The NIH-funded TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program
Columbia University

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES
FOR CURRENT DOCTORAL STUDENTS ONLY

APPLICATION DUE DATE:
APRIL 15, 2014 AT 5PM

NOTIFICATION DATE:
MAY 1, 2014

AWARD START DATE:
JULY 1ST, 2014

I. Background. Through the CTSAs, the NIH launched a national consortium that seeks to transform the conduct of clinical and translational research, with the ultimate goal of enabling researchers to provide new treatments more efficiently and quickly to patients. The CTSA at Columbia University encompasses extensive research support, infrastructure, training programs, and mentoring mechanisms. A key component is the TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program, which offers structured training and practical exposure to the needed training for doctoral students currently enrolled in basic science, population science or pre-clinical doctoral programs, who want to gain some exposure to the Personalized Medicine field.

The TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program is intended to provide students already enrolled in doctoral training programs, primarily from GSAS, P&S, School of Nursing, or the Mailman School of Public Health, with additional research training to prepare for an academic research career that can contribute in some meaningful way to the important field of Personalized Medicine. This two year training opportunity which will run simultaneously with the students’ ongoing doctoral training, allows doctoral students to gain knowledge and skill-sets that may be outside of their primary academic or clinical discipline. The interdisciplinary education gained as a TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine trainee will serve as an invaluable asset in conducting future research and collaborating with scientists and investigators from other clinical and academic fields of knowledge. Participation in this program will not necessitate extending an individual’s doctoral training program.

II. Award Provisions. With TRANSFORM support, doctoral students will obtain additional training in research. They will accomplish this goal by attending two 3 credit course (total of 6 credits) that will

1Initially awarded for 1 year and renewed for a second year with satisfactory progress
advance their knowledge of personalized medicine, such as systems biology, genomics, statistics, and/or medical informatics, according to the applicant’s background and future career goals. They will also attend the year-long, weekly Patient Oriented Research colloquia (hour-long presentations covering academic career topics of interest) (total 2 credits), and the “Responsible Conduct of Research and Related Policy Issues” (G4010; total 1 credit). It is important to note that these course activities will be in addition to the coursework and mentored research they will be completing within their “home” program. Successful completion of the 1-credit course entitled “Responsible Conduct of Research” is required, but can be part of the doctoral requirements.

Eligible students admitted into the training program will be considered for an award that will provide 2 years of support (awarded for 1 year and renewed for a second year with satisfactory progress) including a stipend and funds for tuition and fees. Students should discuss with their Program Director if stipend and tuition award supplementation is available. Students who do not meet NIH eligibility (see below) are still invited to apply to the training program, but funds will not be awarded.

*Please note that individuals currently supported by other federal funds are not eligible for trainee support from the TRANSFORM TL1 program at the same time. The CTSA funds will replace other federal funds during the two year period of training in Personalized Medicine.

*Please also note that this Program serves as an opportunity for exposure training; no trainee will be expected nor mandated to publish a paper from the program.

*TL1 award recipients must be FULL-TIME doctoral students, as per NIH guidelines.

**III. Eligibility Criteria for TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program.**

Specific eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to be eligible for funding under this program.
- The CTSA places special emphasis on multidisciplinary research, which must be reflected in mentorship for this program. Consequently, each applicant must identify one TRANSFORM Multidisciplinary Mentor from a different discipline than the Dissertation Supervisor to advise on his/her research progress during the period of the CTSA award. Any Columbia University Faculty member can serve as a multidisciplinary mentor.
- Successful completion of the 1-credit course entitled “Responsible Conduct of Research and Related Policy Issues” (G4010) or an equivalent graduate ethics course is required of all TRANSFORM students.
- Recipients of the TRANSFORM TL1 funding will be required to submit a written progress report during each year of the training, and may be contacted periodically to provide information on their research career.
- Students entering their third year of doctoral training or beyond are preferred.
IV. Application Information

Applications will be judged primarily by: 1) the academic potential of the doctoral student to engage in and contribute to personalized medicine research; 2) the merit of the proposed courses/additional mentor/personal statement; 3) the strength of the recommendation letters.

Applicant must complete the online application with:

- Current CV
- Current transcript
- One document including:
  - Personal Statement (no more than 250 words): Please explain why you have chosen to seek additional research training via the TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program.
  - Career goals (no more than 200 words): Explicitly describe your career goals and how the TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program would prepare you for them.
  - A proposed schedule of meeting times between the student and his/her mentors
  - Proposed Personalized Medicine coursework
- Three letters of recommendation (Dissertation Supervisor, TRANSFORM Multidisciplinary Mentor, Department Chair). Each letter should comment on the following:
  - Applicant’s academic potential
  - Applicant’s proficiency in own area of study
  - Applicant’s ability to extend into personalized medicine that would be meaningful to the candidate’s own research

*The Dissertation Supervisor will be asked to guarantee that the individual will complete the TRANSFORM TL1 Personalized Medicine Training Program requirements during the award period.