

Vagelos Institute for Biomedical Research Education and Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Institutional K Mentored Research Career Development Award

Information, Application Procedures, and Forms

Application Due Date: Friday, October 30, 2026, by 5:00 PM ET

Earliest Award Start Date: January 1, 2027

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I. Background

The [Vagelos Institute for Biomedical Research Education \(VIBRE\)](#) Physician-Scientist Programs and [Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research \(IICTR\)](#) invite applications for an **Institutional K Mentored Research Career Development Award**, an institutionally funded career development program designed to support early-career physician-scientists as they develop independent research programs.

Established as part of the landmark gift from Roy and Diana Vagelos, the VIBRE Physician-Scientist Programs are reimagining how physicians are trained and supported to bridge discovery science and clinical care. Building on Columbia's longstanding strengths in clinical/translational and preclinical or basic biomedical research, VIBRE creates an integrated pathway that supports physician-scientists from medical school through residency, fellowship, and early faculty careers. The program advances innovative models of education, strengthens the physician-scientist pipeline, and fosters transdisciplinary collaboration equipping the next generation of clinician-investigators to lead in translating scientific breakthroughs into better care for patients.

The Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, now in its 20th year, is home to Columbia University's Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program hub, and is one of over 50 medical research institutions across the nation that work together to speed the translation of research discovery into improved patient care. The K award is supported by TRANSFORM (TRaining And Nurturing Scholars FOr Research that is Multidisciplinary), the Irving Institute's educational resource. The primary goals of TRANSFORM programs are to produce clinical and translational researchers who are familiar with interdisciplinary team structures, comfortable with leadership roles, able to integrate research from other disciplines and methodologies, and are prepared to direct multi- and interdisciplinary research.

The Institutional K program supports the development of physician-scientists conducting research across the continuum of biomedical investigation. **Both clinical/translational investigators and investigators pursuing preclinical or basic biomedical research are eligible and strongly encouraged to apply.** The program recognizes that the training needs of physician-scientists vary substantially according to their scientific focus, prior research training, and career goals. Accordingly, scholars will participate in a common program of mentored research and career development while following an individualized didactic training pathway appropriate to their background and area of investigation.

For scholars pursuing clinical, translational, population-based, or patient-oriented research, training will include formal coursework through the Mailman School of Public Health including the **Master of Science in Patient-Oriented Research (MS/POR)** unless a waiver is granted based on the scholar's prior experience and training.

For scholars pursuing preclinical or basic biomedical research, the program will leverage educational opportunities across the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, including coursework offered through the **Vagelos Institute's Biomedical Research Education (VIBRE) Physician-Scientist Programs**. Institutional K scholars may, with program approval, select VIBRE or other VP&S graduate courses that address identified training needs and complement their research and career development goals.

The program is intentionally designed to recognize prior training. Scholars who have already acquired substantial formal research training may not require an additional degree or a predetermined number of courses. Instead, each scholar's prior experience and remaining competency gaps will be reviewed by program leadership, and an individualized training plan will be developed in conjunction with the scholar and mentorship team.

Through protected research time, individualized didactic training, multidisciplinary mentorship, cohort-based career development, responsible conduct of research training, grantsmanship activities, and other professional development opportunities, the Institutional K program seeks to accelerate scholars' progression toward independent, sustained careers in biomedical research.

Please note, this award is being piloted and evaluated in 2027, and future requirements and provisions are subject to change.

II. Award Provisions

Award Duration

The Institutional K Award will generally provide **two years of mentored research and career development support**.

Scholars completing the MS in Patient-Oriented Research as part of their approved Institutional K training plan and those who are surgeons or proceduralists may receive up

to **three years of support** to allow completion of the degree and associated career development activities.

Protected Effort

Scholars are expected to devote a minimum 75% protected effort to research and career development during the award period. Surgeons or proceduralists must maintain at least 50% effort in research.

Award Support

Award support includes:

- Salary support (up to 75% of current salary – maximum \$90,000/year);
- Research-related expenses;
- Tuition or course expenses associated with the scholar's approved training plan;
- Career development activities; and
- Research-related travel.

Departments will be expected to protect the scholar's required research and career development effort and provide any required salary or fringe support not covered by the award and the department chair letter included in the application should attest to this commitment.

III. Eligibility Criteria

The Institutional K program is intended to support early-career **physician-scientists conducting either clinical/translational research or preclinical/basic biomedical research**. The scientific pathway selected by an applicant will inform the scholar's training plan but will **not determine whether the applicant is eligible for consideration**.

Applicants must:

- Hold an **MD or equivalent clinical medical degree**;
- Hold, or be eligible to hold by the award start date, an assistant professor title;
- Have a clearly defined mentored research project and career development plan;
- Identify an appropriate multidisciplinary research mentorship team;
- Be able to devote the required protected effort to research and career development for the duration of the award; and
- Demonstrate a commitment to developing an independent biomedical research career.
- **Not** have been the recipient of any other K award from the NIH in the past or currently. In addition, the applicant may not have served, in the past or currently, as

the PI of an R01, R29, or P50 grant award. Recipients of R03 or R21 awards, however, are eligible.

IV. Program Structure and Training Model

The Institutional K uses an individualized research career development model that combines:

1. Mentored research;
2. Career development and grantsmanship;
3. Responsible Conduct of Research;
4. Cohort-based programming and peer engagement;
5. Individualized didactic or skills-based training; and
6. Ongoing assessment of the scholar's progress toward research independence.

Each scholar will develop an **Individualized Training and Career Development Plan** with their mentors and program leadership. The plan will consider:

- The scholar's prior degree and research training;
- Previous graduate-level coursework;
- Research methodology and scientific skills;
- Current research focus;
- Identified gaps in knowledge or competencies;
- Career development goals; and
- Preparation needed to compete successfully for independent research funding.

The program will distinguish between **common requirements for all Institutional K scholars** and **pathway-specific training requirements**.

V. Training and Career Development Requirements

A. Requirements for All Institutional K Scholars

Regardless of scientific pathway, all scholars will participate in a common set of research career development activities.

Required program elements are expected to include:

- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training;
- Funding and Grantsmanship training;

- Weekly attendance at the Patient Oriented Research Career development colloquium;
- Monthly attendance at **K cohort meetings**;
- Participation in the ASPIRE! peer and near-peer mentoring program
- Participation in THRIVE retreat hosted by the Irving Institute;
- An Individual Development Plan or equivalent individualized career development plan, reviewed periodically with mentors and program leadership;
- Regular meetings with the scholar's research mentorship team;
- Program progress reviews and required evaluation activities; and

B. Clinical/Translational Research Training Pathway

Scholars whose research is primarily clinical, translational, population-based, epidemiologic, patient-oriented, or otherwise requires formal training in clinical research methodology will have their prior training reviewed at the beginning of the award.

For scholars who **have not previously completed training equivalent to the program's required clinical research competencies**, the approved training plan may include formal training through programs such as:

- The **Master of Science in Patient-Oriented Research (MS/POR)**;
- Columbia Summer Research Institute (CSRI); or
- Another program-approved combination of courses that provides the necessary methodological preparation.

C. Preclinical/Basic Biomedical Research Training Pathway

Scholars conducting preclinical or basic biomedical research will follow a training pathway tailored to their scientific background, research program, and existing expertise. In addition to the required training for all scholars, these awardees prior training and experience will be evaluated by program leadership to determine areas in which additional coursework or skills development would add meaningful value to the scholar's research and career trajectory.

VI. Mentorship Model

Each scholar must identify a multidisciplinary research mentorship team consisting of 2-3 mentors with the expertise necessary to support the proposed scientific program and the scholar's progression toward independence.

The mentorship team should collectively provide:

- Background in two or more distinct departments
- Scientific and methodological expertise relevant to the proposed research;

- Guidance regarding research strategy and execution;
- Career development and transition-to-independence guidance; and
- Support for development and submission of independent research funding applications.

Mentors will meet regularly with the scholar and participate in periodic progress reviews with Institutional K leadership.

VII. Institutional K Scholar Requirements and Expectations

During the award period, scholars are expected to:

- Conduct the approved mentored research project;
- Maintain the required level of protected research and career development effort;
- Participate actively in Institutional K cohort meetings and required career development activities;
- Complete all components of the approved individualized training plan;
- Meet regularly with their mentorship team;
- Complete required RCR and other institutional research training;
- Maintain and periodically update an Individual Development Plan or equivalent career development plan;
- Submit progress and evaluation materials requested by the program;
- Present research progress as requested;
- Develop a strategy for transition to independent research support; and
- Prepare and submit competitive applications for independent research funding appropriate to their career stage and scientific field.

VIII. Application Instructions

Applications must be submitted electronically through WebCAMP by the published deadline. **Note that WebCAMP can only be accessed while on a Columbia or CUIMC network and you will only be able to complete the application while on campus or [connected to the VPN](#).**

The following application components must be submitted:

- Curriculum Vitae;
- NIH-format biosketch for the applicant;
- Biosketches for proposed mentors;
- Personal statement;

- Research abstract;
- Research proposal (maximum 5 pages);
- Training and career development plan (maximum 5 pages);
- Initial budget proposal;
- Letters of support from each mentor;
- Department Chair letter confirming protected effort and institutional support;
- Completion of the ASPIRE! baseline survey via Qualtrics; and
- Graduate and Doctoral level academic transcripts, where relevant to assessment of prior graduate-level training.

We strongly recommend that you initiate your application and begin uploading documents **at least one week prior** to the deadline as our system is known to have challenges when a high volume of applicants are logged in at the same time.

IX. Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- The applicant's potential to develop a successful independent biomedical research career;
- The significance, rigor, feasibility, and scientific quality of the proposed research;
- The strength and appropriateness of the mentorship team;
- The quality and appropriateness of the career development plan;
- The relationship between the proposed training and the applicant's prior preparation;
- The extent to which the proposed training plan addresses meaningful competency gaps without unnecessarily duplicating prior training;
- The applicant's commitment to protected research and career development time;
- The likelihood that the Institutional K will accelerate the applicant's transition to independent research funding; and
- The overall fit between the candidate, proposed research program, mentorship environment, and Institutional K career development resources.

Questions and Contact Information

Questions regarding eligibility, the appropriate research pathway, training requirements, prior coursework, or application preparation may be directed to: [Harley Lynch](#), Associate Director for Workforce Development and Training Strategy in the Irving Institute.