

## Dean's Scholar in Clinical Research Program

### Quick Applicant Reference

Use this section as a checklist before preparing the full application. The detailed instructions and scoring rubric below provide the complete application and review expectations.

| Category                                | Applicant Quick Reference                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>Program Purpose</b>                  | Two-year mentored career development program designed to prepare early-career faculty to submit a competitive NIH K23/K08, R-series application, or other appropriate external funding application. A third year of salary support is available to those who submit a K or R01 grant application (as PI) in the first 2 years and require time to develop a successful resubmission and meet program expectations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Program Support</b>                  | Provides 50% protected time, up to \$100,000 in start-up or research support, and tuition reimbursement for an approved relevant master's degree at UTSW annually for the first 2 years. Those who are eligible for a third year receive salary support and tuition reimbursement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Application Format</b>               | Abbreviated NIH K23/K08-style application. Applicants should write for an NIH-style review audience and ensure that the research strategy, career development plan, mentorship plan, budget, and letters are internally consistent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Core Application Materials</b>       | CV; applicant NIH biosketch; primary mentor and key mentor(s) biosketches; Specific Aims; Research Strategy; budget and justification; Other Support; combined Candidate Statement, Career Development Plan, Mentorship Plan, and Further Educational Plans; Chair letter; two mentor letters of support; and, if applicable, response to prior review.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Key Page Limits</b>                  | Applicant and mentor biosketches: 5 pages each. Specific Aims: 1 page. Research Strategy: 3 pages, excluding references and separate two-year timeline. Combined Candidate Statement/Career Development/Mentorship/Further Educational Plans: 3 pages. Resubmission response: 1 page.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Required Departmental Commitment</b> | The nominating department must commit to protect 50% research and career development effort for the full two-year award period and match the \$50,000 start-up funds from the Dean's Scholar Program with departmental funds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Review Emphasis</b>                  | Reviewers will assess candidate potential, research strategy and funding potential, mentorship and research environment, career development plan, and departmental and institutional commitment using an NIH-style Overall Impact Score and a 100-point scoring rubric. The Dean's Scholar Program is a career development award rather than a project grant. Successful applications demonstrate alignment among the candidate's career goals, training needs, mentorship plan, research project, and anticipated future external funding mechanism. Strong applications clearly explain how proposed research, mentorship, and career development activities will position the applicant for research independence. |

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| <b>Submission Format</b> | Upload all application materials as PDF files. Incomplete applications may not be reviewed. |
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## Important Program Philosophy

The Dean's Scholar Program is designed to accelerate the development of independent clinical and translational investigators. Consistent with NIH mentored career development awards, reviewers will evaluate not only the scientific merit of the proposed research project, but also the extent to which the career development plan, mentorship team, training activities, departmental support, and proposed research project work together to prepare the applicant for competitive external funding and long-term research independence.

Strong applications demonstrate clear alignment among:

- Career goals
- Training needs and identified skill gaps
- Career development activities
- Mentorship strategy
- Research project
- Future external funding plans

Applicants should devote the same degree of attention to the Career Development Plan and Mentorship Plan as they devote to the Research Strategy.

## Full Application Instructions

Use this section to fully develop your application.

| Applicant and Mentor Profile Materials               |                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| Component                                            | What to Submit                                                                                                                                                                  | Length / Format                | What Reviewers Will Look For                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Curriculum Vitae</b>                              | Submit a full, current curriculum vitae.                                                                                                                                        | No formal page limit.          | Education, training, faculty appointment, clinical role, publications, grants, presentations, leadership roles, honors, prior research experience, productivity appropriate for career stage, and readiness for intensive career development support.                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Applicant NIH Biosketch</b>                       | Submit a complete NIH biographical sketch using the NIH format. Current SciENcv format is optional.                                                                             | Maximum 5 pages.               | Clear personal statement describing commitment to clinical and/or translational research, preparation for the project, scientific theme, prior accomplishments, and how the program will support transition to external funding. Contributions to Science should emphasize work relevant to the proposed research direction and future K23/K08, equivalent career development award, or R-level application. |
| <b>Primary Mentor and Key Mentor NIH Biosketches</b> | Submit the most current NIH biosketch for the primary scientific mentor and any key co-mentors essential to the project or career development plan. SciENcv format is optional. | Maximum 5 pages per biosketch. | Active research funding, relevant scientific expertise, strong mentorship record, prior mentorship of early-career investigators, experience with K awardees and K-to-R transitions when applicable, and evidence of mentee progression to independent funding, productivity, promotion, or academic advancement.                                                                                            |

  

| Research, Budget, and Support Materials |                                                            |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Component                               | What to Submit                                             | Length / Format | What Reviewers Will Look For                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Specific Aims</b>                    | Submit a one-page Specific Aims page written in NIH style. | Maximum 1 page. | Problem, knowledge gap, central hypothesis or objective, long-term goal, and specific aims to be completed during the two-year award period. Each aim should be supported by a rationale, approach, expected outcome, and relevance to a future K23/K08, equivalent career development award, R-series application, or other external funding submission. Aims should be related but not overly interdependent. |

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| <b>Research Strategy</b>               | Submit a focused mentored research plan organized using NIH-style headings: Significance, Innovation, and Approach.                                                                    | Maximum 3 pages. References do not count toward the page limit. | Rigor, feasibility, significance, innovation, study design, population or data sources, key variables or outcomes, methods, analytic plan, power calculation or sample size justification when applicable, deliverables, potential problems, alternatives, and alignment with future funding. If applicable, address access to human subjects, , specimens, data repositories, community or stakeholder engagement, approvals, or other information that demonstrates the rigor and feasibility of the approach..                                                                                     |
| <b>Project Timeline and Milestones</b> | Submit a separate two-year timeline outlining major research activities, training activities, publications,, career development milestones, and external grant preparation milestones. | Separate attachment. Does not count toward page limits.         | Clear and feasible progression of research and career development activities; alignment between the proposed project and training plan; realistic milestones; evidence that the proposed work can be completed within the award period; and a clear path toward external funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Budget and Justification</b>        | Submit a budget and brief justification for Years 1 and 2.                                                                                                                             | Use the program budget template provided.                       | Realistic, non-duplicative budget aligned with the Research Strategy and Career Development Plan. The program provides 50% protected time, up to \$100,000 in start-up or research support, and tuition reimbursement for an approved relevant master's degree or other appropriate educational program. Justify how requested funds support the project, career development, grant preparation, and transition to external funding.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Other Support</b>                   | Submit current and pending Other Support using the NIH format.                                                                                                                         | Use current NIH format.                                         | All resources available in support of or related to the applicant's research, regardless of monetary value. Include institutional, departmental, foundation, industry, federal, philanthropic, and other research support as applicable. Identify scientific, budgetary, or effort overlap and explain how overlap will be resolved. Applicants who hold or will hold at the time of their appointment as a Dean's Scholar other institutional career development awards, K or equivalent career development awards are not eligible. Check with the program if you have questions about eligibility. |

| Career Development, Mentorship, and Institutional Support                                           |                                                                                                                                                |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Component                                                                                           | What to Submit                                                                                                                                 | Length / Format                                             | What Reviewers Will Look For                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Candidate Statement, Career Development Plan, Mentorship Plan, and Further Educational Plans</b> | Submit one combined section that mirrors the candidate, career development, mentorship, and training components of an NIH K23/K08 application. | Maximum 3 pages.                                            | <p>Candidate Statement: prior research experience, commitment to clinical and/or translational research, long-term goal, current career stage, and gap between current preparation and readiness for external funding.</p> <p>Career Development Plan: a structured, individualized two-year plan designed to address specific gaps in knowledge, skills, experience, or methodology that currently limit readiness for independent funding. Applicants should clearly describe how proposed coursework, degree training, workshops, mentoring experiences, writing activities, conferences, career development programming, responsible conduct of research training, manuscript preparation, and grant development activities will prepare them for a future career as an independent investigator.</p> <p>Mentorship Plan: mentor roles, expertise, meeting cadence, feedback structure, milestone monitoring, and plans to address barriers to career development and research progress. Applicants should explain how the mentorship team will help address identified training gaps and facilitate transition to external funding.</p> <p>Further Educational Plans: training or tuition request and rationale. Applicants should clearly explain how proposed educational activities address identified developmental needs and support future funding goals.</p> |
| <b>Letter from Nominating Department Chair</b>                                                      | Submit a letter from the nominating Department Chair and Division Chief, if applicable.                                                        | No formal page limit; institutional letterhead recommended. | Specific institutional commitment, not a generic endorsement. The letter should describe appointment, eligibility, 50% protected effort, departmental match of \$50,000 in start-up funds, workload adjustments, departmental research alignment, resources, space, staff, data or clinical access, bridge support, mentorship team, mentor funding and track record, and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                              | long-term plans to support transition to external funding and research independence. The Chair should specifically describe how research effort will be protected from competing clinical and administrative responsibilities and how departmental support will continue beyond the Dean's Scholar award period.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Letters of Support from Mentors</b> | Submit two additional letters of support. One must be from the primary scientific mentor. The second may be from a co-mentor, career mentor, methodologist, collaborator, Division Chief, or another individual central to the applicant's research or career development. | Letters must be on institutional letterhead. | Mentor commitment, expertise, resources, structured support, meeting cadence, role in preparing the applicant for K23/K08, equivalent career development award, R-series application, or other external funding, active funding, mentoring record, prior trainee outcomes, and experience helping early-career investigators transition to independent funding. Letters should clearly describe how mentors will address identified training gaps, monitor progress toward milestones, provide feedback on manuscripts and grant applications, and support the applicant's development into an independent investigator. |

| Resubmissions                                           |                                                              |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Component                                               | What to Submit                                               | Length / Format | What Reviewers Will Look For                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>For Resubmissions Only: Response to Prior Review</b> | Submit a response to prior review if this is a resubmission. | Maximum 1 page. | Factual, responsive summary of the major critiques from the previous application and how the revised application addresses them. Organize by review theme, such as candidate readiness, research significance, innovation, approach and feasibility, mentorship, career development, institutional commitment, or budget. Be specific about changes made. |

## Submission Instructions

Upload all application materials as PDF files.

Applications must be complete and submitted electronically through the application portal, which can be found on the Dean's Scholar in Clinical Research Program website. Incomplete applications or applications that do not include required letters, biosketches, research materials, budget, and other support documentation may not be reviewed.