

## NeRD Associate Training (NeAT) Program

The mission of the UT Southwestern Medical Center Neuroscience Research Development (NeRD) office is to facilitate the discovery of novel neurotherapeutics and technologies by empowering individual and team researchers to obtain funding and/or access available resources.

The goal of the NeAT program is to provide a hands-on learning experience in [Research Development](#), of which some aspects are:

- Research project development from the inception of the scientific idea through publication or awarding of a grant
- Identification of funding sources
- Generation and submission of grant applications
- Providing administrative support and policy guidance
- Extensive review, critique, substantive and copy editing, and formatting of documents
- Regulatory writing for research with human and animals
- Manuscript writing, editing and submission

You can read more about research development here:

1. Michael Preuss, Kimberly Eck, Mary Fechner, Loren Walker, [Describing Research Development: A First Step](#), Research Management Review, Volume 23, Number 1 (2018).
2. Sengupta, S. [Research Development: A Career for the Planners, Strategists, and Figure-it-Out-ers](#) – National Postdoctoral Association, Oct. 2017.
3. Kuo M. [Being the Enabler](#) – Science Careers, Oct. 17, 2016.
4. AtKisson MS. [Research Development: Where to Begin?](#) – NCURA Magazine, March/April 2014, pages 8-9.
5. Jacob Levin. [The emergence of the Research Development Professional](#), The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 27, 2011.

### **Benefits to trainees include:**

- Exploration of a new, viable career path
- Utilization and development of transferable skills when helping researchers with their projects (manuscript or grant)
  - Project management skills and tools
  - Communication skills
  - Team science and collaboration efforts for the completing of project goals
  - Time management
- Expanding their professional network

## **Program details and description**

Trainees will be selected through a competitive application process. Those selected to participate in the program must commit to approximately seven to eight hours a week for four weeks. The training will start once a suitable project has been identified. Trainees can choose from one of two options:

A grant project

A writing project

Based on their choice and availability of projects, trainees will be informed of when they will start their training in the academic year.

The trainees will start their program by meeting with the Director of the NeRD office and the Scientific Writer for an orientation session. Trainees will meet with them again for a bi-directional feedback session at the end of the program. While working on the designated project, the communication within the team will be via emails, phone calls or one-on-one meetings with the scientific writer. Trainees are encouraged to attend weekly NeRD team meetings. The trainees will be required to complete a feedback survey about the program to receive their training certificate.

The trainees are expected to:

- Work closely with the scientific writer
- Participate in meetings with the principal investigators
- Grant track
  - Learn how to read a request for application
  - Help with the development of a scientific idea and study design
  - Create and edit documents
  - Collaborate with the NeRD grants and contracts specialist for successful submission to sponsor
- Writing track
  - Identify journals appropriate for the manuscript
  - Write parts of and edit the entire manuscript
  - Assist with regulatory writing, such as institutional review board protocols
  - Provide assistance as needed to the principal investigator

Each training program is approximately four weeks long. We expect trainees to be involved in all aspects of a project, therefore the program will start when a suitable project is identified. The program will identify 5 candidates to train in an academic year. Announcements will be sent in the first week of June and candidates will have until mid-July to apply. The selected trainees will be contacted first week of August and their training will begin when a suitable project is identified within the academic year. After completion of the program, candidates will meet with the Director and the scientific writer for an evaluation of their performance and will be given a certificate of completion.

## **Candidate Requirements**

- Must be employed by UT Southwestern
- Must have an interest in scientific writing and project management
- Written and verbal fluency in English
- Good communication skills
- Provide a resume and a cover letter that explains their reason for applying to the training program, a brief description of their qualifications, and their goals for participating in the program
- Provide one writing sample (scientific is preferred, but can be non-scientific)
- Send above documentation as a single PDF to [nerdoffice@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:nerdoffice@utsouthwestern.edu)

Compensation is not provided to trainees. This is an opportunity provided by the NeRD office for UT Southwestern employee to extend their knowledge and skill set. Trainees must ensure that participation in the NeAT program will not interfere with their employment or academic obligations.