

NIH Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowships: A Reviewer's Perspective

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Fellowship grants

- F31: **Predoctoral**
 - supervised research training in specified health and health-related areas leading toward the research doctoral degree (e.g., PhD).
- F32: **Postdoctoral**
 - research training to broaden scientific background and extend potential for research in specified health-related areas.
- F awards are ***training*** awards, NOT research awards.
 - will this make a strong impact on the candidate's research training and scientific career development?

Review Criteria

F30/F31/F32/F33/F99/K00 Review

Application #:

Applicant:

OVERALL IMPACT

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the candidate's potential for, and commitment to, a productive independent scientific research career in a health-related field, in consideration of the following scored and additional review criteria. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have a major impact.

Overall Impact/Merit *Write a paragraph summarizing the factors that informed your Overall Impact score.*

SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the five review criteria below in the determination of the candidate's qualifications, scientific and technical merit of the proposed research, candidate's training potential, institutional environment and commitment to training, and give a separate score for each.

1. Fellowship Applicant

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

2. Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

3. Research Training Plan

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

4. Training Potential

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

5. Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA

As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will consider the following additional items in the determination of scientific and technical merit, but will not give separate scores for these items.

- A response for Protections for Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, and Biohazards **is required from reviewers for all applications.**
- A response for Inclusion Plans is required from reviewers for applications proposing Human Subjects Research, except those designated Exemption 4.

Protections for Human Subjects

[Click Here to Select](#)

Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):

-

Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (Applicable for Clinical Trials Only):

[Click Here to Select](#)

Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):

-

Inclusion Plans **Applicable Only for Human Subjects research and not IRB Exemption #4.**

- Sex/Gender: [Click Here to Select](#)

Overall Impact

What is the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the candidate's potential for, and commitment to, an independent scientific research career in a health-related field?

Fs
• Applicant
• Sponsor(s)
• Research Training Plan
• Training Potential
• Institutional Environment & Commitment

Overall Impact	High	Medium	Low
Score	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9

Each criteria also scored on a scale of 1-9.

Fellowship Applicant

- **Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher in biomedical, behavioral or clinical science?**
 - academic record and research experience.
 - evidence of productivity: publications, meeting abstract presentations, contributions to collection of data.
 - letters of recommendation.
 - record to-date and proposed fellowship activities demonstrate commitment to independent research career?

Sponsors, Collaborators, Consultants

- **Does the sponsor(s) have the following to support the proposed training?**
 - research qualifications, accomplishments in the area.
 - mentoring experience and commitment to the candidate
 - plan for coordinated mentoring?
 - personalized training plan?
 - letters of collaboration convey commitment?
 - will the mentoring team have sufficient research funds over the duration of the training period? (it is appropriate to balance current funding with a history of funding).

Research Training Plan

- **Is the research plan well integrated with the candidate's goals, will it expand the candidate's conceptual understanding and is the plan of high scientific quality?**
 - keep focus on the big picture; focus on rationale.
 - alternative outcomes or methodologies considered?
 - are publishable results from the work likely?
 - is the amount of work proposed feasible within the timeframe requested?
 - is the work proposed **sufficiently distinct** from the sponsor's funded research?
 - scope of the work proposed appropriate for the candidate's career stage? F32 vs F31

Training Potential

- **Do the proposed research project and training plan have the potential to provide the applicant with the requisite individualized and mentored experiences that will develop his/her knowledge, research and professional skills?**
 - training consistent with applicant's career goals?
 - will it help them advance to the next stage?
 - what new research areas/skills/techniques will be learned?
 - is the proposed research complementary to previous training (particularly for F32)?
 - training plan and applicant activities should include non-research training appropriate to the career goals (e.g., teaching, coursework, grant-writing, presentations).

Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training

- **Are the research facilities, resources and training opportunities adequate and appropriate for the candidate's scientific development?**
 - availability of necessary equipment, laboratory space, computational resources and core facilities.
 - exposure to seminars, workshops and professional development activities.
 - institution's record of commitment to fostering high quality trainees.

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- Applicant
- Sponsor(s)
- Research
Training Plan
- Training
Potential
- Institutional
Environment &
Commitment

Good Luck!