NIH Career Development Grants
K25: Mentored Quantitative Research Development Awards

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What’s the point?

- The purpose of the K25 is to attract to NIH-relevant research those investigators whose quantitative science and engineering research has thus far not been focused primarily on questions of health and disease.
- The K25 award will provide support and “protected time” for a period of supervised study and research for productive professionals with quantitative science and engineering backgrounds to integrate their expertise with NIH-relevant research.
  - That’s our college!
Who is eligible?

- Must have a PhD or equivalent in a quantitative science or engineering field
- Can be postdoc through senior faculty rank
  - Usually seems to be junior faculty though
  - If you are a postdoc, you should try for a K99/R00 instead
- Must be US citizen or permanent resident
- Can not have been a PI on large NIH grant (R01, P01, center grants, etc.) or other career development (K) grant
  - OK if PI on small R03/R21 grant or SBIR/STTR funding
What do you get?

- 5 years support
- Exact amounts of $ depends on institute but usually
  - Covers $75-100k/year of your salary
    - Devote 75% time (9 month) to the award
    - Department Chair letter must address this (more on this later)
  - Additional $40k/year of research support
- Mentoring to help get ready to submit successful NIH grants
  - (that means R01)
Proposal structure

- 12 pages
  - ~1/2 research plan (6-7 pages)
  - ~1/2 career development plan (5-6 pages)

- Career development
  - What are you going to do to become a NIH-fundable researcher?
    - When do you plan to submit an R01?
  - What are your mentors going to provide?
    - When are you going to spend time in their labs?
    - What are you going to learn?
  - Are you going to take classes? (answer: yes)

- Research plan similar to R01
  - Put a clear timeline
Early things to work out

- Identify a mentoring TEAM
  - Primary mentor must be successful NIH researcher (i.e. has R01s)
  - Co-mentors bring additional expertise
  - Can also have “advisory committee”

- Reference letters by people not on the proposal

- Animal and/or Human Research protocol
  - Make sure to get any animal (IACUC) or human (IRB) research protocols approved ahead of time
  - This takes time get it done early
  - Include lots of details on proposal (not in page limit but important during review)
Institutional Commitment

- Get department chair ok (Institutional Commitment)
  - Department chair letter should have the following things:
    - Guaranteed protected time to spend 9 months on project
    - Description of resources for professional development
    - Description of research resources and facilities you have access to
    - Statement saying your salary is not dependent on this award (i.e. if you don’t get this award you still get your 9month salary)
      - Most applicants come from med schools where they only have 3months of salary support
    - Transition to “independent” (NIH R01) researcher
      - Again, because of med school structure, you want to be clear that you can be independent of your mentors
Career development plan

- Your background
  - Emphasize technical background
  - How successful were you in your science/engineering field?
  - Why do you want to go into biomedical research?
- Career goals
  - Follow from your background
  - Lead to career development/training path
- Career Training Plan
- Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - Must be included and should include mentor contribution
- Mentor, co-Mentor, etc statements
Other tips

- Talk to appropriate program director ahead of time
- If mentor/co-mentors not at Clemson, be sure to address travel and other issues
  - Budget time for prolong stay in mentor lab, etc.
  - Describe videoconferencing capabilities
- Make sure to have at least one person on your team from Clemson
- Can take courses online
- Include detail stats in research plan
- Ask for help! (copies of old successful proposals, proofread submission, get feedback from mentors, etc)