NIGMS Postdoctoral Research Associate Training (PRAT) Program Applicant Webinar

Program Overview and Application Webinar – June 19, 2019
Today’s Webinar - Participants

PRAT Program Leadership

• Kenneth Gibbs, Ph.D., PRAT Director
• Mercedes Rubio, Ph.D., PRAT Co-Director

PRAT Fellows

• Miriam Bocarsly, Ph.D., NIAAA
• Tommy Vo, Ph.D., NCI
• Sofia Beas, Ph.D., NIMH
Today’s Webinar - Format

• PRAT program

• PRAT application process & review

• Hearing from PRAT fellows!

• Your questions
NIGMS PRAT Program

• Competitive three-year postdoctoral fellowship program that provides high quality research training in the basic biomedical sciences in NIH intramural research laboratories, and prepares fellows for leadership positions in biomedical careers

• Provides stipend, health insurance, and travel/training allowance

• Structured postdoctoral program with defined training components

https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/Pages/PRAT.aspx
PRAT Curriculum Principles

- Leadership
- Communication
- Networking
- Mentorship
- Biomedical Ecosystem Knowledge
- Diversity
- Service
PRAT Program Components

Three year program providing:

• Outstanding laboratory experience

• Access to extensive NIH resources – facilities, expertise, collaborations, and office of intramural training and education

• Community and networking

• Personal mentorship

• Extensive career development activities
Sample of PRAT Training Activities

• Monthly seminar series
  o Vanderbilt, Genentech, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Georgetown, University of Michigan, NIMH, NIDDK, AstraZeneca

• Professional skills development & communications training
  o “Managing Up”
  o Emotional Intelligence

• NIH Funding – 101 (Research Grants, K awards)
Sample of PRAT Training Activities

• Early Career Scientific Leaders

  Jessica Polka  
  ASAPbio  

  Prachee Avasthi  
  Kansas University Medical Center  

  Hosea Nelson  
  UCLA  

• Annual Scientific Symposium

  Christine Pfund  
  University of Wisconsin  

  Linda Sealy  
  Vanderbilt University
Sample of PRAT Training Activities

Field Trip: Janelia Research Campus
Recent PRAT Alumni – Career Outcomes

Sample of Post-PRAT Institutions

- Yale
- USU
- University of Washington
- NIH
- FDA
- Genentech
- Pfizer
- AAAS
- Cooley

PRAT alumni (n=73; 2005 – 2016) who completed training
PRAT Application Process & Review
NIGMS PRAT Program - Eligibility

• **Citizenship** - US citizens and permanent residents

• **Scientific focus** – All research areas supported by NIGMS

• **Career stage**
  - Current NIH postdocs must have started **no earlier than July 1, 2018**
  - Graduate students who intends to begin postdoc experience at NIH in fall 2020

*We are especially interested in ensuring the applicant pool reflects the diversity of the biomedical Ph.D. talent pool.*
NIGMS Research Areas

- Biological chemistry
- Biophysics
- Bioinformatics
- Cell & molecular biology
- Computational biosciences
- Developmental biology
- Genetics
- Immunology
- Neuroscience
- Pharmacology
- Physiology
- Technology development
Current PRAT Fellows at 11 ICs

- NICHD (n=5)
- NCI (n=4)
- NIA (n=2)
- NIAID (n=2)
- NIDA (n=2)
- NIEHS (n=2)
- NHGRI (n=1)
- NIAMS (n=1)
- NIDDK (n=1)
- NIMH (n=1)
- NINDS (n=1)

PRAT Application Process

• Competitive application process - Fi2 (i= intramural) mechanism with applications submitted via grants.gov

• Read everything **thoroughly**
  • Specific guidance for each part of the application (e.g. length, content, due date)

• Begin or continue record of independent funding

## Application Form Instructions

Need help selecting the right instructions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Instructions</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SF424 (R&amp;R) - Version E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G General Instructions</td>
<td>Comprehensive guidance for research, training, fellowship, career development, multi-project, and small business applications</td>
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### Filtered Application Instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Instructions</th>
<th>Guidance for research only</th>
<th>PDF</th>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development Instructions</td>
<td>Guidance for career development only</td>
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<td>Training Instructions</td>
<td>Guidance for training only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fellowship Instructions</td>
<td>Guidance for fellowship only</td>
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# NIGMS PRAT Program – FOA

## Department of Health and Human Services

### Part 1. Overview Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Organization(s)</th>
<th>National Institutes of Health (NIH)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Components of Participating Organizations</td>
<td>National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Opportunity Title</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Research Associate Training (PRAT) Program (Fi2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity Code</td>
<td>FI2 Intramural Postdoctoral Research Associate</td>
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<td>Announcement Type</td>
<td>Reissue of PAR-16-190</td>
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FOA = Funding Opportunity Announcement
Important Dates:

Due Date – October 2, 2019 (work with Institute Signing Official early)

Review timeframe- Feb/March 2020

Selection – May 2020

Starting Date – August/September 2020

Interacting with Institute AOR

- Application needs to be submitted by Institute where proposed work will be conducted. Each Institute has one or more designated AORs.

- Make sure you contact your AOR **early in the process**
  - Many can be found here: [https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/PRAT/Pages/prat-faq.aspx#q7](https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/PRAT/Pages/prat-faq.aspx#q7)
  - Contact kenneth.gibbs@nih.gov if you need help identifying who this is

- The AOR will submit the application on your behalf and has important information you need.

- The AOR needs to create an eRA Commons account for PI and Sponsor(s)

- You will need to schedule a time to upload your grant with your AOR. Respect the AOR’s deadlines.

AOR= Authorized Organization Representative
Application 101

• Terminology
  • The institute where you perform the work (e.g. NIMH) is the applicant
  • You, the postdoc, are the PI (no multi-PIs)
  • Your preceptor is the sponsor (you can have multiple)

• Ensure all requirements of the FOA are met – incomplete applications are returned without review

• Demonstrate integration of research and training components, and additional training potential

• Contact AOR early in the process

AOR= Authorized Organization Representative
Leadership Statement (1 page)

• Past leadership and service activities in the scientific community, or to enhance public engagement/understanding of scientific research

• Commitment to diversity in the biomedical sciences, and your leadership, mentoring and outreach activities to enhance diversity – especially involving groups underrepresented in the biomedical research enterprise

• Planned activities during the fellowship to develop or enhance leadership skills
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

- **Fellowship Applicant**
  - Tell your story
  - Clearly articulate career goal

- **Sponsors, Collaborators and Consultants**
  - Important to provide a detailed and tailored plan for you (e.g., mentorship, career advancement)
  - Efforts to ensure inclusive and supportive research environment, and training record (as applicable)
  - If multiple mentors, explain how they’ll work together for your training
  - Use current NIH **biosketch**
  - *Collaborators should provide letters of support (different from reference letter)*
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

- **Research Training Plan**
  - **Rationale**
    - Significance – literature/preliminary data supporting feasibility
    - Central hypothesis (in addition to aim specific hypotheses)
  - **Approach**
    - Ambitious but not unrealistic
    - Aims should be related but not interdependent
    - Discuss expected outcomes, potential challenges, and alternative strategies
    - Statistical analysis (e.g., sample size, power analysis) and attention to relevant biological variables
  - Avoid jargon, and don’t “oversell” proposal
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

• **Training Potential**
  
  o Clarify training benefit (e.g., new system, techniques, or skills)
  
  o Can include OITE programs, FAES Courses, conferences, etc.
  
  o Should include PRAT program activities

• **Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training**
  
  o Why this is the best environment to conduct the proposed research training

  *The entire application is reviewed — a rigorous research proposal is necessary but not sufficient*
Criteria for Application Withdrawal

• For any application due date, multiple applications have the same primary sponsor.

• Missing biosketch for key personnel (PI and sponsors).

• Inappropriate or incomplete letters of reference.
  ○ Three letters of reference are **required**
  ○ Key personnel on the application (e.g. your sponsor and collaborators) cannot provide reference letters.
Reference Letters

- **Electronic submission** of a letter of reference is a separate process from application submission.

- Reference letters are submitted directly through the eRA Commons and do not use Grants.gov.

- This process requires that the referee be provided:
  - The PI’s (candidate’s) eRA Commons user name,
  - The PI’s first and last name as they appear on the PI’s eRA Commons account, and
  - The number assigned to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (PAR-19-286).

- Letters can be submitted well in advance of application being submitted—ask early.
Common Mistakes – Big Picture

• Not giving yourself enough time to:
  o Identify a mentor in the NIH Intramural Research Program
  o Work on the proposal
  o Work with the AOR on logistics of submission

• Incomplete application

• Forgetting to send an update if a paper is accepted between submission and review of the application

Hearing from PRAT Fellows
Miriam Bocarsly (NIAAA)
“Neural Circuitry Driving Aberrant Consummatory and Appetitive Behavior”

Tommy Vo (NCI)
“RNA- and transcription-based mechanisms of heterochromatin assembly”

Sofia Beas (NIMH)
“Underlying Mechanisms Mediating Stress Responses in the Brain”
NIGMS PRAT Program – 2020 Recruitment

- **Timeline**
  - October 2, 2019 – Application deadline
  - February/March 2020 – Peer review
  - May 2020 – Notification
  - August/September 2020 – PRAT start

- **PRAT home page**

- **PRAT Funding Opportunity Announcement**

- For more information – [kenneth.gibbs@nih.gov](mailto:kenneth.gibbs@nih.gov)
Questions?
Thank you for listening & good luck with your application!