

The Candidate Section

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Fellowship applications will be reviewed using three criteria



Candidate's Preparedness and Potential



Research Training Plan



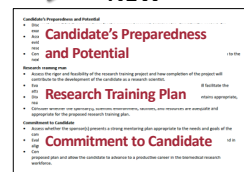
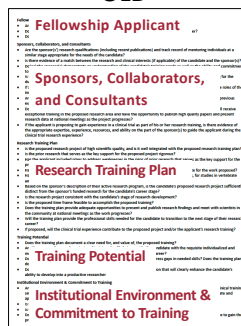
Commitment to Candidate

Criteria for applications submitted after May 25, 2025

The review criteria will be simplified — five criteria are reduced to three

OLD

NEW



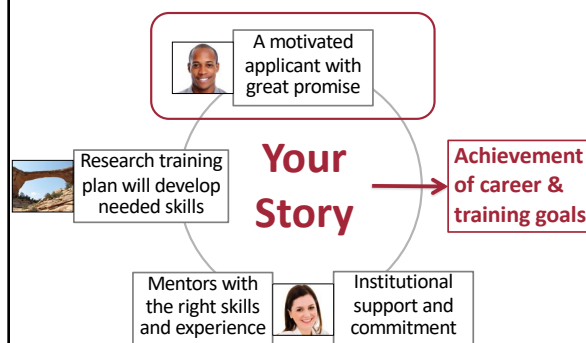
Fewer but more specific questions for reviewers

<https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process>

Reviewers are asked to evaluate the candidate's preparedness, qualities and potential

- Discuss the **candidate's preparedness** for the proposed research training plan. Consider the context, for example, the candidate's stage of training and the opportunities available.
- Assess whether the candidate and sponsor statements as well as the referee letters provide convincing evidence that the **candidate possesses qualities** (such as scientific understanding, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness, and drive) that will improve the likelihood of a successful research training outcome.
- Consider the **candidate's potential** to benefit from the fellowship research training plan and to transition to the next career stage in the biomedical research workforce.

"Your Story" starts with your background and career plans



You have 3 pages to describe your Goals, Preparedness and Potential

Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential	3
Research Training Plan	
Training Activities and Timelines	3
Research Training Project Specific Aims	1
Research Training Project Strategy	6
Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research	1
Commitment to Candidate	
Sponsor(s) Commitment	6
Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants	6

The Candidate Section — "Goals, Preparedness, and Potential" — contains four components

- Overall Training Goals** 1/3 page
— goals for the proposal and long-term career goals 250 words
- Candidate's Preparedness** 2/3 page
— candidate's educational, scientific & professional experiences that prepare for the proposed plan 500 words
- Candidate's Self-Assessment** 1 page
— 2–4 current characteristics that are likely to contribute to achieving the research training
— 2–4 areas of development during the fellowship 800 words
- Scientific Perspective** 1 page
— how the project will advance the field 800 words
— broader, unsolved question in the scientific field

Total of 3 pages

The Candidate Section makes the case for you as the candidate and for the research training plan

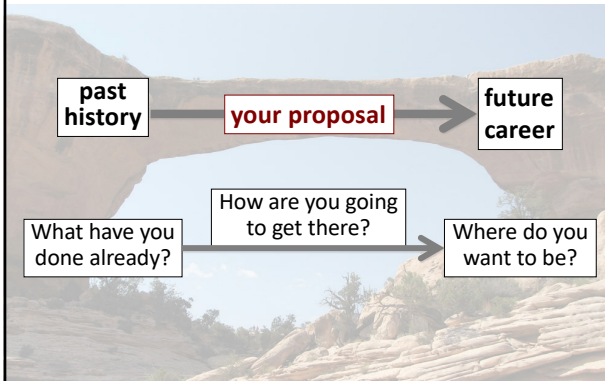


The rationale for the research training plan is summarized in the **Overall Training Goals**

- Describe the goals for the proposed research training plan and the long-term goals for a career in biomedical research workforce.
— *what am I going to learn?*
- Relate the fellowship goals to the long-term career goals.
— *how will that help me advance my career?*
- Describe your motivation for pursuing a career in the biomedical research workforce.
— *why do I want to be an investigator?*

This section is where you state your long-term career goals

Describe your planned career arc:
Your career story has a past, present, and future



What are your long-term career goals?

How will your fellowship help you accomplish those goals?

Why do you want to do biomedical research?

Describe your background and experience in
Candidate's Preparedness

"How relevant activities and experiences contributed to the candidate's scientific development and preparation for the current research training plan."

— coursework, research experiences, conferences, internships, employment

"Any additional activities and experiences that demonstrate an interest and commitment to a career in the biomedical research workforce."

Note: information listed in the candidate's biosketch may be expanded upon, but not simply duplicated, in this section

Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses (gaps) in
Candidate's Self-Assessment

Define your "current characteristics (such as relevant skills, abilities, traits or attitudes) and areas to develop that are likely to contribute most significantly to success in the proposed research training plan and career path"

- 2–4 current characteristics
- 2–4 areas for development

This section makes the case for the activities described in the Research Training Plan

Consider the following areas . . .

Technical: techniques or technical methods, quantitative/computational approaches

Operational: practices that promote rigorous and reproducible science, research safety, animal, or human welfare

Professional: management, leadership, communication, teamwork skills.

At least one from each area for current characteristics & areas for development

What do you do well?

2–4 “current characteristics” (strengths)

What do you still have to learn?

2–4 “areas for development” (weaknesses)

Consider using an Individual Development Plan (IDP)



A career-planning tool with 4 steps:

1. Self-assess skills, values, interests
2. Explore & evaluate career opportunities
3. Set goals for your career path
4. Implement after discussion with mentors

<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org>

<https://www.science.org/content/article/myidp>

myIDP developed by CN Fuhrmann, JA Hobin, B Lindstaedt, PS Clifford

**Demonstrate your scientific thinking in
Scientific Perspective**

“the candidate’s potential to think about and express ideas within a scientific field”

Explain the following:

- Why this field of science is important and the ways the chosen research training project will advance the field.
- A broader, unresolved scientific question in the chosen scientific field, the importance of the problem, and the ways biomedical research might advance the scientific field.

Put your research in a larger context

***What is the potential impact
of your research?***

***What is a major unsolved
problem in your field?***