NIH Fellowship Application (F30, F31, F32) — Candidate Section

(Extracted from Fellowship Instructions for NIH and Other PHS Agencies - Forms Version I Series, F.430 - PHS Fellowship Supplemental Form, pp. F-57–F-59)*

Goals, Preparedness and Potential

Organize the Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential for the Research Training Proposal in the specified order and use the instructions provided below. Start each section with the appropriate heading – Overall Training Goals, Candidate's Preparedness, Candidate Self-Assessment, and Scientific Perspective. *Candidates are expected to write the application, including the research training project section. However, the sponsor should review drafts and provide constructive feedback to the candidate throughout the application process.*

A. Overall Training Goals

Candidates should describe the goals for the proposed research training plan and the long-term goals for a career in biomedical research workforce. Relate the fellowship goals to the long-term career goals. Candidates should describe their motivation for pursuing a career in the biomedical research workforce.

This section is a summary of the whole candidate section and is where you clearly state your career goals and make the argument that the proposed research training plan will advance you to those goals.

- What are your long-term career goals? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- Describe your planned career arc: you are here now (Section B below) and want to be in that dream position—how do you get there?

B. Candidate's Preparedness

This section provides information regarding the educational, scientific, and professional experiences that prepare the candidate for the proposed research training plan. *Note: information listed in the candidate's biosketch may be expanded upon, but not simply duplicated, in this section.* The candidate should address the following:

- How relevant activities and experiences contributed to the candidate's scientific development and preparation for the current research training plan. Examples may include coursework, research experiences, conference attendance, internships, and employment.

- Any additional activities and experiences that demonstrate an interest and commitment to a career in the biomedical research workforce. Examples may include seeking out opportunities for research skill development or engaging in leadership, service, teaching, or outreach activities.

This section is a narrative of your academic history. Your decisions and choices at stages of your career add context to your story. Reviewers want to be confident that you are a "safe bet" — possessing *"qualities (such as scientific understanding, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness, and drive) that will improve the likelihood of a successful research training outcome"* (Fellowship Review Criteria).

- What was your science/research specialization as an undergraduate and why? What areas of science interested you as an undergraduate and why? What science/research activities did you undertake (*examples listed above*)? Was science/research a factor in your choice of undergraduate school?
- Why did you choose GSK for graduate school?
- What research experiences (e.g., rotations) have you had so far as a graduate student? Why did you chose your lab and research project? What have you accomplished on your project to date (particularly, papers, presentations, etc.)?

C. Candidate's Self-Assessment

The purpose of this self-assessment is to provide an opportunity for the candidate to define their 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. For example, the candidate may include but is not limited to describing technical (techniques or technical methods, quantitative/computational approaches), operational (practices that promote rigorous and reproducible science, research safety, animal, or human welfare) or professional (management, leadership, communication, teamwork) skills. The candidate should describe:

- Two to four current characteristics that are likely to contribute to achieving the research training.

- Two to four specific areas of development during the fellowship to attain the stated research training and career goals.

In this section you make the argument for your research training plan, based on your assessment of your current characteristics (**strengths**) and areas for development (**weaknesses**). The instructions describe three areas—*technical, operational, professional*—consider a strength and weakness in each of those areas.
- What do you do well in the lab, practice, professionally? What don't you know? What do you need to know & practice to accomplish your goals?
- What lab techniques, procedures, or analyses have you mastered? What new lab techniques, procedures, or analyses do you need to learn for your project?
- What is your knowledge base? You should be a world expert on the topic of your thesis research.
- Have you taken courses in the operational areas listed above? If not, and if relevant, include in your training plan: for example, appropriate courses on animal welfare if you are doing animal surgeries.
- Have you taken courses on professional development—the "soft skills" of science—at school or a professional society meeting? If not, include in your training plan; this course would count.

D. Scientific Perspective

This section is intended to provide information about the candidate's potential to think about and express ideas within a scientific field. In this section, candidates should 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

In this section you demonstrate your broader knowledge of science, placing your research project in a wider context.
- How has research in your field advanced science and/or human health?
- What will be the impact of your project?
- What are the major, unsolved problems in your field: gaps in knowledge or unmet clinical needs?