

Translational Science Training (TST) T32 Program Application Guidelines

2025 TST T32 Applications are due on: 3/3/2025

The Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) at UT Health San Antonio includes a TST component.

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Predoctoral application link – [Predoctoral Application SurveyMonkey Apply](#)

Postdoctoral application link - [Postdoctoral Application SurveyMonkey Apply](#)

Links to SF424 NIH General Application Instructions and Specific Training Instructions:

[NIH General Application Instructions](#)

[NIH Fellowship Instructions](#)

[NIH NCATS T32 for Predoctoral Trainees](#)

[NIH NCATS T32 for Postdoctoral Trainees](#)

The links above could be used as a reference for filling out the application. Please reach out to the Program Coordinator, Marlene Valenzuela, if you have any questions regarding the components of the application.

Application Review and Selection of TST Awardees

All applications will be reviewed for formalities and completeness. Applications will be comprehensively reviewed by the TST Review Committee. The NIH scoring scale (1-9 in whole numbers with 1 = best and 9 = worst) will be used to assess TST Trainee applications (See [NIH Scoring Guidance](#)). This scale will be used to assign a numerical rating for the Overall application as well as for each of the Scored Review Criteria. Competitive scores will typically fall in the 1 to 3 range. Scores in the range of 4-6 indicate that weaknesses exceed strengths. In the online form, comments (both strengths and weaknesses) and scores must be provided for the categories of:

- Candidate's Preparedness and Potential
- Research Training Plan
- Commitment to Candidate

The TST Review Committee will evaluate applications for scientific and technical merit in accordance with NOT-OD-24-107, which announces changes to the application and peer review process for NIH and AHRQ fellowship applications. Reviewers will take into account that an individual with limited research experience is less likely to be adept at preparing a Research Plan than more experienced investigators. The following factors will be considered during the review:

Revised Review Criteria ([NOT-OD-24-107](#)):

Candidate's Preparedness 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.

Research Training Plan

- Assess the rigor and feasibility of the research training project and how completion of the project will contribute to the development of the candidate as a research scientist.
- Evaluate the goals of the overall research training plan and the extent to which the plan will facilitate the attainment of the goals.
- Discuss whether the research training plan identifies areas of needed development and contains appropriate, realistic activities and milestones to address those needs.
- Consider whether the sponsor(s), scientific environment, facilities, and resources are adequate and appropriate for the proposed research training plan.
- Does the proposed research clearly outline obtainable and measurable objectives that align with the overarching goals of the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) research training program?

Commitment to Candidate, Mentoring and Training Environment

- The sponsor(s) will present a strong mentoring plan appropriate to the needs and goals of the candidate.
- The extent to which the sponsor(s) and organizational commitment is appropriate, sufficient, and in alignment with the candidate's research training plan will be assessed.
- The level of commitment provided will contribute to the successful completion of the proposed plan and allow the candidate to advance to a productive career in the translational science workforce.
- To what extent do the mentor(s) have sufficient protected time available to devote to the

training activities?

- To what extent is there a plan for how multiple mentors will effectively coordinate their training and mentoring responsibilities?
- Are the research facilities and research environment conducive to preparing the trainee for a successful careers as clinical and translational scientist?
- To what extent are the mentor(s) currently funded and engaged in clinical and translational science?
- To what extent do the mentors have strong records as researchers, including recent publications and successful competition for research support in areas directly related to the proposed research training program?

Selected Candidates will demonstrate evidence that training in translational science will facilitate the Candidate's long-term research and career development goals. They will demonstrate strong educational performance and prior research training. The scope and focus of the research training plan provided in the application will be closely aligned with the TST Program mission and will help achieve the applicant's well-articulated research and learning objectives.

Application Components and Instructions

The selection of TST Trainees is based on all components of the application package. Each application component should be prepared as a **single PDF document** and uploaded in the appropriate section in Survey Monkey Apply (SMA). Those individual components include:

Application Component	Length Limit	Link to Form or Specific Instructions
General Information	N/A	Complete the General Information form embedded in the SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA) application system. Specific instructions for this form are embedded in the SMA application.
Applicant Biosketch	5 pages	Predoctoral Fellowship biosketch sample Postdoctoral Fellowship biosketch sample Fellowship Biosketch (blank format page, Word)
Applicant Other Support	N/A	Other Support sample Other Support (blank format page, Word)
Project Narrative	3 sentences	Narrative (NIH Instructions) Communicate the public health relevance of the proposed translational research project.
Project Summary/Abstract	30 lines of text	Project Summary/Abstract (NIH Instructions) Applicant's career goals and research plans.
Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential	3 pages	<p>A. Personal and Professional Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant should describe the goals for the proposed research training plan and the long-term goals for a career in the translational science workforce. Candidates should describe their motivation for pursuing a career in TS. Address how and why the TST Program is important and will facilitate the applicant's research career. <p>B. Fellowship Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section provides information regarding the educational, scientific, and professional experiences that prepare the candidate for the proposed research training plan. The applicant should address 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.

Application Component	Length Limit	Link to Form or Specific Instructions
		<p>C. Candidate's Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Address two to four current characteristics that are likely to contribute to achieving the research training. ▪ Address two to four specific areas of development during the fellowship to attain the stated research training and career goals. <p>D. Scientific Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This section is intended to provide information about the candidate's potential to think about and express ideas within a scientific field. Candidates should explain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.
Training Activities and Timeline	3 pages	<p>Describe by year, the planned activities (coursework, professional development, research training project, mentoring, etc.) during the proposed award.</p> <p>*Please note that the program is 2 years long, and the training plan should be filled out accordingly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how the training activities will develop the areas defined in the self-assessment section and help to meet the fellowship goals. 2. Provide specific examples of how the proposed research training will facilitate the transition to the next career stage. 3. Describe why the sponsor(s), collaborators, and research training environment are appropriate for the proposed research training plan.
Research Training Project Specific Aims	1 page	<p>State concisely the broader goals of the proposed research training project (for example, to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology). List succinctly the specific objectives or aims of the research training project to be completed by the candidate during the funding period. Summarize the expected outcome(s). Include the potential impact that the results of the proposed research training project will have on the research field(s) involved. <i>(e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field or develop new technology).</i></p>

Application Component	Length Limit	Link to Form or Specific Instructions
Research Training Project Strategy	6 pages	<p>The Research Training Project should include the following:</p> <p>A. Scientific Foundation and Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide the context for the proposed research training project. Include information on published and unpublished findings serving as the scientific foundation for the proposed research training project. Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project. ▪ Describe the rationale for the research training project, including unaddressed areas for research and why this area of research is interesting and important. ▪ Describe how achieving the proposed research training project goals will advance biomedical research in the candidate's chosen field. <p>B. Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. ▪ For trials that randomize groups or deliver interventions to groups, describe how your methods for analysis and sample size are appropriate for your plans for participant assignment and intervention delivery. These methods can include a group- or cluster-randomized trial or an individually randomized group-treatment trial. ▪ Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims. ▪ If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work. ▪ Explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans. For example, strong justification from the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant considerations, must be provided for applications proposing to study only one sex. ▪ Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. ▪ If research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs) is proposed, but an approved cell line from the NIH hESC Registry cannot be chosen, provide a strong justification for why an appropriate cell line cannot be chosen from the registry at this time. ▪ If you are proposing to gain clinical trial research experience, briefly describe your role on the clinical trial.

Application Component	Length Limit	Link to Form or Specific Instructions
Cited Literature	N/A	
Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research	1 page	<p>Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research should promote the aims of scientific inquiry, foster a research environment that enables scientists to work together toward common goals. Areas to be addressed are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Format of Instruction 2. Frequency and Timing 3. Subject Matter 4. NOT-OD-22-055
Sponsor(s) Commitment	6 pages	<p>The Statement should address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Mentoring Approach and Candidate Mentoring Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Research Supervising Professor/Mentor's previous experience as a mentor including a description of the nature and extent of supervision experience with pre-doctoral and/or postdoctoral trainees. ▪ Mentors should indicate if they have participated or completed mentoring training (8 hours), and when. If mentors have not completed mentoring training, they must declare willingness to participate in mentoring training. B. Prior Commitment to Training and Mentoring C. Commitment to the Candidate's Research Training Plan, and Translational Science Aspects of the Plan D. Research Training Environment E. Candidate's Potential for a Career in Multidisciplinary Translational Research
Letters of Recommendation (LOR)	2 required	<p>Contact Information of Recommenders * Specific instructions for LOR's below</p>
Letters from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants	6 pages	Optional
Mentor/Co-Mentor Biosketch (Your mentor/co-mentor should have a current version of this document)	5 pages	Biosketch (blank format page, Word)
Mentor/Co-Mentor Other Support (Your mentor/co-mentor should have a current version of this document)	N/A	Other Support (blank format page, Word)

Application Component	Length Limit	Link to Form or Specific Instructions
Mentor/Co-Mentor Table 5A, 5B (<i>Depending on your mentor's training record, they may or may not have these Tables currently on file</i>)	N/A	Table 5A (blank format page, Word) Table 5B (blank format page, Word)
Mentor/Co-Mentor Table 8A, 8C (<i>Depending on your mentor's training record, they may or may not have these Tables currently on file</i>)	N/A	Table 8A (blank format page, Word) Table 8C (blank format page, Word)

* **Letters of Recommendation:** The application requires two additional letters from people other than the mentor(s). The letters of recommendation should address, at a minimum, their relationship to the applicant (the position on which they base their knowledge of the applicant) and the applicant's background and potential for a career as an investigator, both in the selected specialty field and in Translational Science. At least one of these letters must be from a UTHSA faculty member. Letters of recommendation should be on letterhead, signed by the recommender, and must be submitted electronically. The letter should address the TST Review Committee or the TST Program Directors (listed above).

All letters of reference must be submitted by the application due date and through the online portal.