

**F31 Grants – rules as of 11/29/17**

- F31 program announcements for standard and URM applications are different - see here: <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships/F31#>
- From Jan 2018 Use FORMS E !!!!
- Biosketch for F31 Trainee is different from the standard faculty form. See here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>
- Reference letters now have an additional instruction and submission process. – see here. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/submission-process/reference-letters.htm>
- Page limits etc from NIH site as of this date:

Section of Application	Page Limits * (if different from FOA, FOA supersedes)
<b>Project Summary/Abstract</b>	30 lines of text
<b>Project Narrative</b>	Three sentences
<b>Introduction to Resubmission or Revision Application</b> (when applicable)	1
<b>Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training</b>	6
<b>Specific Aims</b>	1
<b>Research Strategy</b>	6
<b>Respective Contributions</b>	1
<b>Selection of Sponsor and Institution</b>	1
<b>Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research</b>	1
<b>Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements</b>	6
<b>Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants</b>	6
<b>Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training</b>	2
Note: This page limit includes the Additional Educational Information required for F30 and F31 applications.	
<b>Applications for Concurrent Support</b> (when applicable)	1
<b>Biographical Sketch</b>	5

Note: This page limit *includes* the Additional Educational Information required for F30 and F31 applications.

**QUESTION:** How many pages are research and how many training? All are equally important!

## **1. Review Criteria**

Only the review criteria described below will be considered in the review process. As part of the NIH mission ([https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/url\\_redirect.htm?id=11149](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/url_redirect.htm?id=11149)), all applications submitted to the NIH in support of biomedical and behavioral research are evaluated for scientific and technical merit through the NIH peer review system.

For this particular announcement, note the following:

A fellowship application has a research project that is integrated with the training plan. The review will emphasize the applicant's potential for an independent, scientific research career, the applicant's need for the proposed training, and the degree to which the research project and training plan, the sponsor(s), and the environment will satisfy those needs.

### **Overall Impact/Merit**

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the applicant's potential for, and commitment to, a productive independent scientific research career in a health-related field, in consideration of the scored and additional review criteria.

### **Scored Review Criteria**

Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below in the determination of scientific merit, and give a separate score for each. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.

#### **Fellowship Applicant**

Are the applicant's academic record and research experience of high quality?

Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher? Does the applicant demonstrate commitment to a research career in the future?

#### **Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants**

Are the sponsor(s)' research qualifications (including recent publications) and track record of mentoring individuals at a similar stage appropriate for the needs of the applicant?

Is there evidence of a match between the research and clinical interests (if applicable) of the applicant and the sponsor(s)? Do(es) the sponsor(s) demonstrate an understanding of the applicant's training needs as well as the ability and commitment to assist in meeting these needs?

Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support the applicant's proposed research project and training for the duration of the research component of the fellowship?

If a team of sponsors is proposed, is the team structure well justified for the mentored training plan, and are the roles of the individual members appropriate and clearly defined?

Are the qualifications of any collaborator(s) and/or consultant(s), including their complementary expertise and previous experience in fostering the training of fellows, appropriate for the proposed project?

#### **Research Training Plan**

Is the proposed research project of high scientific quality, and is it well integrated with the proposed research training plan?

Based on the sponsor's description of his/her active research program, is the applicant's proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the sponsor's funded research for the applicant's career stage? Is the research project consistent with the applicant's stage of research development?

Is the proposed time frame feasible to accomplish the proposed training?

### **Training Potential**

Are the proposed research project and training plan likely to provide the applicant with the requisite individualized and mentored experiences in order to obtain appropriate skills for a research career?

Does the training plan take advantage of the applicant's strengths and address gaps in needed skills? Does the training plan document a clear need for, and value of, the proposed training?

Does the proposed training have the potential to serve as a sound foundation that will clearly enhance the applicant's ability to develop into a productive researcher?

### **Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training**

Are the research facilities, resources (e.g., equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities (e.g. seminars, workshops, professional development opportunities) adequate and appropriate?

Is the institutional environment for the applicant's scientific development of high quality?

Is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering the applicant's mentored training.

### **Added Comments by Ian Bird:**

#### **So - from this what do you need to include in your F31 text?**

**Project Summary/Abstract** – Describe research BUT end by saying how research AND A CUSTOM TRAINING PLAN will lead to a productive and successful career. Its not just the project.

**Project Narrative** – Public statement – emphasize contributing to workforce in an important reserach area.

**Introduction to Resubmission or Revision Application** (when applicable). Only in resubmission and respond to criticisms

**Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training** Keep it relevant – this is not your life story it is your RELEVANT life story: Where are you from and where will you end up. Keep this part at the most 1-2 pages. The rest is used for what further scientific expertise AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING will you need. If you can drop the names of the sponsors and mentors here do so, but only MENTION them. The focus here is to outline what you need so the reviewer can see it is satisfied by the research plan and Sponsors training plan.

Be sure to include your training programs activities such as responsible conduct, grant writing, paper writing etc as well as relevant course (stats, big data analysis, animal handling etc). Included regular meetings with your Sponsor and Co-Sponsors and THESIS COMMITTEE! Include Mentee Training through your program or CIMER. Include plans to attend conferences and submit posters and then papers on the proposed work. Summarize in a table of activities by

year. Organize columns with checkmarks as research, professional skill, responsible conduct. Be EFFICIENT. One of the biggest mistakes is to propose far too many activities leaving no research time. I advise no more than 25% time per week in training and workshops.

**Specific Aims** Same as abstract- majority can be on research but end with a short paragraph about how this COMBINED WITH TRAINING PLAN will allow you to reach your career goals and contribute to society/the workforce.

**Research Strategy** This is similar to what you would prepare for an R03 BUT always mention where you can that techniques or training that are new are outlined also in the Training Plan and r Sponsors letter or publications (See Training Plan or See sponsors letter or Using Course xxx in Training Plan)

**Respective Contributions** This explains the roles of each person in the F31 proposal.

**Selection of Sponsor and Institution** Why did you choose this advisor and why did you choose this program ANDUNIVERSITY. Hint- refer to the things you will use in Training as a strengths – CIMER, your training program, equipment and reosurces, writing workshops etc.

**Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research** – Ask your program for a statement on how they ensure trainees meet RCR requirements. Describe here not only RCR course you will participate in, but additional training in Biosafety, Animal use, Human subjects, Ethics workshops and meetings on campus. See Graduate school and ICTR websites for listings.

*At this point the trainee sections end. We now move to the Sponsors and these statements must match.*

**Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements** Not to be confused with reference letters. Sponsors and CoSponsors are combined in one section.

A good way to start this is the Main advisor/Sponsor should ask for 2 pages of required text from each other CoSponsor and then combine and smooth the document to read well and match the other grant sections by Trainee. FOCUS IS ON SUITABILITY TO CREATE A TRAINING ENVIRONMENT, not achievements of Sponsor. Mention achievements specifically with respect to where it makes you qualified to train and train well. I advise you to SIGN at the end in a graphic as you would a letter. It shows sincerity that you will do so.

The focus should get as quickly as possible on your training plan and describe not just what, but why..Say the specific role each Sponsor plays. How will each activity and your meetings with the applicant make them a better more rounded Postdoc or beyond? What you mention as your shared plan should *match the Trainees statements above*. Include attendance of NATIONAL MEETINGS and WRITING Plans. Say you participate in RCR courses (NIH expects it) and lead by example.

**Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants** The same as for any grants- you are willing and able to take on the stated role.

**Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training** Summarize how the institution supports trainees- available courses, money to travel, centers such as CIMER, Postdoc office that you can access for career guidance. DiscoverPD portal etc. These are all investments by UW Madison. Also department and institutional support for Programs to run.