KL2 Junior Faculty Mentored Research Award Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

How is the KL2 Program funded?

The NIH KL2 Mentored Clinical Research Scholars Program is funded through NCATS, as part of the Clinical and Translational Science Award. The UC San Diego KL2 Awards are administered by the Clinical and Translational Research Institute.

How many funded positions will there be each year?

There are a total of 8 NIH-funded 3-year KL2 positions. The number of positions available each year varies, depending on the number of exiting scholars.

Eligibility

Do I need to be a US Citizen or have permanent residence in the US to apply?

You are welcome to apply, but if your project is selected for funding at the time of award (April/May) and there is no residency secured we cannot make the offer (i.e., won’t wait for the citizenship). US Citizenship is an NIH requirement for this K award. NIH will accept other legal verification of admission for permanent residence. See below for NIH guidelines on citizenship:

Citizenship

All eligible awardees/applicants must be citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States, or have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence and have in their possession an Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151 or I-551) or other legal verification of admission for permanent residence. Non-citizen nationals are persons born in lands that are not States but are under U.S. sovereignty, jurisdiction, or administration (e.g., American Samoa). Individuals on visas are not eligible.

Do I need to have a faculty appointment for the KL2 award?

Yes. Assistant Professors and Assistant Research Scientists are eligible for the KL2 award. Post-docs and Project Scientists may also apply, but special provisions must be satisfied. They must have departmental approval for faculty appointment at time of initiation of funding. The CTRI will verify that a candidate’s file has been approved by the department and is in process with CAP before initiating KL2 funding. In addition, specific language is required in your Chair’s Letter affirming that your department is working toward approving your faculty appointment (please see below).
Tip: include a letter from your Division/Dept chair stating that there would be a promotion to assistant professor if the project is funded. If your application is selected, we (the KL2 program) then put pressure on the dept to act on that promise in an expedited way.

How long am I eligible for a KL2 after completing my post-doc/medical fellowship?

Only candidates within 5 years after completing their post-doc, medical fellowship, or equivalent, are eligible to apply for a KL2.

Do I need to have an MD/be a clinician for the KL2 award?

No. PhDs and non-clinicians are also eligible.

Do I need to have an approved IRB/IACUC protocol to apply?

No, you will not need an approved protocol to apply. However, once you submit your application we will send you a list of documents required for funding should you be selected.

Are surgeons and other procedurally-oriented applicants eligible?

Yes, surgeons and other procedurally-oriented applicants are eligible for a KL2. In addition, certain procedurally-oriented subspecialties may be eligible for a modified award with only 50% required research time. If you think this may apply to you, contact actri-education@health.ucsd.edu for more details before applying.

If I have specialized training (such as in video EEG procedures) would this qualify to allow for me to be eligible for the 50% research effort?

NIH is unlikely to consider that procedure intensive – they are usually referring to surgical specialties. We have only ever had the 50% reduction approved for surgeons.

Am I eligible if I have already received another award or research funding?

Please see the table below to determine eligibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Award</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Eligibility for KL2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentored K or equivalent (ie. K12)</td>
<td>Awardee</td>
<td>Not eligible, with exceptions. Please contact KL2 representatives for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R01</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P01, P50, P50, U54</td>
<td>Subproject PI</td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are early faculty applications accepted to the ACTRI KL2 that focus on global health research?

Yes, we welcome applications from all fields, including global health research.

Application

Do I need to apply through the Research Affairs/HSSPPO office?

No, you will apply directly to ACTRI via RedCap
https://forms.monday.com/forms/c94f9ba89b617a2adaf0e3c04e64e86a?r=use1 You will not need to submit RES or other internal forms required by HSSPPO.

What are reviewers looking for in this application?

As this is a Career Development Award, reviewers expect training and mentoring plans that are as well delineated as the research plans. Reviewers are also looking for strong departmental support, thoughtful and engaged mentor participation, and a demonstrated mentor track record of successful fostering of career development among former mentees.

What should be included in the abstract?

Write your abstract as you would for an NIH independent K award with both a summary of your research scientific plan and training plan.

What should be included in the “Training and Mentoring Plan”?

This plan should delineate a specific plan for mentoring (including frequency of meetings, roles of mentors, etc.). The Education Committee is particularly interested in your mentor’s commitment to your career development and achievement of independent researcher status within three years. Specific mentoring plans that demonstrate this commitment will be favorably received.

In addition, KL2 awardees are expected to complete coursework for a CREST certificate, or show equivalency. Include specific planned CREST courses and a
timeline for completion. Specify how CREST courses will fit into your professional development.

**What should be included in the “Mentor’s Support Letter”?**

The following items are REQUIRED in the Mentor’s Support Letter:

- Primary Mentor’s plans for supporting your career development, including plans for you to achieve independence as a researcher within 3 years
- Primary Mentor’s BioSketch and Other Support documents
- List of the Mentor’s trainees in the last 10 years, with their current academic titles and locations
- Letters from Co-Mentors, if applicable

In addition, the following items are recommended:

- Specific resources, such as laboratory space, available to you
- Proposed frequency of meetings

**What should be included in the “Chair’s Letter”?**

The following statements are REQUIRED in the Chair’s Letter:

- Applicant will dedicate at least 75% of effort to research
- All departmental obligations (night call, inpatient or outpatient clinical coverage, teaching obligations) will not add up to more than 25% of effort
- Such activities need approval of CTSA education committee

If you do not yet have a faculty appointment, the Chair’s letter should also include:

- Specific position proposed
- Current status of proposal of your file for faculty appointment
- Projected timeline for appointment

*Letters that do not specify the status of the appointment and its timeline will not be sent for review.*

I see that in the first section of the table (“First three items…”), I need to list references. How do I list references, and still stay within the 12-page limit?

Please only include the most relevant references.

**What if I have multiple mentors, with different mentoring plans?**

You may include more than 1 mentor’s support letter in the 6-page “Mentor’s Support Letter” section. Please be sure to include your primary mentor’s letter first in this section.
Does the KL2 award provide funding for research-related expenses?
The KL2 is a Career Development Award, providing funding in the form of salary support. On a case-by-case basis, we may be able to assist with some research related expenses for awarded KL2 scholars, but funding levels are typically minimal and never guaranteed.

Do I need to provide a budget justification?
No. As the KL2 funds salary support and not research, a budget justification is not required.

Award

May I defer acceptance of this award?
No, we do not accept deferrals.

If I am awarded a KL2, may I also apply for additional mentored K awards (K08 or K23), or research grants (R01, R03, R15, industry-funded, etc.)?
Yes. Appointed KL2 scholars should, apply for K08, K01 or K23 support during their second and third award years. If they are successful, they move from the KL2 to the new award. Scholars cannot simultaneously hold two career development awards from federal or other sources. The total combined K award time, including the KL2, cannot exceed 5-7 years depending on the guidelines of individual institutes within the NIH.

KL2 scholars may also apply for R-series research support. Scholars may not receive salary support from any other US Public Health Service sources (NIH, CDC, FDA, etc.) If awarded an R-01 or equivalent, as PI, they must move from the KL2 to the new award.

KL2 scholars may receive additional research funding (such as industry funding or foundation awards) concurrently with their KL2, but the effort requirement of the KL2 still applies and additional funding must be disclosed to CTRI.

Are KL2 Scholars eligible to apply for the NIH Loan Repayment Program?
Yes, many KL2 scholars have successfully applied for this program. More information is available at www.lrp.nih.gov.

What expectations are there of KL2 scholars and their mentors?
As described in the application, scholars are expected to complete CREST courses or show equivalency, complete all required reporting, cite the grant and adhere to NIH public access policy for all publications, and engage their mentors
and KL2 leadership to ensure career progress. Scholars are also expected to submit K23 and/or R01 applications, or their equivalents, by the end of their third year.

KL2 mentors are expected to maintain a consistent and constructive role in the KL2 scholars’ career development, stay regularly engaged with KL2 leadership, complete all required reporting, and seek assistance as needed.

I have other questions.

Please email actri-education@health.ucsd.edu