



GRADUATE STUDIES

Instructions for Preparing and Submitting the UNMC Assistantship/Fellowship Application

Eligibility Requirements:

Only full-time Ph.D. students at UNMC who submitted a Letter of Intent, Project Funding Affirmation and Abstract on or before February 1st are eligible to apply. The applicant's supervisor (must be NU employee) and supervisory committee must have been approved in *Seguidor* prior to the March 1st application deadline. The applicant must have completed at least 12 months as a full-time, degree-seeking Ph.D. student by the application deadline. (M.D./Ph.D. students must have been enrolled as a full-time Ph.D. student for at least one complete semester, excluding summer terms, at the time of application.) Applicants must be in good academic standing with a GPA of 3.0 or better and not on remediation. If funded, this must be maintained for the duration of the award. Funding through this mechanism will be awarded for a period of 1 year, or until the student completes their fifth year of study (whichever comes first).

Applications for Research Assistantships/Fellowships must contain one (1) composite electronic (pdf) copy of Items A-G:

A. **UNMC Assistantship/Fellowship Application Form** (including the Preliminary Data Disclosure)

B. **Research Plan** (written by the student, not the mentor), prepared using Arial 11 font, with margins of at least 0.5 inch on each side, and with lines single-spaced. The research plan information is similar to that required by the [NIH F31](#) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship. Although the funding period is for 1 year, applicants should feel free to propose work that extends beyond that year, but should limit the work to that which can be reasonably completed during their PhD. The Research Plan should be arranged in the following numbered sections:

1. **Specific Aims** (maximum 1 page). A title for the application should be included at the top of the Specific Aims page. The Specific Aims page should give a brief background, state the central hypothesis and/or the purpose of the proposed research, and list the specific aims of the project.
2. **Research Strategy** (maximum 6 pages). The Research Strategy section should start on a new page and include two subsections: Significance and Approach. Preliminary data can be included within either the Significance or Approach subsection. The Significance subsection should provide any additional background information that is necessary for the reviewers to understand the project and appreciate its importance. The Approach subsection should describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish each specific aim of the project. The Approach subsection should include how the data will be collected, analyzed (including statistics), and interpreted, as well as potential difficulties and limitations in the procedures and alternative approaches that could be employed to achieve each aim.
3. **Literature Cited** (no page limit). A listing of all references cited in the body of the proposal. The references should include author(s), year, title, journal name, volume and inclusive page numbers.
4. **Respective Contributions** (maximum 1 page). This section should define who wrote the application and describe the collaborative process between the applicant and the Advisor/mentor in the development, review, and editing of the proposal.
5. **Applications for Concurrent Support** (maximum 1 page). This section should indicate the type, dates, sources, and amount of any funding for which the fellowship applicant has applied or for which he/she plans to apply. This is especially important if the proposed project cannot be completed in the 1-year funding period.
6. **Training Plan** (maximum 2 pages). This section should be collaboratively developed by both the student and Advisor/mentor and include the following elements:
 - **Activities Planned Under This Award.** Describe how the proposed aims and related activities will provide the training and experience necessary for success. Provide concrete details and timing of any training activities, opportunities, and/or unique resources that will be utilized.
 - **Career Goals and Professional Development.** Describe the applicant's overall career goals and any plans for professional development. Explain how the proposed research training synergizes with the professional development activities to achieve the career goals.
 - **Responsible Conduct of Research.** State whether the UNMC Responsible Conduct in Research Training Program has already been completed or an expected date of completion. Detail ongoing training in research ethics, responsibility, rigor, and reproducibility, including concrete plans and the specific role of the Advisor/mentor in the applicant's instruction in these areas.
7. **Optional Appendix** (maximum 10 pages). Only surveys, questionnaires, clinical protocols, and informed consent documents relevant to the application may be submitted.

C. **List of awards** received, as a Ph.D. student in the UNMC graduate program, from local, regional, or national organizations.

D. **List of research presentations.** List only those presentations made by the applicant as a Ph.D. student in the UNMC graduate program. Include the full list of authors, the title of the presentation, and the meeting at which the work was presented.

- E. **List of research publications** resulting from work performed as a Ph.D. student at UNMC. Provide complete citations, including the full list of authors and title of the paper. Do not include manuscripts “In preparation.” Categorize publications as full-length research manuscripts, abstracts, review articles, etc. Indicate which publications were peer-reviewed and indicate the status of any paper not yet published (i.e., submitted, in revision, in press, epub ahead of print, etc.).
- F. **List of professional development activities** (including leadership positions) as a Ph.D. student at UNMC.
- G. **Optional brief statement** (< 200 words) indicating any personal circumstances that should be considered when the application is reviewed.

Submission Instructions:

All application materials must be assembled into a **single pdf** (file-naming convention: LastName,FirstName_Application) for email submission to the UNMC Graduate Studies Office (unmcgraduatestudies@unmc.edu) **no later than 11:59 PM on March 1st**. The submitted pdf must include **only** the above-specified items (A-G). Letters of recommendation, resumes, cover letters, etc., will not be seen by the study sections. No changes to the application package will be accepted after the deadline.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to see that all of the above-listed application materials are correctly submitted. LATE, INCOMPLETE, OR IMPROPERLY PREPARED APPLICATIONS WILL **NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

Review Criteria and Score Components:

Scientific Potential, Productivity, and Preparedness of the applicant (Scored 1-9) – Evaluate the preparedness of the applicant to undertake the proposed training and their capacity to benefit from the fellowship. Evaluate the applicant’s accomplishments in the context of their stage of training. Evaluate the application’s scientific potential based on their current trajectory and whether they are the active drivers of their education/training.

Science and Scientific Resources (Scored 1-9) – Evaluate the breadth and depth of scientific understanding that the applicant conveys. Evaluate to what extent the applicant articulates the importance of their science and demonstrates an ability to study that problem in a rigorous scientific manner. Evaluate the quality of the proposed science and assess the depth of understanding demonstrated by the student regarding the scientific background, rigor, and feasibility of the approach. Evaluate the extent to which necessary technical, scientific, and clinical resources are specified and are realistically available to the applicant.

Training Plan (Scored 1-9) – Evaluate how well the proposed scientific project serves the applicant’s training goals. Evaluate how the proposed training plan matches that of the research aims and whether it will prepare the applicant for a successful career. Evaluate whether the applicant has clearly defined areas of needed growth and/or weakness. Evaluate whether the applicant articulates a concrete, coherent, and cohesive plan for interacting with the Advisor/Mentor(s). Evaluate and comment on what impact completion of the training plan will make in meeting the scientific development needs of the applicant and aid them in achieving their career goals.

When the review process has been completed, each applicant will be provided the following:

- The critique of his/her application written by the reviewers, including their suggested scores (scale of 1-9) for Productivity/Preparation, Research Proposal, and Training Plan.
- Total Percentile Score (35% Productivity/Preparation, 30% Research Proposal, 35% Training Plan)

Total Percentile Scores for the entire applicant pool are ranked and, barring unusual circumstances, funding will be awarded from the most meritorious score downward until the funds are exhausted. Unfortunately, we always get many more meritorious proposals than can be supported with available funds.

Submission of Extramural Predoctoral Fellowship Applications:

In addition to the UNMC Graduate Studies Assistantship/Fellowship program, students are encouraged to submit fellowship applications to the NIH or other granting agencies. In particular, any eligible student (US citizen or permanent resident) who receives UNMC Graduate Studies Assistantship/Fellowship support should apply to NIH for an F award. The UNMC Graduate Council has established several incentives for students who apply for extramural funding (as well as their mentors). Details can be found on the Graduate Studies website (<http://unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/funding-options/external-funding-opportunities/index.html>). In addition to these financial incentives, each student who successfully competes on a national or international level for a fellowship, grant or scholarship is eligible to be named a UNMC Graduate Student of Distinction (<http://unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/resource-center/graduate-studies-resources/awards-recognition/graduate-students-of-distinction/index.html>).