

**K-R Internal Junior Faculty Appointment Committee**  
**July 1, 2024**

**Overall Goals:** Encourage strategic development of K Awards and other mentored grant mechanisms to enhance development of departmental needs and strengths. Strategies to encourage such applications and the identification of departmental needs and strengths will take place in the Research Council, the Education Council, and the Department Cabinet, with input from other members of the Department and the Department Chair. The K-R Internal Junior Faculty Appointment Committee (called “K-R Committee”) will ensure that quality applicants are proposed for appropriate departmental appointments, and that competitive grant applications are submitted.

**Relevant Types of Grant Mechanisms:** Grants that require the awardee to have a faculty series appointment in the Department. NIH K Awards (K01, K08, K12, K23, K25, KL2), VA Career Development Awards (CDAs) and other mentored and junior faculty grant mechanisms if they are being used as the basis for a first UCSD faculty appointment (e.g., R00, R01, R21, large TRDRP grants).

**Applicants Not Reviewed by the K-R Committee:** Note that BBRF/NARSAD Young Investigator Grants, as well as NIH F32, T32 and K99 awards do not require a faculty appointment and are therefore not covered by this policy. K99s are not relevant because K99 applicants do not apply for faculty appointments until after at least their third year of funding, and the standard model is to apply for a faculty appointment at a different institution. If a K99 applicant is potentially interested in activating the R00 portion of the award in the UCSD Department of Psychiatry, this requires applying for a faculty appointment, meaning they would need to go through this vetting process at that time.

**Timeframe:** It is easy to underestimate how long the process can take given constraints on availability and scheduling. In addition to writing the grant proposal and completing the internal Psychiatry Grant Review process, the candidate meets with several faculty members and must fit into existing schedules for giving a job talk and being reviewed at a subsequent Senior Faculty Meeting. A good rule of thumb is to **begin the process at least 4-6 months before the date of the grant submission**). This timeframe includes the **departmental recommendation** that two experienced faculty members review the proposal and provide written feedback prior to submission.

For faculty appointments that are contingent on grant support, the appointment cannot go into effect until after the grant is funded and the appointment is approved by the appropriate university committees; this process takes months following receipt of the grant notice of award. To expedite this process, contact the Department of Psychiatry Academic Affairs as soon as there is a positive indication that the grant will be funded.

**Process for applicant approval for non-VA grants (including VMRF-funded grants):**

1. **4-6 months before submission: Candidate meets with K-R Committee Chair, who will:**
  - a. Explain the process for departmental vetting;
  - b. Ensure that potential candidates understand that they may or may not be approved as a faculty member;
  - c. Ensure that the primary mentor is a UCSD faculty member in good standing;
  - d. Ensure that the candidate has an adequate number of publications to make them a viable candidate at NIH or other agencies; and that they have a reasonably well developed training and research plan;

- e. Ensure that the candidate understands the timeline for making it through the K-R Committee process.
- f. If the Chair of the K-R Committee does not approve the applicant to proceed with the process, and the applicant and his/her mentor disagree, the applicant/mentor may appeal to other K-R Committee members.

**Before meeting with the Chair of the K-R Committee:**

The applicant should send preliminary Specific Aims Page and CV. It is helpful to include a preliminary Training Plan. The K-R Committee Chair will email the primary mentor a blank copy of the Primary Mentor Evaluation form. This form is a brief evaluation of the applicant, and should be filled out and emailed to the K-R Committee Chair. The K-R Committee Chair will distribute it to the other K-R Committee members.

2. **Four to six months before submission: Candidate initiates the Psychiatry Grant Review process** by sending their Specific Aims page to Dr. Elizabeth Twamley, who will schedule an initial Psychiatry Grant Review meeting to provide internal review and feedback regarding the proposed aims and training plan. Psychiatry Grant Review meetings are typically held the third Tuesday of the month from 8:30-9:30 am. The candidate will present 10-15 slides on their background, rationale for their project and training, proposed aims/hypotheses/methods, their training plan, and any specific questions they have for the group. The candidate's mentors and co-mentors are encouraged to attend. Participation in the Psychiatry Grant Review process is strongly recommended as the internal reviewers will simulate the grant review process.
3. **Four to six months before submission:** Candidate sets up a meeting with an additional faculty member from the K-R Committee (depending on candidate's preference and availability of faculty). The candidate may also set up meetings with Vice Chairs in the department. These meetings are an opportunity they are entitled to, but not obligated to pursue, and can also occur after the grant has been scored.
  - a. The most scientifically relevant Vice Chair, Research (Basic Science or Clinical);
  - b. The Vice Chair, Education;
  - c. The Vice Chair, Academic Affairs (provide CV to help establish appointment type);
4. **Six or more weeks before submission: Candidate submits the Specific Aims, Research Plan, and Training plan for internal review.** As the second part of the Psychiatry Grant Review process, at least six weeks prior to their submission date, the candidate will send a draft of their Specific Aims, Research Plan, and Training Plan documents to Dr. Twamley. The candidate will receive written feedback on these documents from two senior faculty members who are not involved with the application. **This is strongly recommended and should follow this schedule so that faculty members have ample time to review the documents.** Feedback will be provided within 10-14 days so the candidate will have time to incorporate feedback prior to submission.
5. **Six or more weeks before submission: Candidate Job Talk.** If the K-R Committee approves, the candidate will give a job talk. All K-R Committee members and all faculty members are encouraged to attend. **The Primary Mentor is responsible for arranging the seminar as follows:**
  - a. Inform date, time, and location to the Department Chair's office (they can provide assistance regarding room availability and scheduling, the Markou Seminar Series is a common time slot used, Mondays at 4 PM);
  - b. Identify 5-6 faculty members who will attend the seminar and can provide input for the Senior Faculty meeting (attendance via video conference is fine);
  - c. Confirm lecture title;
  - d. Provide all relevant information about the seminar to the Department Chair's office. They will send an email announcement to all Department members and post a flyer.

6. **Following the job talk:** All K-R Committee members who met with the candidate provide brief input to the K-R Committee Chair. All other faculty who wish to express their views about the candidate after the seminar may send an email to the K-R Committee Chair and the Department Chair.
7. **Six or more weeks before submission: Mentor sends a draft letter of Departmental support** to the Department Chair. A draft template letter is available on the iShare.
8. **Four or more weeks before submission:** If the K-R Committee approves, the candidate will **meet with the Department Chair**, who will explain the Departmental commitment and expectations for continuation of the appointment beyond the K-R award funding. Please contact Liz Lam to schedule the meeting (elam@health.ucsd.edu).
9. **Four or more weeks before submission:** The candidate is asked to **apply to the Open Faculty advertisement online**, based on the recommended faculty appointment type. Joanna Horning ([jhorning@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:jhorning@health.ucsd.edu)) can provide a link to the relevant advertisement. Candidates are most typically considered for appointment as an Assistant Adjunct Professor. The Adjunct Professor series requires at least 3% effort be devoted to teaching. This effort cannot be funded through a K Award and is generally funded by the mentor. The fund source for the 3% effort must be a non-federal fund source. If the mentor is not able to cover the 3% salary, the Department will cover that cost. A candidate may also be considered for the Research Scientist series if they do not want to have any requirements for teaching. Applicants are reviewed monthly by the Open Faculty Committee. The appointment process includes an interview with members of the Open Faculty Committee (these individuals are also K-R Committee members).
10. **The month the submission is due:** The recommendation for approval/denial to move forward with the grant proposal, the academic file, and the recommended departmental title will then be presented for a vote at the Senior Faculty Meeting (held the first Tuesday of the month).
11. **One or more weeks before submission:** The Chair provides the letter of support to be included with the application, provided that steps 1-10 have been completed. A draft template of the Chair's letter of support is available on the Department i-share.

**Process for applicant approval for VA grants:**

1. For individuals based at the VA who are applying for a CDA, submission of the grant does not require a letter of support from the UCSD Department Chair. However, a UCSD faculty appointment must be initiated before the grant is funded. This is because, consistent with the VA-UCSD affiliation agreement, MDs and PhDs performing research or clinical work at the VA must hold academic appointments in the relevant UCSD Department. Once an applicant receives a favorable score on a VA CDA, the UCSD appointment process should be started.
2. To initiate the UCSD faculty appointment, steps 3c, 5, 8, 9, and 10 are required. Steps 1 and 3 and b are optional.
3. Steps 2 and 4 (Psychiatry Grant Review process) are strongly recommended.
4. The Candidate Job Talk (step 5) may be held at the VA, VMRF, or UCSD.
5. Timing: Steps 3 (a-c) and 5 may be completed once the CDA is submitted but may also wait until after receiving a fundable score. The entire timeline for faculty appointment, including steps 9 and 10 (applying to the Open Faculty Recruitment advertisement) can take 6-9 months to complete.
6. For CDA applicants, step 9 should be done once there is indication that the grant is likely to be funded. Candidates with VA grants are most typically considered for appointment as an Assistant Adjunct Professor, but the mentor does not need to cover 3% of the candidate's salary as with NIH funding. The candidate can elect to apply for either a stepped (salaried) Assistant Adjunct Professor appointment or a non-stepped (non-salaried) Assistant Adjunct Professor appointment. The former allows the candidate to also apply for grants through UCSD while the latter does not. The latter allows the candidate to have a private practice while the former does not.

## Other Useful Resources

1. **Psychiatry Grant Writing Seminar:** A 2-day comprehensive proposal development workshop led by Dr. Martin Paulus is held 1-2 times per year, designed to develop a competitive specific aims page from a grant idea. This workshop focuses on developing ideas for grants into potentially competitive projects that can be developed into proposals for NIH. The emphasis is on refining initial grant ideas within the specific framework (people and environment) of the young investigator. The basic notion is that impact and innovation are the most important aspects of a proposal and often do not receive sufficient scrutiny by the applicant. The intent is that by engaging in intense peer-based activities (idea review, mock study sections, discussions) the participant will receive helpful feedback that will make the application more competitive. Space is limited to 8-12 Department of Psychiatry participants. Contact the Psychiatry Education Training Council for upcoming dates.
2. **K Writing Group:** This is a medical school-wide group for postdocs and junior faculty. Feedback is provided on all aspects of the K application process and on all components of the application from biosketches to scientific sections. This group is led by Dr. Harvey Checkoway from the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health.
3. **Implementation Science Seminar:** In addition to presentations from national and internationally known experts in implementation science, this seminar directed by Dr. Gregory Aarons is intended to provide a forum for grant development. Several K and R grant ideas have been workshopped at this seminar and have gone on to be NIH-funded projects. Interested candidates can present and receive feedback on grant ideas.
4. **K Award Budget:** NIH K Awards come with established effort requirements that differ based on the type of K and the institute. K Awards often come with a salary limit as well. The majority of NIH K Award applicants are proposed for appointment as an Assistant Adjunct Professor, Step 2 or Step 3, with an Academic Program Unit (APU Scale) of either 1 (preclinical researchers and clinician educators without patient contact) or 3 (externally funded project). It may be advantageous to have a lower APU and higher percent effort if there is a salary limit to your K Award. K Award applicants should work with their assigned fund manager and mentors to determine the percent effort and salary that can be requested on their K Award application budget. This is a link to the most recent UCSD salary scales (10/1/2024): <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/2024-25/oct-2024-scales/t5-summary.pdf>
5. **Potential Salary Increase:** It is worth knowing that the Just-In-Time (JIT) process may provide a unique opportunity to increase the salary covered by the grant. Although it might not be true for all NIH institutes, some of them (e.g., NIAAA and NIDA) are willing to increase the total award of the grant above what was originally requested, at the time the JIT is submitted (typically sometime after the grant received a good score – check with your Project Officer (PO) to see if they suggest a JIT since in some cases there will be an automatic JIT request that does not necessarily indicate that the grant is likely to be paid). The budget in the JIT can reflect the salary the person will be paid as of the start date of their grant. Often times, this is higher than the salary they were being paid when they applied (e.g., applicant was a postdoc but will now be an Assistant Professor). This change can increase the total amount requested and does not need to come from re-budgeting (e.g., from money originally requested for supplies). This is unusual, because the NIH will not typically consider increasing the total award at the JIT phase. K Award applicants should carefully explore this possibility with their PO and fund manager. In some cases, it can increase the salary of the awardee by 10-25%.

## Appendix A: Relevant Contacts (7/1/2024)

### Chair:

Z. Jeffrey Daskalakis, M.D., Ph.D. ([zdaskalakis@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:zdaskalakis@health.ucsd.edu))  
Contact Liz Lam ([elam@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:elam@health.ucsd.edu)) for meeting

### Vice Chairs, Research:

Vice Chair, Basic Science Research: Abraham Palmer, Ph.D. ([aapalmer@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:aapalmer@health.ucsd.edu))  
Vice Chair Clinical Research: Eric Granholm, Ph.D. ([egranholm@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:egranholm@health.ucsd.edu))

### Vice Chair, Education:

Vice Chair, Education: Gregory Light, Ph.D. ([glight@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:glight@health.ucsd.edu))

### Vice Chair for Academic Affairs:

Vice Chair, Academic Affairs: Victoria Risbrough, Ph.D. ([vriskbrough@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:vriskbrough@health.ucsd.edu))  
Contact Joanna Horning ([jhorning@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:jhorning@health.ucsd.edu)) for the Open Faculty Online Advertisement link

### K-R Committee Chair:

Tamar Gollan, Ph.D. ([tgollan@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:tgollan@health.ucsd.edu))

### K-R Committee Members:

Greg Aarons, Ph.D. ([gaarons@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:gaarons@health.ucsd.edu))  
Katherine Bangen, Ph.D. ([kbangen@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:kbangen@health.ucsd.edu))  
Raeanne Moore, Ph.D. ([r6moore@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:r6moore@health.ucsd.edu))

### Psychiatry Grant Review Meeting:

Elizabeth Twamley, Ph.D. ([etwamley@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:etwamley@health.ucsd.edu)) runs and organizes this meeting

### Psychiatry Grant Writing Seminar:

Led by Martin Paulus, M.D., Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry and Scientific Director of Laureate Institute for Brain Research  
Contact Jennifer Hickey-Hinojosa ([jhickey@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:jhickey@health.ucsd.edu)) to sign up

### K Writing Group:

Led by Harvey Checkoway, Ph.D. ([hcheckoway@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:hcheckoway@health.ucsd.edu))  
Contact Alan Larson ([a7larson@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:a7larson@health.ucsd.edu)) to sign up

### Implementation Science Seminar:

Directed by Gregory Aarons, Ph.D. ([gaarons@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:gaarons@health.ucsd.edu))  
Contact Joella Phillips ([jjphillips@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:jjphillips@health.ucsd.edu)) to sign up