

K-R Internal Junior Faculty Appointment Committee
November 21, 2024

Overall Goals: Encourage strategic development of K Awards and other mentored grant mechanisms to enhance advancement of department mission and complement department 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 prior to the date of the grant submission.**

UCSD, VMRF, VA: The process for applicant approval for UCSD administered (i.e. K or R) grant submissions (including VMRF-funded grants) will include more steps than the process for applicant approval for VA administered (i.e. CDA) grants. Refer to below summary table for Required/ Optional steps depending on whether grants are administered by UCSD, VMRF or VA.

Candidates with VA CDA grant proposals are most typically considered for appointment as an Assistant Adjunct Professor. 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. 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 receive pay from UCSD and 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.

Refer to Summary Table on page 6 for Steps that are required/ optional/ not required depending on where grant is administered (UCSD, VMRF, VA)

4-6 months prior to target grant submission date

1. **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 or secondary mentor is a UCSD Department of Psychiatry faculty member in good standing; (unless exception granted by Chair of the Department of Psychiatry).
 - 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.

REQUIRED: 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 primary mentor will complete the Mentor Evaluation form which includes a brief evaluation of the applicant, and emailed to the K-R Committee Chair and the Academic Affairs Admin.

REQUIRED: After meeting with the Chair of the K-R Committee:

The applicant sets up a meeting with an additional member from the K-R Committee (depending on candidate's preference and availability of faculty)

2. **Candidate initiates the Psychiatry Grant Review process** by sending their Specific Aims page to Psychiatry Grant Review Meeting Coordinator, 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. **Candidate initiates proposal starter with Department of Psychiatry Sponsored Research Administration** by completing the Pre-Award Research Proposal Starter Intake Form located https://ucsd.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1YrfUZIAIQy8cU6

4. **Candidate applies to the Open Faculty APOL advertisement online** The Academic Affairs Admin can provide a link to the relevant advertisement. Candidates are most typically considered for appointment as an Assistant Adjunct Professor. Applicants are reviewed monthly by the Open Faculty Committee. The appointment process may include an interview with a member of the Open Faculty Committee.
5. **Mentor sends candidate ECC form to Administrative Vice Chair and Academic Affairs Administrator.** This is a projection of proposed salary, funding sources, and space. The Academic Affairs Administrator will forward to both the Department of Psychiatry post-award Fund Manager and the Department of Psychiatry pre-award Fund Manager.

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>

For most K Award programs, the K Awardee must commit at the minimum 9 person months, equivalent to 75% full-time professional effort, directly to their research project and career development activities. Prior approval is required to reduce effort below the program minimum. *If 75% of the applicant's salary exceeds or is expected to exceed the institute-specific salary limit at the award start date, please consult with your post-award fund manager."*

Source policy:

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/html5/section_12/12.3.6_level_of_effort.htm

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 the cost for the duration of the K award. For candidates applying with a less than 100% appointment at UCSD (e.g. CDA candidates) the 3% is not required. A candidate may also be considered for the Research Scientist series if they do not want to have any requirements for teaching.

6. **Candidate sets up a meeting with:**
 - a. The Vice Chair for Academic Affairs **(required)** (provide CV beforehand).
 - b. The Vice Chair of Basic Science Research **(optional)**
 - c. The Vice Chair of Clinical Research **(optional)**
 - d. The Vice Chair of Education **(optional)**

2-3 months prior to target grant submission date

7. **Candidate continues with the Psychiatry Grant Review process.** As the second part of the Psychiatry Grant Review process, the candidate will send a draft of their Specific Aims, Research Plan, and Training Plan documents to the Psychiatry Grant Review Meeting Coordinator. 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.
8. **Candidate Job Talk.** All K-R Committee members and all faculty members are encouraged to attend. The Candidate Job Talk may be held at the VA, VMRF, or UCSD.
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.

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.
9. **The Open Faculty Committee reviews candidates** based on APOL Open Faculty application, job talk, input from the K-R Committee Chair, grant review process, and other steps described above. The committee will decide whether to recommend the candidate for further consideration for faculty appointment, and/or provide feedback for what the candidate can improve in the future.
10. **Mentor sends a draft letter of Departmental support** to the Vice Chair of Academic Affairs. An example letter and form may be obtained from Vice Chair of Academic Affairs.
11. **The candidate meets with the Department Chair**, (contact Chair Admin) who will explain the Departmental commitment and expectations for continuation of the appointment beyond the K-R award funding.

6-8 weeks prior to target grant submission date

12. **The candidate will be presented for a vote at the Senior Faculty Meeting** (held the first Tuesday of the month). The primary presenter will be the mentor and the secondary presenter will be a member from the K-R Committee. Vote results will be available the day of the meeting. If the Senior

Faculty Committee vote passes, the PI Exception should be immediately initiated with Department of Psychiatry sponsored projects.

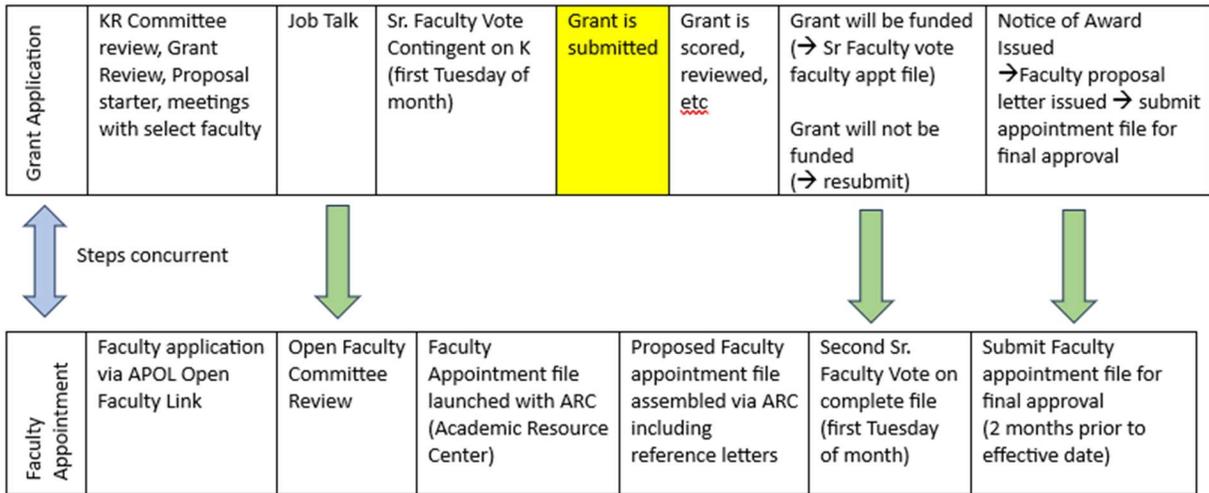
- 13. **The candidate will work with their sponsored projects research administrator to process PI exception.** Mentor should work closely with mentee to complete the PI Exception (PIE). The PIE must be reviewed and approved prior to grant submission.

2-3 weeks prior to target grant submission date

- 14. **The Chair provides the letter of support to be included with the application** (if required for the grant application), provided that the above steps have been completed.

After the grant is submitted

The timeline for faculty appointment generally takes 6-9 months to complete following Step 9 above, and 2-3 months following the Notice of Award. Most grant review cycles also typically take about 6-9 months. Both steps may be started concurrently as indicated in the below image. The steps in row one and row two can happen at varying paces with the goal of aligning the faculty start date with the grant start date as best as possible. For best chances of aligning faculty start date with grant start date it is important to stay in contact with Academic Affairs Admin and Research Administration Admin as grant updates are received, scored, resubmitted, etc.



Summary Table.

**may occur once grant is submitted or after receiving fundable score

4-6 months prior to target grant submission date			
Date	If UCSD or VMRF administered (e.g. K, R, TRDR)	If VA administered (e.g. CDA)	Refer to Corresponding Step on K-R Policy for additional details
	Required	Optional	1. Candidate sends Specific Aims and CV to K-R Committee Chair & meet to confirm eligibility
	Required	Optional	1. Primary Mentor sends Evaluation form to K-R Committee Chair & Academic Affairs Admin
	Required	Optional**	1. Candidate sets up a meeting with an additional member from the K-R Committee.
	Optional/ Highly Recommended	Optional/ Highly Recommended	2. Department of Psychiatry Grant Review
	Required	NA	3. Candidate initiates proposal starter with DOP sponsored research administration.
	Required	Required**	4. Candidate applies to the Open Faculty advertisement online.
	Required	NA	5. Mentor sends candidate ECC form to Academic Affairs Admin and Vice Chair of Academic Affairs
	Required	Required**	6. Candidate sets up meeting with Vice Chair of Academic Affairs and perhaps other Vice Chairs
2-3 months prior to target grant submission date			
	Highly Recommended	Highly Recommended	7. Department of Psychiatry Grant Review part 2
	Required	Required**	8. Candidate job talk. Primary Mentor arranges seminar and introduces candidate.
	Required	Required**	9. Open Faculty Committee reviews candidate
	Required	NA	10. Mentor sends a draft letter of Departmental support to Vice Chair for Academic Affairs
	Required	Required**	11. Candidate meets with the Department Chair.
6-8 weeks prior to target grant submission date			
	Required	Required **	12. Candidate is presented for vote at the Senior Faculty Committee meeting
	Required	NA	13. Candidate works with mentor and sponsored projects to process PI exception
2-3 weeks prior to target grant submission date			
	If required for grant application	NA	14. The Department Chair provides the letter of support to be included with the grant application

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. **Potential Salary Increase during JIT phase:** It is worth noting 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). K Award applicants should carefully explore this possibility with their PO and fund manager during the Just-In-Time phase.

Current Contacts
(last updated 3/20/26)

Chair:

Z. Jeffrey Daskalakis, M.D., Ph.D. (zdaskalakis@health.ucsd.edu)

Chair Executive Assistant: Jenni Oliver (j5oliver@health.ucsd.edu) to arrange job talk and Chair meeting

Administrative Vice Chair:

Michael Godwin (mgodwin@health.ucsd.edu) Department Business Officer

Ashley Etasami (aetesami@ucsd.edu) Associate Business Officer

Vice Chairs, Research:

Vice Chair, Basic Science Research: Abraham Palmer, Ph.D. (aapalmer@health.ucsd.edu)

Vice Chair Clinical Research: Eric Granholm, Ph.D. (egrholm@health.ucsd.edu)

Vice Chair, Education:

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

Vice Chair for Academic Affairs:

Vice Chair, Academic Affairs: Victoria Risbrough, Ph.D. (vriskbrough@health.ucsd.edu)

Academic Affairs Admin: Joanna Horning (jhorning@health.ucsd.edu)

Sponsored Research Administration:

Director: Judy De Los Santos (jadelossantos@health.ucsd.edu)

K-R Committee Chair:

Tamar Gollan, Ph.D. (tgollan@health.ucsd.edu)

K-R Committee Members:

Greg Aarons, Ph.D. (gaarons@health.ucsd.edu)

Katherine Bangen, Ph.D. (kbangen@health.ucsd.edu)

Raeanne Moore, Ph.D. (r6moore@health.ucsd.edu)

Psychiatry Grant Review Meeting:

Elizabeth Twamley, Ph.D. (etwamley@health.ucsd.edu)

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) to sign up

K Writing Group:

Led by Harvey Checkoway, Ph.D. (hcheckoway@health.ucsd.edu)

Contact Alan Larson (a7larson@health.ucsd.edu) to sign up

Implementation Science Seminar:

Directed by Gregory Aarons, Ph.D. (gaarons@health.ucsd.edu)

Contact Joella Phillips (jiphillips@health.ucsd.edu) to sign up