

Frequently Asked Questions

SCTR KL2 (K12) Multidisciplinary Scholars Program in Clinical & Translational Science

What is the KL2 scholars program?

The SCTR KL2 program provides mentored, protected research experiences to enhance the development and retention of early career investigators. The program equips scholars with a supportive environment, start-up research funds, and access to program faculty to provide expertise and guidance in conducting a clinical/translational research project. The goal of the SCTR KL2 program is to increase clinical/translational research capacity through the training of junior faculty to help drive research independence.

What are the basic requirements to be a KL2 scholar?

Eligible candidates are junior faculty with doctoral-level professional degrees who are commencing clinically relevant basic, translational, and/or clinical research. Candidates must have:

- A full-time faculty appointment (regardless of tenure or non-tenure track) at MUSC at the time of appointment as a scholar.
 - Senior fellows pending faculty appointment are eligible to apply.
- A health professional doctoral degree or its equivalent – either Clinical (i.e. MD, DrPH, PharmD) or Non-Clinical (i.e. PhD, ScD).
- Junior faculty – anyone at the Instructor or Assistant Professor level who is within 10 years of having completed a postdoctoral specialty or subspecialty training based on the definition for NIH Early Stage Investigators (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/early-investigators/index.htm>).
- A research project based in clinical and translational science.
 - Candidates conducting pre-clinical research are eligible if their work is clinically relevant.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence and possess a Permanent Resident Card (I-151 or I-551) or some other verification of legal admission as a permanent resident. Individuals from underrepresented groups, disadvantaged backgrounds, and/or with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Can I apply if I have applied for or received other NIH funding?

- Applicants who have previously served as the PD/PI on a NIH R03 or R21 grant or non-PHS equivalent are eligible to apply for the KL2 program.
- Applicants may apply if they have a pending application for another PHS mentored career development award (e.g. K07, K08, K23) as long as:
 - They have not received a formal Just-in-Time email for funding consideration
 - The other application is pulled from consideration if appointed to the KL2

Who is not eligible for the KL2 program?

- Individuals on temporary or student visas.
- Applicants who:
 - Have a formal Just-in-Time notification for: 1) any other PHS mentored career development award (e.g. K07, K08, K23) that duplicates the provisions of the K program, 2) an NIH institute-specific K22 award, or 3) a Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00).

- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on an independent NIH research grant (e.g. R01); or a subproject leader on a Program Project (P01) or Center Grant (P50), or a non-PHS equivalent to these grants.

Special permission must be obtained for eligible faculty with Veterans Affairs (VA) appointments. Candidates with VA appointments must contact Diana Lee-Chavarria (leeachar@musc.edu) prior to applying.

What are the benefits of the KL2 program?

The KL2 program provides mentored career support for early career faculty as they progress into independent researchers.

Annual Research Funding

- **Salary support** of up to \$120,000 plus fringe
- **\$25,000** in project funds to purchase research supplies and small equipment
- **\$1,000** towards travel to attend a relevant scientific conference

Research Support

- **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** guidance and mentorship
- **Guidance and quarterly updates** with KL2 program leadership
- **Support to develop an extramural grant application** to fund research at the conclusion of the KL2 funding
- **Access to SCTR consultation, services and staff**, including SUCCESS Center consults in research navigation, biostatistics, recruitment, REDCap, regulatory issues, grant budgets, and research opportunities and development

What is the length of appointment to the KL2 program?

Appointment to the KL2 program is for a period of 2 years (24 months) with the potential for a third year pending satisfactory progress and the submission of an extramural grant.

What are the program requirements for KL2 scholars?

KL2 scholars must devote a minimum of 75% full-time professional effort in this program for the training and clinical research activities. The 75% effort is based on the entire amount of time worked in a typical week and should be proportionate. The remaining 25% effort can be divided among other research, clinical and teaching activities if these activities are consistent with the proposed goals of the KL2 program.

Scholars must also submit abstracts, journal articles, and publications annually to maintain evidence of scholarly productivity. Productivity and protected time will be reviewed quarterly at scholar progress meetings with the KL2 program directors and primary mentor.

Other didactic courses and career development requirements for KL2 scholars are listed in the table on the next page.

KL2 scholars are required to apply for an extramural grant no later than the end of Year 2. Considerations for a third year of funding are dependent upon scholarly progress, which includes this submission.

What is the program timeline for the first 2 years on the KL2 program?

Since our goal is for Scholars to become independently funded by the end of their KL2 award period (or earlier), we

set out these general guidelines on when to complete core requirements:

Years 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate (monthly) and present (annually and prior to an extramural grant submission) at the “K to Independence” (K to I) Club meetings • Participate and present at Mock Study Sections • Participate in quarterly Health Disparities/Community Engaged Research Discussion series (quarterly) • Attend the SCTR Mentor Training Symposium and Translational Science Spotlight during MUSC Innovation Week • Complete one or more high quality publications that may form the basis of a grant application • Attend relevant conference to present project • Participate in other opportunities as required
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain all required regulatory approvals • Obtain NIH Prior Approval (through SCTR Business Office; more information will be sent upon appointment) • Complete SCTR Administrative Review • Required courses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) 2) K Scholars Grant Writing Course 3) MCR-700 Clinical Biostatistics (or similar), unless previous training in clinical biostatistics has been completed 4) Formal training in Research Methodology/Experimental Design, e.g., CGS-770 Principles, Practices, and Professionalism; other courses subject to approval 5) Team Science Course (MCR 750)
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required didactics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6) (Re) Writing Science Seminars 7) Leadership Training – options listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AAMC – LEAD Certificate program: https://www.aamc.org/career-development/leadership-development/lead. ▪ AAMC – Minority Faculty Leadership Development Seminar: https://www.aamc.org/career-development/leadership-development/minfac ▪ MUSC Emerging Leaders Program: https://horseshoe.musc.edu/everyone/leadership-institute/leadership-programs/emerging-leaders-program ▪ MUSC Advanced Leadership Program: https://horseshoe.musc.edu/everyone/leadership-institute/leadership-programs/advanced-leadership-program ▪ Other activities subject to approval • Submit proposal for review to a K Scholar Mock Study Section • Submit an extramural grant (typically R01, K23, or other federal, state, foundation or industry grant)

What are the expectations for mentors of KL2 scholars?

Mentors are responsible for helping to develop the skills necessary to promote the independent research career of the scholar mentee. This includes setting aside protected time to meet with the mentee (weekly for primary mentors; monthly for the mentoring team), ensuring that the protected time provided by the KL2 (75%) is being met, and having a mutually agreed-upon set of expectations and goals in place at the outset of the mentoring period.

Scholars and mentors should work together before and during the KL2 appointment to perform a career development needs assessment and develop a mutually agreed-upon set of expectations and goals, resulting in an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Both mentor and mentee should participate in training opportunities to enhance their skills, including the SCTR Annual Mentorship Training Symposium and mentor training opportunities (Mentor Training Course, Tools for Mentors and Mentees, etc.). The mentor/mentee relationship should be based on trust and mutual respect; open communication and periodic formal performance reviews with the KL2 team will help ensure that the expectations of both parties are being met.

KL2 mentors will:

- Promote all ethical standards for conducting research, including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research.
- Provide the mentee with the required guidance and mentoring, seeking the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary. Mentor must provide access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.
- Encourage the interaction of the mentee with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally and encourage the mentee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.
- Ensure that the research performed by a mentee is submitted for publication in a timely manner and that she/he receive appropriate credit for the work she/he performs. Mentor will acknowledge her/his contribution to the development of any intellectual property and will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to institutional policy.
- Make available to the mentee, as appropriate, data from previous or ongoing projects that are related to the mentee's area(s) of interest and encourage the mentee to submit manuscripts for publication both during and after the award period. Mentor will ensure that mentee receives appropriate credit for the work she/he performs
- Play a fully involved role in the SCTR KL2 program by participating in quarterly progress meetings, K to I Club (required when mentee is presenting), and as a reviewer for Mock Study Section.
- Be a supportive colleague to mentees as they transition into the next stage of their career and throughout their professional life.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the mentor to ensure that the scholar mentee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in the agreed-upon area of investigation.

How do I apply for the KL2 program?

All applications will be submitted online using the InfoReady application portal. Before submitting an application, the candidate must get a Study ID from SPARCRequest. Please see the "*Application FAQs*" document on the KL2

program website (<https://research.musc.edu/resources/sctr/funding-opportunities/clinician-scientist-scholars>) for detailed instructions on the steps to obtain a Study ID, document requirements, and processes for applying.

Applicants should be prepared to submit the following materials when applying to the KL2:

- Letter of Intent outlining your interest in applying to the program and proposed research project (submitted via email)
- Current NIH biosketch for applicant, primary mentor, other members of the mentor team, and consultant (if applicable)
- Up-to-date CV
- Candidate Statement, including evidence of your track record, resources, and career potential
- Research Plan, including specific aims and a detailed timeline for project completion
- Letters of Support from primary mentor and department/division chair; letters from other members of the mentoring team are optional
- Mentor Training and Research Timetable

Who do I contact for more information?

Diana Lee-Chavarria, KL2 Program Manager
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