MUSC Medical University of South Carolina | South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute

Frequently Asked Questions

SCTR T32 Pre-doctoral Training Program in Translational Research

What is the T32 Pre-doctoral Training Program in Translational Research?

The SCTR T32 is a two-year, NIH-funded mentored research training program for pre-doctoral students in PhD or dual-degree programs, **pending award notification**. Once awarded, this National Research Service Award (NRSA) T32 will replace SCTR's first-year TL1 (T32) in Translational and Team Science. It is designed to foster the development of clinical and translational scientists by stimulating interest from doctoral students in health- and disease-related disciplines who will become future translational scientists and research leaders.

The T32 program is meant for students with a strong interest in pursuing a career in clinical and/or translational science and provides early exposure to clinical and translational research methodology through experiential training and an instructive curriculum.

T32 trainees pursue training on a full-time basis. Trainees may not work outside of their research area.

What are the basic requirements to be a T32 trainee?

- Full-time student enrolled in a PhD or combined degree program:
  - PhD ○ MD/PhD
  - PharmD/PhD*
  - DMD/PhD*
- US citizen, non-citizen national, or lawful permanent resident at the time of appointment
- Students with a strong interest in clinical and/or translational research

Trainees from all disciplines (pre-clinical, clinical, and translational) are welcome to apply. Individuals from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

** T32 trainees are not eligible to hold two SCTR grants that have scientific overlap and/or propose the same specific aims (i.e. T/K Collaborative grant).* ***Students are ineligible if they are in their first or last year of graduate school, or if they have already received a doctoral degree as part of a dual-degree program.*** *Please contact Kristen Briggman (burgstei@musc.edu) prior to applying in you are in the PharmD/PhD or DMD/PhD program.*

Who is NOT eligible for the T32 program?

- Students completing a professional clinical degree *only* (e.g. MD, DMD, DPT, PharmD)
- Individuals who have been previously awarded a doctoral degree, **including as part of a dual-degree program**
- Students in their last year of graduate school
- Individuals currently supported by other federal funds (unless federal funding is terminated by June 30, 2025)
- Students on temporary or student visas

What is the length of appointment to the T32 program?

Appointment to the T32 program is for a period of 2 years. Per NIH guidelines, no individual trainee may receive more than 5 years of aggregate NRSA support at the pre- doctoral level.

Will the T32 program extend my graduation date?

No. Trainees in the T32 program do not incur any extra time to graduation and successfully complete their degree programs in the same amount of time as other PhD students.

What are the benefits of the T32 program?

The T32 program provides trainees mentored exposure to clinical and translational research methodology. Through experiential learning and instructive curriculum, trainees will learn about the continuum from basic research to how discoveries are disseminated into improved health care. Trainees also get to experience the real-world translation of research into practice through clinical observation and mentoring.

Trainees in the T32 program receive annually:

Research Funding

- **Stipend support*** at the NRSA-established levels for pre-doctoral trainees. Mentors are required to supplement the trainee's stipend up to the amount required by their respective colleges.
- Tuition fees up to **$16,000** for PhD students; up to **$21,000** for students in a combined dual-degree program (Fall & Spring only)
- **$4,750** of project funds & training-related expenses (including student health insurance)
- **$1,500** in travel funds for travel to the Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) national meeting. Trainees funded for a second year may choose to attend a meeting relevant to their research.
- **$3,000** in childcare costs for each trainee in addition to training funds https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-177.html

Research Guidance

- Mentorship in your area of research
- Support and regular updates with program leadership
- Access to SCTR/OCR research staff, including SUCCESS Center consults in research navigation, biostatistics, recruitment, REDCap, regulatory issues, grant budgets, and research opportunities and development

Research Career Development

- Assistance with protocol creation – completing a regulatory review, constructing a Prospective Reimbursement Analysis (PRA), complying with the NIH Public Access Policy (publications in PubMed Central)
- Customized Individual Development Plan (IDP) to guide future career progress
- Support with writing a competitive NRSA or other extramural application
- Training and support for making scientific presentations
- Training in rigor and reproducibility

Research Experience

- Real-world clinical exposure working alongside clinical mentors in your field of research (Translational Science Clinic)
- Exploration of thought-provoking case studies from both a clinical and research perspective (Translational Medicine Seminars)
- A novel team-based journal club that explores the translation of basic science discoveries into practice (T32 Journal Club)

- Opportunities to present your research before peers and thought leaders (ACTS meeting, Perry V. Halushka Student Research Day, SCTR All-Staff Meeting). During the second-year, awardees can attend and present at the conference of their choosing.

*Note: Trainees receive stipends related to their academic programs. They do not render services for pay and therefore are *not considered employees* and are not eligible to pay into the state retirement system, nor will they accrue vacation or service credits for the length of the award period. Monthly stipends for fellowships may be subject to federal, state and local taxes. Depending on a fellow's residency status, their taxes may or may not be withheld from their stipend. Questions regarding taxes or stipends should be directed to Kim Dalrymple, SCTR Business Office, 843-792-8250 or dalrympl@musc.edu.

How is the SCTR T32 program different from other T32 programs?

The SCTR T32 program is unique as it provides career development and training opportunities for trainees from various disciplines, colleges, and research areas. By not focusing on a specific disease area, T32 trainees are able to work and collaborate with students in similar career stages but with different perspectives. The program provides valuable networking opportunities with other T32 trainees, K12 scholars, and researchers throughout MUSC and the nationwide CTSA consortium. Trainees engage in numerous professional development activities and learning opportunities along the translational research continuum from T0 (basic science) through T4 (public health). Students in the T32 program have access to training in areas that they may not otherwise be exposed to, including seeing research results "in action" in a clinical setting.

What are the program requirements for T32 trainees?

The T32 program expands on the CGS curriculum through research-focused coursework and experiential learning. Along with standard courses in proposal writing, rigor and reproducibility, and basic concepts in biomedical science, T32 trainees take supplemental courses to enhance predoctoral students' research training experience.

T32 Curriculum	
Designing a Rigorous Extramural Fellowship Application (CGS 817)	Translational Research Journal Club (CGS 815) *
	Translational Science Clinic (MDCOR 871) *
MSTP Seminar (CGS 820) *	Month in the Research Nexus (MDCOR 832) *
Principles, Practices, and Professionalism (CGS 770)	Career Development Conference

**unique to T32 program*

Trainees must also satisfy the degree requirements of their individual colleges/programs. The use of a trainee's specific college requirements to satisfy T32 programmatic requirements will be determined on an individual basis. While appointed to the T32, trainees must remain in good academic standing (minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00) while making reasonable progress toward their graduate degree.

Additionally, trainees are expected to:

- Participate in required professional development opportunities, including the ACTS Conference, the Annual Mentorship Training Symposium, Perry V. Halushka Student Research Day, the SCTR All-Staff Meeting, the Translational Research Event during Innovation Week, and a research-related conference of their choice.
- Attend quarterly program progress meetings.

- Cite the T32 grant on all T32 funded projects/papers: Any publications that are produced during the award year or future publications related to the T32 funded project must cite the grant support of the T32 award and follow the NIH public access policy. Trainees are expected to have at least one first author publication upon completion of the requirements for their PhD degree.
- Obtain an ORCiD ID.
- Complete NIH annual progress report documents.
- Participate in the NIH required 15-year follow up: As part of NIH reporting requirements, recipients of the T32 must comply with yearly information requests for 15 years upon completion of their award (even after departure from MUSC).

Do I have to have a mentor on the T32?

Yes. The applicant is expected to identify a mentor in their area of research interest and work with them in all aspects of their T32 training, starting with the application process. Both mentors and trainees will read and sign the AAMC *Compact between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors*, paying special attention to the Commitments of Graduate Students and Commitments of Research Advisors.

The mentor must have independent funding for the duration of the applicant's T32 appointment and for future years to cover the anticipated time for completion of the PhD degree.

What are the mentor requirements?

Under guidance and editing from the mentor, the applicant should develop their proposal that describes the research project to be undertaken. The mentor will guide and encourage the design and execution of an original, high quality, dissertation research project. Mentors will provide guidance on the following documents and activities, including but not limited to:

- T32 application
- Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Progress reports
- Manuscripts
- Abstracts/posters/presentations

Additionally, mentors provide career development and counseling by meeting with trainees regularly (at least weekly), attending required meetings/activities organized by SCTR, including the trainee as an author on relevant publications/posters/presentations, completing mentor training, and helping the trainee apply for post-T32 funding. **Mentors are also required to ensure that the trainee's department is supplementing the T32 stipend up to the amount required by their respective colleges.**

Quality mentorship is fundamental to influencing trainees' productivity in research, informed career decision-making, networking, career trajectory, and career satisfaction. In addition to the responsibilities discussed above, mentors are required to:

- Ensure that the projected time supported by the award is being met.
- Promote all ethical standards for conducting research, including compliance with institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research. The mentor shall clearly define expectations for research conduct and be available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.
- Ensure that the mentee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary for a career in clinical and translational research.

- Seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary.
- Encourage the mentee to interact with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally, including at professional meetings to network and present research findings.
- Support the trainee as they transition into the next stage of their career and beyond.
- Seek opportunities to enhance one's own mentoring skills, including attending SCTR's Annual Mentorship Training Symposium.
- Encourage and support the mentee's submission of an external F award application or equivalent grant.

How do I apply for the T32 program?

All applications will be submitted online using the InfoReady application portal. Please see the "Application FAQs" document on the T32 program website (https://research.musc.edu/resources/sctr/funding-opportunities/training-program) for detailed instructions on the steps and processes for applying.

Applicants should be prepared to submit the following materials when applying to the T32:

- Letter of Intent - *optional, but strongly recommended*
- Current NIH biosketch (5 pages) and CV
- Primary mentor's NIH biosketch (5 pages) and training table
- Summary of Undergraduate/Graduate Research Experience
- Career Development Plan (1 page)
- Research Plan (3 pages)
- Letter of Support from primary mentor and department/division chair (1 page/each)
- Essay of Interest (1 page)

Who do I contact for more information?

Kristen Briggman, T32 Program Coordinator
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843.792.8446