

Introduction

The Research Scholars Program provides support to young men and women who are interested in pursuing a career in urologic research. The American Urological Association (AUA) started funding research in 1975 and the Research Scholars Program was administered by the American Foundation for Urologic Disease, Inc. from 1987 until 2005. Following reorganization in 2005, the American Urological Association Foundation (AUA Foundation) was created. In all, over 460 researchers have been granted research scholarships and awards through a variety of programs and fellowships. Many of those scholars remain in academic urology today, continuing to build upon the base of experience and knowledge gained during their research fellowships.

The AUA Foundation Research Scholars Program provides a valuable opportunity for young scientists to begin a career in urologic research at a time when many urology departments across the country are faced with budget challenges that limit research capabilities. One-year fellowships for M.D.s and Ph.D.s are available for the 2010 Research Scholars Program.

Available Scholarships

Research Scholar Awards Portfolio

Throughout the 35-year history of the Research Scholars Program, the awards have been primarily supported by AUA sections, AUA-affiliated specialty societies, pharmaceutical companies, and urology-focused organizations. While the current economy provides challenges for all funding agencies, the AUA Foundation continues its commitment to advancing the careers of young investigators.

At the release of this Program Announcement, there are six one-year awards available for 2010 fellowships. The AUA Foundation continuously seeks sponsors for Research Scholar awards, thus the portfolio for this year's awards is ever-evolving. The entities listed below may not represent the final list of sponsors that commit to awards in 2010, nor do these sponsors or the AUA Foundation make any guarantees that any/all awards will be filled. Research Scholar awards are granted based on the objective evaluation of all aspects of eligibility criteria, scientific review, and the financial portfolio available at the time the grants are finalized by the AUA Foundation. The AUA Foundation and the Office of Research reserves the right for final approval for any/all awards provided through the program. Updates on sponsor commitments will be posted on www.UrologyHealth.org/researchscholars.

Unrestricted Scholarships

The Astellas USA Foundation is providing funding for two 2010 Research Scholar Awards. This is the fourth consecutive year that the Astellas USA Foundation has funded multiple, unrestricted awards in the same year.

Designated Scholarships

In October of 2007, the AUA Foundation Board of Directors approved the creation of a Section Scholar Endowment Initiative that provided matching funds to assist AUA Sections establish endowed research funds to support Research Scholars in perpetuity. We are pleased that the following Sections have agreed to sponsor fellowships in 2010 for qualified grant Applicants from within their respective geographic areas:

Southeastern Section (2 awards)

Western Section

Designated Scientific Areas

Sanofi-aventis, U.S. will provide funding for an award in the area of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) research.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility

Applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens but must have a valid Social Security number for Internal Revenue Service purposes. All research must be conducted within the boundaries of the eight sections of the AUA.

Principal Investigator

Applications should be compiled and submitted by the Applicant, even though the Mentor is technically considered the Principal Investigator for an AUA Foundation project. Each project should have only one primary Principal Investigator; however, listing co-investigators is acceptable. The "researcher" is the Applicant not the Principal Investigator.

General Application Instructions

Multiple Applications from One Institution

The AUA Foundation will make every effort not to fund more than one Scholar at the same research or educational institution if they are in the same fellowship class. However, cases may exist where funding is restricted by the sponsor and there is no other option available.

Distribution of Funds

AUA Foundation scholarship funds will be paid directly to the Scholar's sponsoring institution for distribution to the researcher. The sponsoring institution also is obligated to provide matching funds pursuant to the specific type of scholarship. Stipends will be payable in two annual installments - one on July 1 and the other on January 1. The AUA Foundation does not withhold taxes from scholarship stipends (i.e., federal withholding, social security, local or state taxes, etc.).

Project Termination and Change of Institution

Any personnel or location changes that occur after the award announcement or during the course of the fellowship must be reported to and approved by the AUA Foundation. Unexpended funds in terminated projects will revert back to the AUA Foundation. Scholarship support will terminate on the date the Mentor or Scholar ceases to work at the research institution, unless advanced permission for transfer has been authorized by the AUA Foundation.

Nondiscrimination

The AUA Foundation does not discriminate as to age, race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, citizenship or national origin in the employment and promotion of staff or in the selection of participants in the Research Scholars Program.

Electronic Submission

The AUA Foundation requires Applicants to submit proposals electronically as detailed on www.UrologyHealth.org/researchscholars. Applicants can link to this URL and complete their Applicant, project and Mentor information online, download an agreement form and upload a complete proposal document as a PDF file.

Incomplete Applications

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. All materials listed on the checklists found on pages 13 & 14 must be included in order to be reviewed and considered for funding.

Certification of Human Subjects

If activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed research, the Scholar must provide a letter of approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Letters of approval are not required at the time of application. However, if an AUA Foundation scholarship is awarded, the Scholar must be prepared to verify IRB approval prior to the beginning of the research project. The letter must be dated less than one year before the application is submitted. Failure to verify IRB approval will result in the loss of the AUA Foundation scholarship.

Certification of Vertebrate Animals

If activities involving vertebrate animals are planned at any time during the research, the scholar must submit a letter of approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Letters of approval are not required at the time of application. However, if an AUA Foundation scholarship is awarded, the scholar must be prepared to verify IACUC approval prior to the beginning of the research project. The letter must be dated less than one year before the application is submitted. Failure to verify IACUC approval will result in loss of the AUA Foundation scholarship.

Contact Information

All communication regarding the AUA Foundation Research Scholars Program, including the application process should be directed to:

Rodney Cotten
Research Programs Manager
American Urological Association Foundation
1000 Corporate Boulevard
Linthicum, MD 21090
(866) 746-4282 x3750
(410) 689-3750
(410) 689-3850 (fax)
grants@auafoundation.org

Preparation of the Research Proposal

Application Agreement Form

The Applicant must download an Application Agreement Form from the AUA Foundation Research Scholars Program website at www.UrologyHealth.org/researchscholars. The form must be completed in its entirety, including all necessary signatures, and submitted by the deadline of **11:59 p.m. LOCAL time on Monday, August 24, 2009**.

Letters of Support

- A letter of support from the Mentor describing the training program and his or her commitment to the Scholar's training, career development, and Mentorship in urology research. The Mentor should address the following:
 - The Scholar's potential for an independent career in urology research
 - The Mentor's history of training postdoctoral fellows and residents
 - The training environment, including ongoing urology disease research and how that will promote the development of the Scholar
 - How the Mentor will support the research project and guide the Scholar
- Two letters of support from individuals other than the Mentor

*Note that letters of support do not count towards the application page limit

Writing the Grant

*Note that 10 pages (approximately 5,000 words) is the limit for all four sections combined. The page limits noted with each section are a suggested distribution.

Section 1: Specific Aims (1-2 pages)*

Introduce the problem being addressed, define the major hypothesis being tested and then list the specific aims proposed to test the hypothesis. Include in this section the major problem intended to be addressed and provide the major reasons why this is an important problem to study. List, in summary form, the experiments proposed and explain how they address the aims of the proposal.

Section 2: Background (2 pages)*

Describe the background of the problem being addressed, citing the appropriate literature. Introduce the subject area of the research in this section. This should include sufficient background material to place the project in scientific perspective so as to allow the reviewers to appreciate the significance of the scientific problem to be addressed.

Section 3: Supporting Data (2-3 pages)*

Provide any preliminary data pertinent to the proposed experiments. Depending upon the Applicant's position when applying, present either research data that the Applicant has generated or data that has been generated by the laboratory of the sponsor and is related to the Applicant's proposal. Unpublished data or published data (with references) may be included; however, these figures and tables are subject to the total page limitations.

Concerning figures and /or tables: It is recommended that not more than three figures be used. The data in this section should support the major hypothesis of the proposed work.

Section 4: Experimental Plan (2-4 pages)*

Describe each experiment in enough experimental detail so that the reviewers can determine how the methods will address the hypothesis and how feasible the experiments are. For each specific aim, it is recommended that the experiments that will be used to achieve the aim be described. For each experiment, outline the rationale for doing the experiment, possible anticipated results, the mechanisms for data analysis and statistical interpretation, including data as appropriate. If possible, briefly describe alternative experimental approaches should the initial experimental approach prove unsuccessful.

Fellowships are evaluated by an independent review panel according to a peer-review process similar to that used by the National Institutes of Health. Please note, however, that the AUA Foundation is a private organization. It is not federally funded. Priority scores will be given to each application based on the following criteria.

Criteria for Review

Criteria for Review

Applicant

The Applicant's achievements (as reflected by awards, honors, previous funding, etc.) should indicate his or her potential for success as a urology researcher.

The Applicant's stated career goals, and the letters of recommendation should provide indications of his or her commitment to pursuing urology disease research throughout his or her career.

Mentor

The Mentor's letter of support should emphasize the Applicant's potential for an independent career in urology research and include a realistic time frame for the Applicant's career path.

It should be very clear that the Applicant's Mentor is strongly supportive of both the research project and the Applicant. In addition, the Mentor should have the required expertise to provide sufficient scientific guidance and oversight and should be an independent investigator with a track record of success in research publication, grant funding and development of trainees who have achieved academic success.

It also should be readily apparent that the Mentor has adequately reviewed the application before submission.

Proposal

The major consideration for the Proposal is it sufficient to provide the Scholar with a rigorous and meaningful research training experience.

The experimental plan should be thoughtfully laid out. Expected results, likely obstacles and potential alternative strategies should be discussed. Space limitations are not considered an adequate reason for an incomplete research plan. Often, Applicants provide a sufficient rationale and review of the literature but then go on to inadequately describe exactly what the Applicant hopes to accomplish and what specific strategies will be employed.

Applications which demonstrate the Applicant's own expertise in an area, either technical or conceptual (e.g., the project is the Applicant's own idea), are often rated higher than projects that appear to be extensions of the ongoing work in the Mentor's lab.

The application should be well organized and the proposal design should suggest the Applicant's ability to think clearly and to present an argument in a logical, compelling way.

Figures should be designed to be easily interpreted with clear legends and labels and should be of sufficient size so that photocopying does not obscure any of the data or labeling. Abbreviations should be used infrequently and should be defined when used. Reviewers often look to the figures for important controls that support the Applicant's interpretation of the data shown.

Projects that will help the Scholar transition into an independent academic position are often rated higher than projects that, although interesting, appear to be less likely to move the Applicant's career ahead in a substantial way.

Another consideration is how likely it will be to achieve the project's specific aims within the proposed time frame.

Selection Procedures

Selections are based on the review of all submitted information by a group of experts.

Awardees will be notified in writing in November 2009. All Applicants will be advised of the results and shall receive a summary statement of their grant review. Results will not be given over the phone. Please wait for notification by mail.

Reporting Requirements

All AUA Foundation grant award recipients must adhere to the following requirements:

A final progress report and personal statement are due two months after the project end date. The report must be submitted to the AUA Foundation electronically (by e-mail or on a CD). The report must include the following:

Technical Progress Report (Two pages)

Summarize the main focus of the research and clearly state the findings. Specify how the research results met the objectives established in the application. This report should include—but is not limited to—answering the following questions: Did the Scholar meet all of the project goals? If not, why not? What is the impact of the research on the current understanding of this research area? What further research remains?

Personal Statement (One page)

How has the funding provided by AUA Foundation helped the Scholar's overall professional growth (i.e. journal submissions, career opportunities, and new research focus)? Does the Scholar plan to continue within the field of urologic research? Has this grant/fellowship led to other funding opportunities? Has the Scholar had the opportunity to report the findings at professional meetings?

Mentor Report (One page)

Under separate cover, the Mentor will submit a *confidential* statement evaluating the Scholar's performance and potential for progress on the funded research, and detailing the future career plan for the scholar.

Publications

Scholars are required to send the AUA Foundation copies of articles published regarding AUA Foundation-funded research. Any publication arising from work supported by the AUA Foundation Research Scholars Program should include acknowledgment of AUA Foundation support as well as that of the corporate sponsor, if any. Such acknowledgement should read:

“This work was supported in part by a grant from the AUA Foundation Research Scholars Program and (name of sponsor).”

Institutional Accountability Report

Each year the Institutional Grant Administrator must submit an Institutional Accountability Report to the AUA Foundation Office of Research. This report re-affirms that the institution is adhering to all terms of the Program Announcement and Institution Agreement Form, especially the provisions of matching funding and level of effort requirements. Continued funding is contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory report. A final Institutional Accountability Report should be included in the Final Progress Report package, which is due two months after the project end date.

Failure to adhere to all requirements of the Research Scholars Program may result in loss of the scholarship and/or repayment of any or all AUA Foundation funds previously paid to the institution/Scholar. Furthermore, lack of compliance could be considered in the AUA Foundation’s funding decisions in the future.

AUA Foundation Research-Related Activities

Each year, the AUA Foundation coordinates several events designed to advance urology research and provide educational venues, especially for young investigators. Attendance to the AUA Foundation Scholars Breakfast, AUA Foundation Research Forum, and the AUA Foundation/SBUR Summer Research Conference (depending on the topic) is required for all investigators funded by the AUA Foundation. Unless prior approval is given, failure to attend an event will disqualify the Applicant from receiving a scholarship or future payments. Travel awards or other means of travel support may be available.

- AUA Foundation Scholars Breakfast: All AUA Foundation Scholars are acknowledged at the AUA Foundation Scholars Breakfast, which is held during the AUA Annual Meeting, and in the Research Pictorial. Attending the AUA Foundation Scholars Breakfast is required for all investigators funded by the AUA Foundation. Even though the first breakfast will take place prior to the award period, new Scholars are required to attend and should plan accordingly. All ending Scholars will compete for the opportunity to present a summary of their project at the breakfast and are required to attend the breakfast regardless of whether the Scholar is chosen to present.
- AUA Foundation Research Forum: Each year at the AUA Annual Meeting, the Research Forum provides a venue showcasing the research of promising young investigators. All investigators funded by the AUA Foundation are required to attend the Research Forum.
- AUA Foundation/SBUR Summer Research Conference: The Summer Research Conference provides an intense and intimate forum for young investigators to meet research leaders, hear about emerging research concepts and methods, network with participants and speakers, learn about new methods and techniques, and receive mentoring and advice on research career activities. The conference is typically held each August and has a different scientific theme and scientific topic each year. If the topic is associated with the research being conducted by the Scholar, they would be required to attend the conference.

Lay Language Statement for UrologyHealth.org

All Scholars will be required to submit a short paragraph (5 – 6 sentences) lay language statement about their research project and headshot to be posted under the current AUA Foundation-supported research at www.UrologyHealth.org. Statements and photos will be due within one month of notification of award.

Submitting the Application

Application Checklist

A complete grant application will contain the following items **in the stated order**. Please be aware that any grant over 26 pages in length will not be reviewed and any grant using less than a 12-point font will not be reviewed. The 26-page limit includes all portions of the application with the exception of optional additional letters of support and references.

Applications will only be accepted online at www.UrologyHealth.org/researchscholars. Applicants must complete the online forms AND upload one complete PDF file document that includes all items. Visit www.UrologyHealth.org/researchscholars for complete application information. The deadline for submitting applications is 11:59 p.m. LOCAL time on **Monday, August 24, 2009**.

Checklist for Applicant

- Complete all online sections:
 - ___ Applicant information
 - ___ Project information
 - ___ Print the Registration Summary Form
 - ___ Download the Application Agreement Form
- Completed Registration Summary Form
- Completed Application Agreement Form (Does not count towards the application page limit)
- Two letters of support from individuals other than the Mentor (Does not count towards the application page limit)
- Research career goals of the Applicant
- Description of research proposal in layman's terms
- Research proposal (See Preparation of the Research Proposal.)
- Applicant's *curriculum vitae* or biosketch (Follow NIH guidelines at <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/biosketchsample.doc>; not to exceed four pages)
- Notification of applications filed to other funding sources

Checklist for Mentor(s)

- ❑ Institutional plans: This section should describe the institution's facilities, funding and technical assistance, specific duties of the Applicant, time committed to research, clinical activities, teaching duties, relationship to Mentor(s), ongoing research program and immediate supervisor (If other than Mentor)
- ❑ Concise statement of reasons why the Applicant and Mentor should be selected, to include an indication of the Applicant's potential for an independent career in urologic research, and an estimated timeline for career development
- ❑ Outline of clinical/research time (M.D. researchers only)
- ❑ Mentors' letters of support for Applicant
- ❑ All Mentors' biosketches (Follow NIH guidelines at <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/biosketchsample.doc>; not to exceed four pages)
- ❑ List of Mentors' previous fellows and their current positions (if there are none, please indicate such)

M.D. or Ph.D. One-Year Fellowship

Applicants

Applicants for this fellowship must be either a trained urologist or basic scientist within five years of completing residency or doctorate who aspire to learn scientific techniques, are committed to a career in urologic research and who are able to provide evidence of current and/or prior interest/accomplishments in research. This program is not intended to fund a urology resident either before or during residency training.

Requirements

A commitment of one year dedicated to the program is required. M.D. Applicants must be willing to spend at least **80 percent** of their time on their research project. Ph.D. Applicants must spend **100 percent** of their time on their research project. Deviation from this requirement will result in discontinuation of funding. For M.D.s, the application should clearly state how the Applicant would allocate the research/clinical time for the duration of the scholarship. This research experience should prepare the Scholar to subsequently become an independent investigator capable of obtaining independent research grant support.

Sponsoring Institution

An accredited medical education/research institution or department within such an institution must sponsor the Applicant by guaranteeing research time commitment and adequate financial support, including responsibility for the adequacy of the scientific environment, laboratory equipment and supplies to perform the proposed research.

Mentor

An established researcher in either a basic science or clinical department who has substantial experience in grant support and mentoring of scientific trainees and who will make a one year commitment to sponsor the Scholar is required. (See Criteria for Review: Mentor.)

Scholarship Duration

The scholarship shall commence on July 1, 2010 and end on June 30, 2011.

Financing

An annual salary stipend of \$40,000 is paid by the AUA Foundation. In addition, the sponsoring institution for M.D. Scholars will be required to match the Foundation's \$40,000 salary payment to the Scholar. For M.D. Scholars, the salary stipend match is not intended to include fringe benefits. The sponsoring institution for Ph.D. Scholars must provide \$40,000 in matching support for salary and/or requisite supplies and equipment to complete the research. For Ph.D. Scholars, the salary stipend match may include fringe benefits. **Details of the sponsoring institution's plan for financial support should be provided in the application submitted by Ph.D. Scholars.** The AUA Foundation salary stipend will be provided for one year with payments made directly to the institution every six months on July 1 and January 1.