Review of Mentored Career Development (K) Award Applications in the Department of Psychiatry

Goals

- To facilitate the **career direction and development** of post-doctoral trainees in the Department of Psychiatry.
- To ensure the continued **scientific excellence of mentored K Award applications** from our Department.
- To allow the leadership of the Department to be **strategic in identifying potential new faculty members and research areas** that will contribute to the scientific priorities and mission of the Department.
- To ensure the provision of **high-quality mentoring and availability of the appropriate resources** required for optimal career development.
- To provide applicants with detailed **guidance about the NIH grant application process**.

K Review Process

Departmental review of K applications includes the following steps:

(1) <u>Submission of the Mentor Statement of Support and Meeting of Mentor with the Chair</u>

Before the K Concept Proposal is submitted, the Candidate's primary mentor should prepare and submit to the Chair (Dr. Lewis) the Mentor Statement of Support (*see required form on PsyHub>Research>Research Mentoring*). The Mentor Statement of Support should be submitted ***no later than 7 months prior to the internal submission deadline***. The Chair will then schedule a meeting with the Candidate's primary mentor to discuss career options for the Candidate. From this meeting, a decision will be made as to whether the Candidate may submit the Concept Proposal. This decision will be relayed to the Candidate by the mentor.

(2) <u>Submission of the K Concept Proposal by the Candidate</u>

What to Submit

- Cover email stating the intended submission date, how the proposed work fits with the funding priorities of the intended NIH institute, and a summary of interactions with Program Officer(s) concerning the programmatic fit of the proposed project

- Candidate Background (1 page max)

- Career Goals and Objectives (½ page max)

- Career Development/Training (1 page max). Inclusion on a separate page of a table that summarizes what will be learned for each aim, the mentor(s) that will provide the teaching, and the vehicles for learning (e.g., course, workshop, etc) is suggested but not required.

- Specific aims of the research plan as they would appear in a formal NIH application (1 page max). An optional figure summarizing the research model may be included on a second page.

- Statement on innovation and potential impact of the proposed research (1 page)

- Candidate's CV

When to Submit

The K Concept Proposal must be submitted to the office of the Chair (Dr. Lewis) *no later than 6 months prior to the <u>internal</u> submission deadline.* NIH (as well as internal) deadlines for each submission cycle are posted on the Pre-Award website of the Department of Psychiatry's Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) at
https://inet.psychiatry.upmc.com/OGC/NewStyle/Pages/PreAward/ElectronicGrantDueDates.htm

Potential K Candidates who attend the CARD Seminar and develop their Concept Proposals in the context of the seminar's two annual Writing Blocks (fall and spring) may submit their proposals no later than *5 months prior* to the internal submission deadline. February submissions to the NIH must adhere to the 6 month deadline regardless of participation in the Writing Block in the prior fall or spring.

Where to Submit

Submit the K Concept Proposal electronically to the Department Chair, David Lewis, MD, with a copy to Deb Montrose, PhD, Director of Research Operations.

(3) <u>Candidate Interviews with the Department Chair and Faculty</u>

The Chair will meet with the Candidate to discuss his/her career interests and plans and to provide feedback for revisions to the K Concept Proposal. Following the meeting, the Candidate will prepare a summary of the feedback and send it to the Chair and primary mentor.

The Chair will also provide a list of Department faculty members with whom *the Candidate will be required to schedule interviews during the subsequent 2 weeks*. Faculty interviewers will submit feedback to the Chair upon completion of their interviews. These interviews will focus on the assessment of the Candidate's suitability as a potential new faculty member, including the Candidate's long-term potential to make innovative and scientifically important contributions consistent with the mission of the Department, and the availability of mentoring support and research infrastructure required for the successful implementation of the proposed project. This process mirrors the processes currently in place for external recruits to the Department of Psychiatry faculty.

(4) Submission of K Concept Revisions

Revisions will be submitted electronically to the Department Chair, David Lewis, MD, with a copy to Deb Montrose, PhD, Director of Research Operations.

(5) K Concept Decision

Following completion of the interviews and review of the revisions, the Department Chair will inform the Candidate whether the proposal has been approved, denied or in need of further revisions. The Chair's decision will also be communicated to the Candidate's mentors, the Director of Research Operations, and the Chair of the K Review Program (KRP).

(6) K Review Program and Research Committee Approval

The next step of the review process focuses on developing the best possible application for submission to NIH, guided by current NIH priorities and review criteria.

- The applicant will consult with his/her primary mentor and the Chair of the K Review Committee (KRC), Daniel J. Buysse, MD, to select an appropriate chair and two additional members to be part of his/her KRC.

  o The chair will be chosen from the K Review Program's list of K Review Committee Chairs. This list includes approximately 25 faculty members with experience in research training, faculty development, and the K submission and implementation process.

  o The other members of the committee can be any faculty member with relevant expertise from the University of Pittsburgh. If a Candidate is already being mentored by a team of investigators, one or more of these team members can serve as reviewers. However, the primary mentor is not included as a KRC member, under the assumption that he/she is already closely involved with the development of the application.

- ***The K review process is intended to be iterative, involving multiple (typically 3-4) in-person meetings between the Candidate, the Candidate's mentor(s) and his/her KRC over the course of proposal preparation.*** In giving guidance to the Candidate, the KRC members will consider current NIH review criteria for K Awards to optimize the proposal's chances for a favorable review. The Candidate's KRC members will provide written feedback to the Candidate on successive versions of the application. The Candidate, in turn, should provide a brief summary and written response to each round of KRC meetings, and submit these to the members of his/her KRC with a cc to both Dr. Buysse (BuysseDJ@upmc.edu), and the KRP Administrative Coordinator, Missy DeVito (mszycoml@upmc.edu).

- In order to ensure adequate communication and coordination of feedback provided to Candidates, the mentor should attend some or all KRC meetings. Doing so will allow the primary mentor to hear the KRC's feedback, and the KRC members to hear the mentor's perspective on the developing application.

- When the Candidate's KRC agrees that the proposal is ready for formal submission, the KRC Chair will provide a brief summary of the major points addressed during the review process to the KRP Chair (Dr. Buysse), as well as a formal recommendation for approval.

Following KRC approval, the Candidate will then submit to the Department of Psychiatry Research Review Committee (RRC) the following items:

- Candidate's current K Award application
- Completed Research Review Committee Coversheet

Upon receiving all the above, Dr. Buysse, in his capacity as RRC Co-Chair, will provide **formal RRC approval.** The approval decision will also be communicated to the Department Chair, the Director of Research Operations, and the Department of Psychiatry's Office of Grants and Contracts. Once approval has been obtained, the K Award application can be routed for formal submission and sign-off by all required institutional entities (Department of Psychiatry's Office of Grants and Contracts; Office of Research, Health Sciences; and University of Pittsburgh Office of Research).

(7) Letter of Institutional Support

As soon as RRC approval has been obtained, the Candidate, with input from the mentor, should prepare a draft letter of Institutional Support. A template may be obtained from the Director of Research Operations. The final draft should be emailed to the Director of Research Operations **at least one week prior to the internal deadline.**

(8) Working with the Office of Grants and Contracts

Immediately after the K Concept Proposal has been approved by the Department Chair, the Candidate should submit a **"Planning to Submit a Grant" form** to the Department of Psychiatry's Office of Grants and Contracts. This form can be found on the OGC website Forms page at https://inet.psychiatry.upmc.com/OGC/. Submission of this form will get the planned submission on the OGC docket and lead to the assignment of an **OGC Pre-Award Specialist** who will work with the Candidate on formulating a budget and budget justification.

Training sessions will be held at the Office of Grants and Contracts for all Candidates who are planning to submit a K Award application. Candidates should make every effort to attend these training sessions because they will allow them to become familiar with the required forms and electronic submission process. Training materials and FAQ's about the K submission process are also posted on the OGC website https://inet.psychiatry.upmc.com/OGC/NewStyle/Pages/PreAward/Training.htm.

Candidates are encouraged to begin work on their budget and budget justification as soon as possible after the K Concept is approved because budget constraints may have to be considered in shaping the proposal.

In preparation for the submission, the Candidate will need to register as a PI on the NIH e-Commons. Pertinent information is also provided on the OGC website.

(9) Formal Submission

The **completed proposal and budget**, entered into the appropriate electronic forms, must be provided to the Pre-Award Specialist at the Department of Psychiatry's Office of Grants and Contracts *no later than 8 business days prior to the agency deadline*. Internal and NIH deadlines for each cycle can be found on the OGC website: https://inet.psychiatry.upmc.com/OGC/. The OGC will perform a final check on the submission and then route the proposal for institutional sign-off to the Office of Research/Health Sciences (ORHS) and the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Research (OR). OR staff will formally submit the proposal to NIH, and OGC receives confirmation of the submission. From this point on, the Candidate will be able to track the progress of the proposal in the NIH e-Commons. This includes monitoring the proposal for errors and warnings, and correcting these within a specific timeline.

(10)   K Award Resubmissions

Administrative approval is also required for the resubmission of K Award applications that did not receive a fundable priority score during the initial submission. Candidates should forward the priority score and Summary Statement to Dr. Lewis as soon as they are available, accompanied by a draft of the "Introduction" to an amended application that addresses the concerns provided in the Summary Statement. If indicated, Dr. Lewis will grant administrative approval to resubmit. The Chair's decision will be conveyed to the Candidate, his/her mentors, the Chair of the K Review Program, and the Director of Research Operations.

Once administrative approval has been granted, the mentors and the original K Review Committee members will assist the Candidate in interpreting and responding to summary statements. These same reviewers will once again participate in an iterative review process as an amended version of the K application is prepared for resubmission. This involves in-person meetings, written meeting summaries by the K Candidate following each meeting, written approval of the final proposal by the KRC Chair to Dr. Buysse, and RRC approval.

Roles and Functions

Department Chair
- David A. Lewis, MD (LewisDA@upmc.edu)
- Reviews K Concept, gives feedback to applicant and makes decision regarding approval

Director of Research Operations
- Deb Montrose, PhD (MontroseDM@upmc.edu)
- Reviews draft and processes Chair Letter of Support
- Coordinates grant application submission at the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC)

Research Review Committee (RRC)
- Chair: Daniel J. Buysse, MD
- Co-Chair: Judy L. Cameron, PhD
- Co-Chair: David Brent, MD
- Co-Chair: William Klunk, MD
- Committee Coordinators: Missy DeVito, BS, Nathan Rockcastle, BS
- Provides final approval of application prior to submission to OGC

K Review Program (KRP – a specialized subcommittee of the Research Review Committee)
    Chair: Daniel J. Buysse, MD (BuysseDJ@upmc.edu)
    Administrative Coordinator: Missy DeVito, BS (mszycoml@upmc.edu)
    Oversees K review process
    Helps Candidate select K Review Committee Chair and members
    Coordinates Research Review Committee approval after final KRC approval

K Review Committee (KRC)
    Consists of a KRC Chair and 2-3 other members
    Reviews successive versions of application
    Provides final approval to KRP Chair

Revision Date: *August 11, 2016*
                          May 30, 2017
                          December 18, 2017