



Instructions for Preparing and Submitting the UNMC Assistantship/Fellowship Application

Eligibility Requirements:

Only full-time Ph.D. students at UNMC who submitted a Letter of Intent, Project Funding Affirmation and Abstract on or before February 1st are eligible to apply. (Students who chose as their research mentor an individual whose primary employer is outside of the NU system are not eligible.) The applicant's permanent major advisor and supervisory committee must have been approved in *Seguidor* prior to the March 1st application deadline. The applicant must have completed at least 12 months as a full-time, degree-seeking Ph.D. student by the application deadline. (M.D./Ph.D. students must have been enrolled as a full-time Ph.D. student for at least one complete semester, excluding summer terms, at the time of application.) Applicants must be in good academic standing with a GPA of 3.0 or better and, if funded, must maintain that status for the duration of the award. Funding through this mechanism will be awarded for a period of 2 years, or until the student completes their fifth year of study (whichever comes first). The second year of funding is contingent on attendance at a minimum of three professional development workshops between July 1st and March 1st of the initial year of funding, as well as submission and approval of the UNMC Assistantship/Fellowship Renewal Application (deadline March 1st).

Applications for Research Assistantships/Fellowships must contain one (1) composite electronic (pdf) copy of Items A-G:

A. UNMC Assistantship/Fellowship Application Form (including the Preliminary Data Disclosure)

B. **Research Plan** (written by the student, not the mentor), prepared using Arial 11 font, with margins of at least 0.5 inch on each side, and with lines single-spaced. The research plan information is similar to that required by the NIH F31 Individual Predoctoral Fellowship, arranged in the following numbered sections:

1. **Specific Aims** (maximum 1 page). A title for the application should be included at the top of the Specific Aims page. The Specific Aims page should give a brief background, state the central hypothesis and/or the purpose of the proposed research, and list the specific aims of the project.
2. **Research Strategy** (maximum 6 pages). The Research Strategy section should start on a new page, and include two subsections: Significance and Approach. Preliminary data can be included within either the Significance or Approach subsection. The Significance subsection should provide any additional background information that is necessary for the reviewers to understand the project and appreciate its importance. The Approach subsection should describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish each specific aim of the project. The Approach subsection should include how the data will be collected, analyzed (including statistics), and interpreted, as well as potential difficulties and limitations in the procedures and alternative approaches that could be employed to achieve each aim.
3. **Literature Cited** (no page limit). A listing of all references cited in the body of the proposal. The references should include author(s), year, title, journal name, volume and inclusive page numbers.
4. **Respective Contributions** (maximum 1 page). This section should define who wrote the application, and describe the collaborative process between the applicant and the Advisor/mentor in the development, review, and editing of the proposal.
5. **Applications for Concurrent Support** (maximum 1 page). This section should indicate the type, dates, sources, and amount of any funding for which the fellowship applicant has applied or for which he/she plans to apply.
6. **Goals for Fellowship Training and Career** (maximum 1 page). This section should describe the applicant's overall career goals, and explain how the proposed research training and professional development will enable the attainment of these goals.
7. **Activities Planned Under This Award** (maximum 1 page). This section should summarize the plans for research, publication, coursework, professional development and other educational activities during the fellowship period.
8. **Responsible Conduct of Research** (maximum 1 page). State whether the UNMC Responsible Conduct in Research Training Program has already been completed or when it is planned to be completed. In addition, this section should detail any other research ethics training being undertaken outside of the formal Responsible Conduct in Research Training Program, and it should describe the specific role of the Advisor/mentor in the applicant's instruction in research ethics.
9. **Optional Appendix** (maximum 10 pages). Only surveys, questionnaires, clinical protocols, and informed consent documents relevant to the application may be submitted.

C. **List of awards** received, while enrolled in the UNMC graduate program, from local, regional, or national organizations.

D. **List of research presentations**. List only those presentations made by the applicant after enrolling as UNMC graduate student. Include the full list of authors, the title of the presentation, and the meeting at which the work was presented.

E. **List of research publications** resulting from work performed as a Ph.D. student at UNMC. Provide complete citations, including the full list of authors and title of the paper. Do not include manuscripts "In preparation." Categorize publications as full-length research manuscripts, abstracts, review articles, etc. Indicate which publications were peer-reviewed, and indicate the status of any paper not yet published (i.e., submitted, in revision, in press, epub ahead of print, etc.).

F. **List of professional development activities** (including leadership positions) since enrolling as a Ph.D. student at UNMC.

G. **Optional brief statement** (< 200 words) indicating any personal circumstances that should be taken into account when the application is reviewed.

Submission Instructions:

All application materials must be assembled into a **single pdf** (file-naming convention: LastName,FirstName_Application) for email submission to the UNMC Graduate Studies Office (unmcgraduatestudies@unmc.edu) **no later than 11:59 PM on March 1st**. The submitted pdf must include **only** the above-specified items (A-G). Letters of recommendation, resumes, cover letters, etc., will not be seen by the study sections. No changes to the application package will be accepted after the deadline.

It is the applicant's responsibility to see that all of the above-listed application materials are correctly submitted. INCOMPLETE OR IMPROPERLY PREPARED APPLICATIONS WILL **NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

Review Criteria and Score Components:

Productivity (25%) – Has the applicant's productivity (publications, presentations, awards, etc.) been appropriate for his/her stage in the Ph.D. program (2nd yr, 3rd yr, etc.) **and** the nature of the research? Was the applicant's contribution to generating the preliminary data appropriate for the time already devoted to the project? Were the respective contributions of the applicant and mentor to preparing the proposal appropriate for the student's stage in the program? Has the student shown initiative in applying for assistantship/fellowship support from alternative sources (NIH, foundations, etc.)? Has the applicant pursued any professional development opportunities (committee service, involvement in student organizations, attendance at professional development seminars/workshops, etc.) while a student at UNMC?

Research Proposal (65%) –

- **Significance:** Does the study address an important biological, behavioral or public health problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of the study on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventive interventions that drive the field?
- **Approach:** Is the proposed research plan of high scientific quality? (Are the design, methods, and analyses appropriately developed, well-reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are potential problems acknowledged and alternative strategies proposed?)
- **Training Plan:** Does the proposed research relate to the applicant's training and career goals? Will the research plan provide the applicant with experiences that will develop skills needed for his/her independent and productive career? Are the activities planned under the award consistent with the applicant's stage of research and professional development?

Cumulative GPA (10%) – The Graduate Studies Office will rank the cumulative GPAs of all applicants. Based on this ranking, each student's Percentile GPA Score will be calculated. (For example, if 25% of the applicants have GPAs that are better than yours, your Percentile GPA Score will be 25%.)

When the review process has been completed, each applicant will be provided the following:

- The detailed critiques of his/her application written by the primary and secondary reviewers, including their suggested scores (scale of 1-9) for Productivity and the Research Proposal.
- Percentile GPA Score (which will not be available to the reviewers, so as avoid influencing the other components of the total score.
- Total Percentile Score (25% Productivity, 65% Research Proposal, 10% GPA)

Total Percentile Scores for the entire applicant pool are ranked and, barring unusual circumstances, funding will be awarded from the most meritorious score downward until the funds are exhausted. Unfortunately, we always get many more meritorious proposals than can be supported with available funds.

Submission of Extramural Predoctoral Fellowship Applications:

In addition to the UNMC Graduate Studies Assistantship/Fellowship program, students are encouraged to submit fellowship applications to the NIH or other granting agencies. In particular, any eligible student (US citizen or permanent resident) who receives UNMC Graduate Studies Assistantship/Fellowship support should apply to NIH for an F award. The UNMC Graduate Council has established several incentives for students who apply for extramural funding (as well as their mentors). Details can be found on the Graduate Studies website (<http://unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/funding-options/external-funding-opportunities/index.html>). In addition to these financial incentives, each student who successfully competes on a national or international level for a fellowship, grant or scholarship is eligible to be named a UNMC Graduate Student of Distinction (<http://unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/resource-center/graduate-studies-resources/awards-recognition/graduate-students-of-distinction/index.html>).