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**WEST VIRGINIA  
CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE**

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## **(3.4) WVCTSI K Award Grant Writing Groups (K-Clubs)**

### **Overview**

The West Virginia Clinical & Translational Science Institute recognizes the need to provide guidance and advice to early-stage investigators planning to apply for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Mentored Career Development Award, known as a K series grant. The K Award Grant Writing Group or “K-Club” program is a structured, facilitated group writing process (approximately three to five investigators to one faculty facilitator) which features a series of two-hour “works-in-progress” sessions over a 12-14 week period prior to an upcoming NIH K cycle submission deadline. The K-Club program is designed to support the development of each participant’s K award grant submission.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the expectations and application process for WVCTSI writing groups along with the general structure of the writing group timeline.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all investigators interested in or applying for writing group membership, in addition to the WVCTSI staff who facilitate the program.

### **Clarification**

The policy detailed here applies to central staff of the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute or other faculty invited by the WVCTSI to serve as facilitators of a K-Club program.

### **Definitions**

Staff – administrative or professional personnel whose primary appointment rests with the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Agencies – West Virginia University, West Virginia University Research Corporation, West Virginia University Healthcare doing business as WVU Medicine or University Health Associates, Charleston Area Medical Center, WV School of Osteopathic Medicine, Marshall University, Veterans Affairs, and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Mentored Career Development Award (K series grant) - K awards provide support for senior postdoctoral fellows or faculty-level candidates. The objective of these programs is to bring candidates to the point where they are able to conduct their research independently and are competitive for major grant support. Current NIH policies require that, by the time of the award, applicants must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen U.S. nationals, or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence. Please note that this requirement applies to all the mechanisms below, EXCEPT the K99/R00.

## Policy

The WVCTSI K-Club will be offered in advance of an NIH cycle when 3 or more eligible WVCTSI members demonstrate interest and readiness for being competitive for this type of NIH research funding grant.

## Procedures

The K-Clubs will meet every other week over a 12-week period followed by a final review of the entire proposal. During the weeks when the K-Club is not scheduled to meet, participants are expected to meet with their mentor(s) to obtain feedback a continued develop of the Approach section for this research and career training proposal.

**An application is required.** Information sessions for those considering applying to participate in K-Clubs will be held well in advance of the submission deadlines and announced via the WVCTSI Enews and website.

Eligible participants include faculty appointed as assistant professor, associate professor, clinical specialty fellows and postdocs interested in clinical and/or translational research careers. Participants must be WVCTSI members.

### To be eligible for the K-Club candidates must:

1. Meet the current NIH Eligibility requirements for the K application of interest.
2. Conduct clinical and/or translational research and committed to submitting an application for a K series award at the end of the K-Club sessions.
3. Have published at least 1 or more first-authored peer-reviewed papers in their area of research interest.

4. Commit to meet with their K-Club group every other week for a period of 12 weeks and participate in a final review of their completed application.

**The following elements constitute a complete application packet for the WVCTSI K-Club:**

1. A draft of the participant's Specific Aims page.
2. The participants NIH Biosketch.
3. The name and contact information of the planned primary mentor and a list of any other proposed co-mentors for the grant application, including their areas of expertise.
4. A letter of support from the participant's department chair. The letter must include:
  - a. a commitment to provide the participant with protected time for participation in the WVCTSI K Award Grant Writing Group;
  - b. a commitment to providing the participant with the required percent effort of protected time upon receipt of a K award; and
  - c. a statement that the chair will provide salary support should the participant's current salary exceed the NIH salary cap. Applications that do not include a letter of support from the participant's department chair will not be considered further.

Applications will be reviewed by the relevant WVCTSI staff, including the director of proposal development and/or the director of investigator development. Once applicants are notified in writing of their selection for participation in a K-Club the above listed directors and other relevant WVCTSI staff will be responsible for development and administration of all aspects of the K-Club program.

**Review Criteria**

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications submitted for consideration:

1. Review of the Specific Aims page demonstrates the topic is relevant to clinical and translational research and that the candidate has an area of research that demonstrates potential for a future R01 grant award from the NIH or other external funding agency.
2. Review of the candidate's NIH Biosketch demonstrates an appropriate training background to date and includes at least 1 first authored paper on the topic of the Specific Aims page.
3. Review of the Mentor(s) demonstrates an appropriate Primary Mentor has expertise in the topic area, has a known record of accomplishment of successful experience with mentoring junior investigators and has their own successful record of extramural research funding.
4. Review of the chair's (or dean's) letter of support demonstrates that all three required criteria are adequately met – protected time to participate in the K-

Club, protected time as required when the K award is funded, and the required commitment for the candidate's salary support.

5. Review of the overall readiness of the candidate to be competitive for an NIH Mentored Career Development Award at this time or consideration of areas that should be strengthened prior to participating in a K-Club.

The completed application will be reviewed to establish each applicant's readiness for developing a competitive K award application. In cases where one (or more) of the elements of the application packet (listed above) is not yet considered fully developed for a successful K application to the NIH or other similar funding agency, every effort will be made to provide constructive feedback and guidance to the applicant – and encourage their participation in a future K-Club once progress has been demonstrated.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility for interpretation of this policy rests with the director of WVCTSI.

## References and Authority

K Award applicants should refer to the NIH application guidelines for detailed instructions on the application process: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.html>.

## Approval and Authority to Proceed

I approve the procedure as described above, and authorize to proceed.

Name	Title	Date
Sally L. Hodder, MD	Director, West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute	4/10/18



4/10/18

Approved By

Date