TRAINING PLAN WORKSHEET

use this handout to develop a comprehensive training plan for a fellowship or career development award

Key points to consider when writing a training plan for your proposal:

- Read ALL instructions, including the review criteria. A clear understanding of the funding opportunity's goals is critical to writing a responsive application!
- Think deeply about your training needs. How will this award help you transition to your next career stage?
- Tailor your training plans (research and career development) and mentoring team to your training needs.

A. Grasp the Funding Opportunity's Goals

Most fellowships and Career Development Awards support research and other opportunities to enhance the applicant's training. As an example, the **NIH NRSA F31 (graduate student) or F32 (postdoctoral) fellowship** is expected to provide mentored research training experience, as well as:

- *A strong foundation in research design, methods, and analytic techniques appropriate to the proposed dissertation research*
- *The enhancement of the applicant's ability to conceptualize and think through research problems with increasing independence*
- *Experience conducting research using appropriate, state-of-the-art methods, as well as presenting and publishing the research findings as first author*
- *The opportunity to interact with members of the scientific community at appropriate scientific meetings and workshops*
- *Skills needed to transition to the next stage of the applicant's research career*
- *Opportunities to enhance the applicant's understanding of the health-related sciences and the relationship of the proposed research to health and disease*

The NIH F31 / F32 instructions also state: *The training plan should document the need for, and the anticipated value of, the proposed mentored research and training in relationship to the individual's research career goals. The training plan should also facilitate the fellow's transition to the next stage of his/her research career.*

Thus, your training plan must describe a cohesive plan, but also justify how this plan will facilitate your training. Make sure to read all the instructions, giving meticulous attention to the goals and requirements, of your specific Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

B. Develop Your Training Plan Based on Your Training Needs

First, think deeply about your training needs. How will this award help you transition to your next career stage? Develop three to five training goals for your funding period and organize your training plan with these goals in mind. The individual development plan (IDP) you develop annually can help facilitate this process (more information for graduate students: http://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/idp/; postdocs: http://postdocs.stanford.edu/idp/). MyIDP (http://myidp.sciencecareers.org) is also helpful. Keep the funding opportunity in mind so your goals are aligned with those of the funding agency.

NIH F31 & F32 applicants are required to describe their Training Goals and Objectives in the *Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training* document (**http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.htm**). Instructions: *Describe your overall training goals for the duration of the fellowship, and explain how the proposed fellowship will enable the attainment of these goals. Identify the skills, theories, conceptual approaches, etc. to be learned or enhanced during the award. As applicable, discuss how the proposed research will facilitate your transition to the next career stage.*

Second, create an action plan to gain the skills or experiences necessary to achieve your goals. Sample activities include courses to acquire new knowledge, laboratory externships to enhance technical skills, conferences to disseminate research and initiate collaborations (local, national), scientific communication opportunities to enhance writing skills (e.g. grant writing), etc.

NIH F31 & F32 applicants are required to describe Activities Plan Under this Award in the *Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training* document (**http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-**

application-guide.htm). Instructions: *Describe, by year, the activities (research, coursework, etc.) you will be involved in during the proposed award and estimate the percentage of time to be devoted to each activity, based on a normal working day for a full-time fellow as defined by the sponsoring institution; the percentage should total 100 for each year. The activities planned under this award should be individually tailored and well integrated with your research project. Describe the skills and techniques that you intend to learn as well as any planned, non-research activities (e.g. those relating to professional development and clinical activities) during the award period. Provide a timeline detailing the proposed research training and related activities for the entire duration of the program.*

Stanford has a wealth of opportunities for gaining research and professional skills. Listed below are websites that include many of these opportunities:

Biosciences: http://biosciences.stanford.edu
Grant Writing Academy: http://biosciences.stanford.edu/grantwritingacademy/
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs: http://postdocs.stanford.edu
BioSci Careers: http://med.stanford.edu/bioscicareers.html
Stanford BEAM (Bridging Education, Ambition, and Meaningful Work): https://beam.stanford.edu/
Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (look at the GDP Framework): https://vpge.stanford.edu
Stanford Explore Courses: https://explorecourses.stanford.edu
Biomedical Seminar Series: http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/
Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning: https://vptl.stanford.edu
Technical Communication Program: https://engineering.stanford.edu/students/support-and-resources/technical-communication-program

Third, develop a realistic timeline that delineates when you will complete the above activities. Your timeline must be easy to comprehend and visually appealing so your reviewer can quickly grasp your training goals.

C. Build a First-Rate Team of Mentors Tailored to Your Training Needs

Your Sponsor will supervise your proposed mentored training and is likely your Stanford PhD or postdoc advisor. Some proposals encourage applicants to identify more than one sponsor, i.e. a co-sponsor, or a team of mentors to assist in your training. A first-rate mentoring team will reflect the various facets of your proposal, including augmenting your research training and supporting necessary professional development activities.

NIH F31 & F32 instructions notes: *The primary sponsor should be an active investigator in the area of the proposed research training and be committed both to the applicant's research training and to direct supervision of his/her research. The sponsor must document the availability of sufficient research funds and facilities for high-quality research training. The sponsor, or a member of the sponsor team, should have a successful track record of mentorship. Applicants are encouraged to identify more than one sponsor, i.e., a sponsor team, if this is deemed advantageous for providing expert advice in all aspects of the training program. When there is a sponsor team, one individual must be identified as the primary sponsor, and will be expected to coordinate the applicant's overall training. The applicant must work with the sponsor(s) in preparing the application.*

When building your team of mentors, consider the Review Criteria for the particular FOA that you are applying to because your reviewers will use these as guidelines to evaluate your team of mentors. As an example, NIH F31 & F32 the *Sponsor, Collaborators, and Consultants* Scored Review Criteria asks the following:

- *Are the sponsor(s') research qualifications (including recent publications) and track record of mentoring individuals at a similar stage appropriate for the needs of the applicant?*
- *Is there evidence of a match between the research and clinical interests (if applicable) of the applicant and the sponsor(s)? Do(es) the sponsor(s) demonstrate an understanding of the applicant's training needs as well as the ability and commitment to assist in meeting these needs?*
- *Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support the applicant's proposed research project and training for the duration of the research component of the fellowship?*
- *If a team of sponsors is proposed, is the team structure well justified for the mentored training plan, and are the roles of the individual members appropriate and clearly defined?*
- *Are the qualifications of any collaborator(s) and/or consultant(s), including their complementary expertise and previous experience in fostering the training of fellows, appropriate for the proposed project?*

TRAINING PLAN WORKSHEET

1. **TRAINING GOALS:** What are your training goals during the funding period of your proposal? Below, please list your training goals and activities you will complete to attain your goals:

   Goal 1: *What is your training goal? Make sure your goal addresses your training needs.*
   - Activity 1: *What will you do to attain your goal?*
   - Justify 1: *Describe how this training activity will help you attain your goal.*
   - Activity 2: *What will you do to attain your goal?*
   - Justify 2: *Describe how this training activity will help you attain your goal.*

   Etc.

2. **TIMELINE:** Create a realized timeline for completing the above goals and activities.

EXAMPLE TRAINING TIMELINE

	Years:	1	2	3
Training Goal #1 *e.g. scientific communication*	Activity #1 - *classes e.g. writing your science*	X	X	
	Activity #2 - *submit abstract, present at conference*		X	X
	Activity #3 - *present annually in departmental journal club*	X	X	X

Etc.

3. **MENTORING TEAM:** Who will be your Sponsor and Co-Sponsor (if applicable)? Who will be members of your mentoring team (or advisory committee)? Lists names and position titles for your team of mentors. Also add qualifications and experiences for your Sponsor and mentors that will foster your training.

Sponsor: (name, position title)
Qualifications & Experiences that will foster your training:

Co-Sponsor (if applicable) (name, position title)
Qualifications & Experiences that will foster your training:

Mentoring Team Member (if applicable) (name, position title)
Qualifications & Experiences that will foster your training:

Mentoring Team Member (if applicable) (name, position title)
Qualifications & Experiences that will foster your training:

Mentoring Team Member (if applicable) (name, position title)
Qualifications & Experiences that will foster your training: