*Fellowship Applications (*[*F30*](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-25-426.html)*,* [*F31*](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-25-422.html#_Section%20V.%20Application%20Review%20Information)*, and* [*F32*](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-25-423.html#_Section%20V.%20Application%20Review%20Information) *mechanisms) are evaluated based on the review criteria listed below.*

**Overall Impact**

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the candidate’s potential for, and commitment to, a productive independent scientific research career in a health-related field, in consideration of the scored and additional review criteria.

The overall merits of the applications will be scored using the three review criteria defined below.

**Scored Review Criteria**

1. Candidate’s Preparedness and Potential

* Discuss the candidate’s previous educational, scientific, and professional experience in terms of how it prepares the candidate for the proposed research training plan. Consider the context, for example, the candidate’s stage of training and the opportunities available.
* Assess whether the candidate and sponsor statements as well as the referee letters provide convincing evidence that the candidate possesses qualities (such as scientific understanding, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness, and drive) that will improve the likelihood of a successful research training outcome.
* Consider the candidate’s potential to benefit from the fellowship research training plan and to transition to the next career stage in the biomedical research workforce.

1. Research Training Plan

* Assess the rigor and feasibility of the research training project and how completion of the project will contribute to the development of the candidate as a research scientist.
* Evaluate the goals of the overall research training plan and the extent to which the plan will facilitate the attainment of the goals.
* Discuss whether the research training plan identifies areas of needed development and contains appropriate, realistic activities and milestones to address those needs.
* Consider whether the sponsor(s), scientific environment, facilities, and resources are adequate and appropriate for the proposed research training plan.
* If the candidate is proposing to gain experience in a clinical trial as part of his or her research training, is there evidence of the appropriate expertise, experience, resources, and ability on the part of the sponsor(s) to guide the applicant during the clinical trial research experience?

1. Commitment to Candidate

* Assess whether the sponsor(s) presents a strong mentoring plan appropriate to the needs and goals of the candidate.
* Evaluate the extent to which the sponsor(s) and organizational commitment is appropriate, sufficient, and in alignment with the candidate’s research training plan.
* Consider whether the level of commitment provided will contribute to the successful completion of the proposed plan and allow the candidate to advance to a productive career in the biomedical research workforce.
* If proposed, will the clinical trial experience contribute to the proposed project and/or the candidate's research training?

**Additional Review Criteria**

As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will evaluate the following additional items while determining merit, and in providing an overall impact score, but will not give separate scores for these items.

Protections for Human Subjects

For research that involves human subjects but does not involve one of the categories of research that are exempt under 45 CFR Part 46, the committee will evaluate the justification for involvement of human subjects and the proposed protections from research risk relating to their participation according to the following five review criteria: 1) risk to subjects, 2) adequacy of protection against risks, 3) potential benefits to the subjects and others, 4) importance of the knowledge to be gained, and 5) data and safety monitoring for clinical trials.

For research that involves human subjects and meets the criteria for one or more of the categories of research that are exempt under 45 CFR Part 46, the committee will evaluate: 1) the justification for the exemption, 2) human subjects involvement and characteristics, and 3) sources of materials. For additional information on review of the Human Subjects section, please refer to theÂ [Guidelines for the Review of Human Subjects](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/url_redirect.php?id=11175).

Inclusion of Human Subjects Policies

When the proposed project involves human subjects and/or NIH-defined clinical research, the committee will evaluate the proposed plans for inclusion. For additional information on review of the Inclusion section, please refer to the [Guidelines for the Review of Inclusion in Clinical Research](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/url_redirect.php?id=11174).

Vertebrate Animals

The committee will evaluate the involvement of live vertebrate animals as part of the scientific assessment according to the following three points: (1) a complete description of all proposed procedures including the species, strains, ages, sex, and total numbers of animals to be used; (2) justifications that the species is appropriate for the proposed research and why the research goals cannot be accomplished using an alternative non-animal model; and (3) interventions including analgesia, anesthesia, sedation, palliative care, and humane endpoints that will be used to limit any unavoidable discomfort, distress, pain and injury in the conduct of scientifically valuable research. Methods of euthanasia and justification for selected methods, if NOT consistent with the AVMA) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, is also required but is found in a separate section of the application.  For additional information on review of the Vertebrate Animals Section, please refer to the [Worksheet for Review of the Vertebrate Animals Section.](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/url_redirect.php?id=11150)

Biohazards

Reviewers will assess whether materials or procedures proposed are potentially hazardous to research personnel and/or the environment, and if needed, determine whether adequate protection is proposed.

Resubmissions

For Resubmissions, the committee will evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous scientific review group and changes made to the project.

Renewals

Individual fellowship awards are generally not renewable. In rare cases in which fellowship recipients require further fellowship support, the committee will consider the progress made in the last funding period.

Revisions

Not Allowed

**Additional Review Considerations**

As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will consider each of the following items, but will not give scores for these items, and should not consider them in providing an overall impact score.

Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research

All applications for support under this NOFO must include a plan to fulfill NIH requirements for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR).  Taking into account the level of experience of the candidate, including any prior instruction or participation in RCR as appropriate for the candidate’s career stage, the reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the proposed RCR training in relation to the following five required components: 1) **Format -** the required format of instruction, i.e., face-to-face lectures, coursework, and/or real-time discussion groups (a plan with only on-line instruction is not acceptable); 2) **Subject Matter -** the breadth of subject matter, e.g., conflict of interest, authorship, data management, human subjects and animal use, laboratory safety, research misconduct, research ethics; 3) **Faculty Participation -** the role of the sponsor(s) and other faculty involvement in the fellow’s instruction; 4) **Duration of Instruction -** the number of contact hours of instruction (at least eight contact hours are required); and 5) **Frequency of Instruction –**instruction must occur during each career stage and at least once every four years.  Plans and past record will be rated as **ACCEPTABLE** or **UNACCEPTABLE**, and the summary statement will provide the consensus of the review committee. See also: [NOT-OD-10-019](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html) and [NOT-OD-22-055](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-22-055.html).

Applications from Foreign Organizations

Reviewers will assess whether the project presents special opportunities for furthering research programs through the use of unusual resources, populations, or environmental conditions that exist in other countries and either are not readily available in the United States or augment existing U.S. resources.

Select Agent Research

Reviewers will assess the information provided in this section of the application, including 1) the Select Agent(s) to be used in the proposed research, 2) the registration status of all entities where Select Agent(s) will be used, 3) the procedures that will be used to monitor possession use and transfer of Select Agent(s), and 4) plans for appropriate biosafety, biocontainment, and security of the Select Agent(s).

Resource Sharing Plans

Reviewers will comment on whether the Resource Sharing Plan(s) (e.g., [Sharing Model Organisms](https://sharing.nih.gov/other-sharing-policies/model-organism-sharing-policy#policy-overview)) or the rationale for not sharing the resources, is reasonable.

Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources

For projects involving key biological and/or chemical resources, reviewers will comment on the brief plans proposed for identifying and ensuring the validity of those resources.

Budget and Period of Support

Reviewers will consider whether the budget and the requested period of support are fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed research.