

Weill Cornell Medicine K Early Career Award Training (KECAT) Program

Application Deadline: Monday, July 27

Program description:

The objective of the Weill Cornell Medicine K Early Career Award Training (KECAT) Program is to provide grant writing training in preparation for career development (K-award) applications. The program is designed for early career investigators who are planning to apply for a NIH K-series grant or equivalent foundation career development award in 2027. This program will run over a 10-month period from September 2026 to June 2027 and is ideally suited for a June 2027 NIH deadline. Applicants who are considering earlier deadlines in 2027 may participate, but they should be aware that their KECAT program may be truncated to match the timing of their submissions. Over the course of the program, participants will attend a series of lectures on grantsmanship and receive hands-on-training through discussion of previous applications.

The program expects to accept up to 8 “KECAT Scholars.” KECAT Scholars will be selected based on adherence to eligibility criteria, the merit of their applications, and the availability of faculty reviewers in their proposed area of research. KECAT Scholars will be expected to develop all components of their research proposal and will receive feedback from faculty reviewers during the program.

Candidates whose applications are complete, submitted on time, and rated well, but who are not selected to be a Scholar may be selected to be a KECAT Auditor. KECAT Auditors will be able to attend all didactic sessions but will not receive feedback from faculty reviewers on their draft applications.

Program Directors

- Genevieve Fouda, MD, PhD, Assistant Dean of Faculty Development (Director)
- Lisa Kern, MD, MPH, Professor of Medicine (co-Director)

Eligibility

- Applicants must hold a PhD, MD, MD-PhD or equivalent doctoral degree and seek additional research training under the supervision of a sponsor or sponsors with the intent of embarking on an independent research career (that is, typically holding or pursuing a faculty position as an investigator with 75% effort or more as a researcher).
- Applicants must be full-time Fellows, Postdoctoral Associates, Instructors, or Assistant Professors at Weill Cornell Medicine. Faculty members with appointments at the Hospital for Special Surgery, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Houston Methodist Hospital, and WCM-Qatar are not eligible to apply. HSS faculty may apply to audit program lectures.

- The applicant’s career goals must be aligned with submission of an application for an NIH K01, K08, K12, K22, K23, K25, or K99 award, DOD/AHA/ACS career award, or equivalent foundation career development award in **2027**.
- Eligibility for the KECAT Program requires that the applicant meet all the criteria mandated by NIH to apply for the award. Current NIH policies require that, by the time of the K award, candidates for the K01, K08, K12, K22, K23 or K25 must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen U.S. nationals, or have been lawfully admitted for residence. Refer to NIH guidelines for additional information.

Application

1. NIH Biosketch (up to 5 pages, following NIH instructions for formatting)
2. Specific Aims Page (1 page)
3. Candidate career goals and objectives (1 page)
4. Candidate’s timeline for K submission (1 page)
5. Letter of Support from Faculty Mentor
 - a. This letter should demonstrate the commitment of the mentor to work with the scholar in developing their K application throughout the KECAT program. Describe the primary mentor’s research qualifications, previous experience as a research supervisor, and intent to serve as the primary mentor for the K award application that the program is designed to create.
6. Letter of Support from Division Chief and/or Department Chair
 - a. This letter should explicitly state that the candidate has at least 10% protected time to attend monthly meetings and fully participate in the program. The letter should also address the level of institutional commitment for the candidate and the candidate’s likelihood for career success.

Application deadline and submission

- Completed applications are due on **July 27th, 2026** to facultydevelopment@med.cornell.edu as a single pdf file using the naming convention KECAT 2026_LAST NAME

Additional Information

- KECAT scholars are expected to attend all program sessions:

Date	Topic
September 10, 12-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to K-Awards (Lectures)
September 22, 12-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Aims Page (Lecture/Workshop)
October 6, 12-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significance & Innovation (Lecture/Workshop)
October 20, 1-3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Research Strategy (Lecture/Workshop)

November 3, 12-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Candidate Section (Lecture/Workshop)
November 2026 – June 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual Review Meetings for KECAT Scholars (Specific Aims, Significance & Innovation, Research Strategy and Candidate Section)

For questions: please contact Amna Aslam at ama4015@med.cornell.edu