



American
Urological
Association

Advancing Urology
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Urology Care
FOUNDATION™
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American Urological Association*

Program Announcement for the 2024 Urology Scientific Mentoring and Research Training (USMART) Academy

IMPORTANT DATES

Application Submission Deadline: 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, December 14, 2023

Application Review: January 2024

Selection Notification: March 2024

Mentoring Period: April 2024-April 2025 (1 Year)

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I. OVERVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY

A. MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The AUA Office of Research was created in 2001 with a mission to increase and maintain the workforce of urology physician-scientists and researchers to catalyze the advancement of clinical practice and reduce the burden of urologic disease through impactful research. In addition to administering a portfolio of research funding programs, the Office of Research also administers investigator programs to provide additional elements of support to the urologic research community, such as mentoring to early-career urology researchers and physician-scientists.

The Mission of the Urology Scientific Mentoring and Research Training (USMART) Academy is to foster creative and impactful mentorship between developing urology researchers and established investigators with an exemplary track record of leadership and mentorship in the field of urology research. The USMART Academy envisions a mentoring program in which every mentee experiences nurturing one-to-one relationships and community support, which in turn allows each mentee to develop to their full potential as scientists capable of impactful research and as involved members of the urologic research community. Additionally, the USMART Academy recognizes the distinct needs of promising urology researchers and physician-scientists from groups underrepresented in the biomedical workforce and in research (e.g., women, racial/ethnic minorities¹). As such, the USMART Academy is committed to striving for the reoccurring goal of ensuring 50% of all mentee cohorts include individuals from underrepresented groups.

The AUA is committed to promoting diversity in its many forms to promote excellence in research and leadership within the urologic research workforce. The AUA is supportive of efforts to analyze and address the ways in which social and economic inequalities impact the urology community, and the ability to achieve health equity for patients with urologic conditions. Information related to the applicant's race/ethnicity and gender is collected during the proposal process to assess these efforts but is de-identified for all reporting purposes. In the event that an available USMART Academy position is restricted to applicants of a particular race/ethnicity or sex, this information may be taken into consideration during the selection process.

B. MENTEE POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Fifteen mentee positions are anticipated to be available for the 2024 USMART Academy competition. Availability of all mentee positions is contingent upon the availability of mentors and subject to change. Final determinations regarding mentee positions available will be made at the time of mentee selection. Applicants with research interests across all urologic disease areas and all research types (basic, translational, clinical, and health services/outcomes) are welcome.

Participation in the USMART Academy as a mentee or mentor does not include financial compensation of any kind: participation in virtual and/or in-person USMART Academy events is at the individual's expense. The USMART Academy appreciates and thanks mentors for their time, energy, and expertise donated to this early-career investigator support program.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. MENTEE APPLICANT

To be eligible to compete for a 2024 USMART Academy mentee position, applicants must, by January 1, 2024, be either:

- Urologist in accredited clinical fellowship.

¹ The following racial and ethnic groups have been shown to be underrepresented in biomedical research: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders."

National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director, Scientific Workforce Diversity

Populations Underrepresented in the Extramural Scientific Workforce

<https://diversity.nih.gov/about-us/population-underrepresented>

- Post-doctoral fellow no more than five years beyond completion of a PhD.
- Early-career urology investigator within the first five years after beginning a faculty position.
- Have a strong, demonstrable commitment to a future career as a urology researcher or urology physician scientist.

One application per applicant is allowed during a competition year. Former USMART Academy mentees may not apply. Applicants whose institutions are located outside the boundaries of the AUA Sections should contact the AUA Office of Research at grantsmanager@auanet.org for more information before applying to the USMART Academy. Information on the AUA Sections can be found at: <https://www.auanet.org/membership/who-we-are/aua-sections-and-demographics>.

Applicants to the USMART Academy must be able to commit one to two hours per month for 12 months to participate in the program via videoconference, teleconference, or in-person interactions. Selected mentees and their mentors are responsible for creating and maintaining a mutually agreed upon meeting schedule: the AUA Office of Research does not provide administrative scheduling services between mentors and mentees.

2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT

AUA Membership

All individuals who are not AUA members at the time of application must secure and maintain AUA membership if selected to receive a USMART Academy mentee position. Proof of AUA membership must be provided to the AUA Office of Research. Additional information about AUA membership can be found at: <https://www.auanet.org/membership>.

II. APPLICATION INFORMATION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The USMART Academy application process requires one application submission. Applicants should review this Program Announcement in its entirety to understand and begin preparing the required components. Questions on eligibility, application materials, etc. should be directed to the AUA Office of Research via email to iheard@auanet.org.

Applicants are responsible for composing, compiling, and submitting complete materials. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all required items are submitted electronically via the application submission system prior to the application deadline. Applicants assume all responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of materials, and that materials are received in full in advance of submission deadlines.

The deadline to complete and submit the full application is December 14, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. Partial applications and/or applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Institutions should encourage the submission of applications from all eligible and highly qualified early-career urology researchers and physician scientists. Within any given funding year, however, the AUA Office of Research prefers to provide support to as many institutions as possible, provided the applicant has submitted a highly meritorious application. Therefore, mentee selection decisions will be impacted by not only the merit of the application and the alignment with awards available, but also may be impacted by the intent to distribute mentoring support to qualified individuals from as diverse a distribution of institutions as possible.

Electronic Registration:

Applicants must submit the application all required documents electronically via ProposalCentral at <https://ProposalCentral.com/>. Submission of materials via email, fax, or postal mail will not be accepted.

To prevent emails from the submission system from being identified as spam, it is strongly recommended that applicants add pcsupport@altum.com to their address book or safe sender list. Applicants requiring technical support related to the grant submission portal should visit <https://ProposalCentral.com/> and/or contact Customer Service or email pcsupport@altum.com.

B. APPLICANT BIOSKETCH

Applicants must submit an NIH-style biosketch, strictly limited to five pages, with the application. A template is provided in the Download Templates and Instructions section in ProposalCentral. In the event the applicant does not have a biosketch, a 5-page PDF Curriculum Vitae focusing on research may be substituted.

Submissions that do not include the applicant's biosketch or resume, and/or biosketches/resumes that exceed the page limitations will be deemed noncompliant and may not advance to consideration for a mentee position.

C. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION STATEMENT

The applicant Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Statement is limited to one paragraph. Please briefly share your views on diversifying the field of urologic research, and the field of urology more broadly. Describe your interests in contributing to this effort. What are some of the ways you have considered or worked toward greater diversity, equity, inclusion as it relates to your research? If you have not had direct experience in this area, please share your aspirations." If applicable to your proposed research plan, describe how your project addresses issues related to DEI in urology or inequity in urologic healthcare delivery.

D. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants will submit their applications through ProposalCentral. If applicants have a pre-existing ProposalCentral account, please use it. New users should create a ProposalCentral account. After creating a ProposalCentral account and logging into the system, the applicant can locate the USMART Academy application by clicking on the "Grant Opportunities" tab and searching for the American Urological Association as the Grant Maker. The proposal can be accessed by clicking the "Apply Now" button. The application sections are listed below with additional guidance on how to complete each section. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of all materials, and that materials are received in full before the submission deadline.

E. APPLICATION SECTIONS

Application sections are listed below with additional guidance on how to complete each section. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of all materials, and that materials are received in full before the application deadline.

1. Title Page

- Please enter your name and press "Save" to begin an application.

2. Download Templates

- This section includes a template for the NIH biosketch and the program announcement.

3. Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal

- This section enables applicants to give other users access to the application: **no action is required.**

4. Applicant Information

- Please enter demographic information of the applicant.
- Please enter information on any past and current mentors.

5. Application

- This section includes questions about the applicant's current research endeavors, history, future career plans, and questions to articulate the applicant's exact mentorship needs. Please be specific, answer questions in full sentences, and avoid acronyms, special characters, or abbreviations where possible.

6. Current Research Interest

- This section includes questions regarding what type(s) of research the applicant conducts, organ systems involved, and urology disease conditions involved in the applicant's research interests.

7. Upload Applicant Biosketch Here

- Applicants are required to upload their biosketch as a portable document file (PDF) with a maximum limit of 5 pages. A template is provided.
- In the event the applicant does not have a biosketch, a 5-page PDF Curriculum Vitae focusing on research may be substituted.

8. Upload Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement

- Applicants are required to provide a one-paragraph Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement.

9. Validate

This ensures that all required components of the application have been completed and will identify any required but incomplete components.

10. Preview

- No action is required in this section. Signature of the generated title page is not required.

11. Submit

- Once submitted, additional changes cannot be made to the application unless released by the Office of Research.

III. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

An independent peer review panel of expert physician-scientists and researchers evaluate applications. Each application is considered according to established criteria for determining merit as described below.

All review processes are conducted confidentially to maintain the integrity of the selection process. Peer reviewers agree to a nondisclosure statement that all application and evaluation information will not be disclosed outside the peer review panel. Violations of confidentiality can result in the voiding of peer review results and other corrective actions. In addition, the applicant, mentor(s), and other individuals involved are prohibited from contacting persons involved in the review process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process. Violations of these prohibitions will result in the disqualification of the application.

Following the completion of peer review, the applicants deemed most meritorious and appropriate for the USMART Academy will be selected to available mentee slots and will be matched with available mentors. All selection decisions are at the sole discretion of the AUA Office of Research and approved by the AUA Research Council Chair.

B. REVIEW CRITERIA

All applications will be evaluated against the following review criteria:

- To what degree does the applicant's current research and five-year plan support the applicant's potential for a successful career in urologic research.
- To what degree is the applicant's commitment to continue striving for success in academic or community-based research shown.
- To what degree has the applicant demonstrated how the addition of an external mentor would increase their potential for a successful career in urologic research.
- Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the extent to which the applicant's DEI statement adequately reflects the intent of the AUA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This review criterion will not affect the overall impact score of an application but may be considered when determining appropriate alignment of program mentees with DEI goals as outlined by the AUA.

C. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Applicants will be notified of decisions via the application submission system and/or via email in March of 2024. Decisions will not be shared over the phone. To prevent emails from the proposal submission system from being identified as spam, it is strongly recommended to add pcsupport@altum.com to your address book or safe sender list. Please note that results will not be given over the phone.

Applicants selected for a mentee position must:

- Send an email to iheard@AUAnet.org to confirm or decline the award within 48 hours.
- Submit a high-quality headshot (file size typically ≥ 1 MB) in professional dress or laboratory/white coat via ProposalCentral within a week of accepting the award. With the submission of this photo, the applicant thus gives consent for its use in AUA publications, advertising, fundraising, or other media activities.
- Confirm AUA membership and provide proof of membership within a week of accepting the award.

IV. MENTEE REQUIREMENTS

A. MATCH AGREEMENT FORM AND ORIENTATION

After being notified of acceptance to a mentee position, AUA Office of Research staff will match mentees with available mentors balancing mentees' requested variables where possible. Upon being matched with a mentor, both mentor and mentee will be provided an agreement form outlining high-level expectations for the frequency of interactions, suggested areas of collaboration, etc. to which both parties must agree and uphold throughout the 12-month program.

B. REPORTING

During Mentorship Period

AUA Office of Research staff will contact participating mentees and mentors to gather reporting information at shared, regular intervals throughout the duration of the 12-month program. Specific instructions will be provided with the match notification. Failure to adhere to reporting requirements in a timely fashion and/or failure to provide requested documentation may result suspension of the mentee and/or mentor from eligibility for subsequent AUA Office of Research programs.

Post-Mentorship Period

Following the completion of the mentoring period, the AUA Office of Research may contact previous mentees and mentors to collect additional information including, but not limited to, publications, funding, invited speakerships and presentations, mentorship, and leadership positions within the AUA or affiliated organizations, to report on program outcomes and return on investment.

C. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED USMART ACADEMY ACTIVITIES

In addition to regular interactions with matched mentors, all mentees are required to join an orientation webinar in April 2024, date, and time to be determined, where program expectations will be outlined. Mentees must be willing to attend a USMART Academy networking event held in conjunction with the AUA Annual Meeting. All mentees are also required to attend a program closeout webinar in April 2025, date, and time to be determined.

Each year, the AUA and the Urology Care Foundation coordinate events designed to advance urologic research and provide educational venues, especially for early-career investigators. These events are held during the AUA Annual Meeting and at AUA Headquarters in Linthicum, Maryland. USMART Academy mentees are highly encouraged to attend the following events as they align with mentees' respective areas of research, and should contact the Office of Research at research@auanet.org for additional information.

AUA Annual Meeting

- Basic Sciences Symposium
- Challenges for Urologic Research Symposium
- Early-Career Investigators Showcase
- Urologic Oncology Research Symposium

AUA Headquarters

- Early-Career Investigators Workshop

V. CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions related to this Program Announcement or submission requirements should be directed to the AUA Office of Research. The preferred method of communication is email at iheard@auanet.org. Phone calls, when necessary, may be directed to 410-689-3773. Assistance is typically available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. Please allow two business days for response time.