

O'Donnell Brain Institute (OBI) Clinical Neuroscience Research Excellence Initiative

The following are questions and answers discussed during and after the four Town Halls conducted from July 16–18, 2024, regarding the launch of the OBI Clinical Neuroscience Research Excellence Initiative.

Question 1: May I apply to both programs?

Answer: You cannot submit applications for both programs as PI, but you may apply as PI for one Program and can also be a Co-I on another program application.

Question 2: May I submit a study that includes animal research?

Answer: No. These programs are designed for clinical/human neuroscience. Applications that propose animal research will be unresponsive to these two programs. For animal research we recommend applicants consider other OBI grant mechanisms such as the Sprouts Grant Program.

Question 3: Will I get to see the reviewers' comments or get feedback?

Answer: No. Like other granting agencies (e.g., Brain and Behavior Research Foundation), reviewers' comments and feedback about your proposal will not be provided.

Question 4: For the Clinical Investigator Development (CID) Program, is there a limit on how recently I've been appointed to an assistant professor position? Are there any exclusions, like having received an R-level grant?

Answer: All Assistant Professors are eligible except those in the process of promotion to Associate Professor. Applicants with an NIH K-Award are eligible, but need to clearly justify the value of the proposed CID funding including explaining why they are not applying for NIH R01. NIH R01 or equivalent grants are **ineligible** for the CID Program

Question 5: Can we ask for \$1M and receive less?

Answer: Yes. Like other granting agencies (e.g., NIH), the budget and budget justification will be reviewed for appropriateness and may be adjusted as needed. Applications should budget for funds needed to carry out the proposed project.

Question 6: In case of MPI, do they have to be affiliated with OBI?

Answer: One or more of the PIs actively driving the work must be an OBI Investigator. PIs that are not OBI Investigators, but deemed critical for the work may participate (e.g., a cardiologist doing assessments in a cognition study). An applicant PI/MPI can submit the letter of intent without being an OBI-Investigator, but are required to become an OBI Investigator prior to submitting a complete application. The OBI-Investigator requirements and application process are listed here:

<https://odonnellbraininstitute.utsouthwestern.edu/assets/investigator-program-about.pdf>

Question 7: For the Human Neuroscience Collaborative Research Program, are multiple PIs (MPI) allowed? Are there limits on the number of PIs?

Answer: Multiple PIs are allowed. There are no limits to the number of PIs. Applicants are encouraged to construct their collaborative team to meet the needs of the proposed research study.

Question 8: How many mentors should be on the mentor team for the CID Program?

Answer: There is no specified number of mentors for the mentoring team. Applicants are encouraged to construct their mentoring team to meet the needs of the proposed career development and research goals.

Question 9: Clinical informatics and biorepository support are being provided. Does this come out of the budget or is the support being provided in addition to what was budgeted? If the latter, how much time/effort would be coming from these teams?

Answer: Clinical Informatics, Biorepository, and Data Management services will be provided by OBI independent of the budget, so in most cases should not be budgeted in the grant applications. Projects proposing exceptional levels of Informatic or Biorepository support may be asked to include some support within their budgets. Applicants asked to submit complete applications will be required to meet with the OBI/PNTRC team to discuss the clinical information, biorepository, and data quality control needs of the study, including the time/effort need to accomplish the study objectives.

Question 10: How much preliminary data would be needed? Is the idea that seems to be feasible based on the expertise of the PI sufficient?

Answer: Applicants are encouraged to provide as much preliminary data as they can to best support the research objectives. There is no defined amount of preliminary data required, but applicants should keep in mind that your proposal will be competing with others that may have considerable preliminary data.

Question 11: How many awards do you expect to provide for each RFA? Are they offered annually?

Answer: We expect to award up to three CID awards for this initial cycle. We will invest up to \$4M for the Human Neuroscience Collaborative Research Program. The total number of awards will depend upon the budgets for the mix of proposals that are awarded.

Question 12: Can you clarify for which programs a PI external to UTSW is eligible to apply?

Answer: An applicant external to UTSW with an accepted offer for an Assistant Professor position is eligible to apply for the CID Program. PI/MPI for the Human Neuroscience Collaborative Research Program must be current UTSW faculty.

Question 13: Could a non-UTSW collaborator that provides technical expertise be part of the research team (and receive support)?

Answer: For both programs, a collaborator(s) can be external to UTSW. Collaborators external to UTSW may be supported with a maximum of up to 10% of the annual budget in any one year, and a total of up to \$25K over the entirety of the grant award. We will not create or enter into formal subcontracts for any program

Question 14: What type of biorepository support will be provided for a successful proposal?

Answer: For both programs, biorepository support will include 1) assisting with sample collection, 2) sample cataloging, and 3) sample storage. Projects proposing exceptional levels of Biorepository support may be asked to include some support within their budgets.

Question 15: What bioinformatic support will be provided to successful applicants in addition to the biostats support? For example, will the OBI provide support for DNA/RNA sequencing analyses?

Answer: Support for DNA/RNA sequence analysis is beyond the type of bioinformatic support that would be provided and would need to be budgeted in the proposed study budget and detailed in the budget justification. In general, bioinformatic support provided by OBI (independent of applicant budget) will be focused on appropriate powering and correct analyses of clinical studies.

Question 16: What is the definition of an early career scientist?

Answer: For the purposes of the CID Program, we define “early career” as a faculty member who is an Assistant Professor and has not yet had an NIH R01 or equivalent grant. Assistant Professor applicants with an NIH K-Award are eligible, but need to clearly justify the value of the proposed CID funding including explaining why they are not applying for NIH R01.

Question 17: What is the process for someone being recruited? Are they eligible to apply for the career development proposal?

Answer: An external person being recruited to UTSW as an Assistant Professor is eligible to apply for the CID Program as long as they have accepted an offer as an Assistant Professor at UTSW.

Question 18: Is it a requirement to involve patient interaction?

Answer: To be responsive to both programs, the proposed research must prospectively study, intervene in, and/or collect biosamples from human subjects who are clinically well characterized. Studies proposing to examine previously collected data are unresponsive to these RFAs.

Question 19: Will career development funding be terminated if a PI receives external funding such as a R01?

Answer: No. Like NIH, CID awardees who receive a NIH R01 will retain their CID funding. As part of the program, CID awardees will be asked to submit an NIH

R01 (or equivalent) during the award period.

Question 20: Do I need to submit my NIH biosketch with my LOI?

Answer: Yes, please include a biosketch in your uploaded PDF.

Question 21: What are you expecting to receive from my Department Chair with the LOI?

Answer: The acknowledgement of application by the department chair needs to be in the form of a signed letter.

Question 22: For the OBI Neuroscience Collaborative Research Program, should the Chair's acknowledgement be a separate letter or a 3rd page of the LOI, or either?

Answer: Please provide a separate letter from the Chair.

Question 23: Do I need references in the LOI and are they included in the 2 page limit?

Answer: References are not needed for the LOI.

Question 24: Are federal funds a source of the funds for this program?

Answer: For these programs, there are no federal funds as these are internal funds at UTSW.

Question 25: Was there a decision made regarding the ability to use external collaborators that provide technical expertise?

Answer: For both programs, a collaborator can be external to UTSW. Collaborator(s) external to UTSW may be supported with a maximum of 10% of the total budget per year, (maximum of \$25K per year for the Human Neuroscience Collaborative Research Program) with an overall maximum up to \$100,000 collectively across all 4 years. We will not create or enter into formal subagreements or contracts for any program or person. The \$25K is a total combined limit for all external collaborators.

Question 26: For the LOI, do we submit acknowledgement of Department Chair, biosketch of PIs, 2 page LOI in one PDF file?

Answer: Yes, please upload in 1 file.