

Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program

A Training Program for Hematology/Oncology Fellows and Junior Faculty with a focus on Clinical Research in Lymphoma

2020-2022 Program Overview, Guidelines and Instructions for Application

KEY DATES

Application Release Date:	May 31, 2019
Application Deadline:	September 5, 2019 at 5:00 PM EST
Peer Review Process:	September – November 2019
Applicant Notification Date:	December 2019
Workshop Dates:	March 3 – 7, 2020

Introduction

LYMPHOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OVERVIEW:

The Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF) remains dedicated to finding a cure for lymphoma through an innovative research program and by supporting the next generation of lymphoma researchers. LRF provides education for people with lymphoma, their loved ones and caregivers, including comprehensive disease guides and facts sheets, in-person conferences and online resources. The Foundation also provides continuing medical education programs designed to increase the knowledge, skills and performance of healthcare professionals. The Foundation's patient services, including the LRF Helpline, Clinical Trials Information Service, financial assistance programs and Lymphoma Support Network, provide direct support to people with lymphoma.

LYMPHOMA CLINICAL RESEARCH MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF) Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program (LCRMP) is an education and mentoring program for fellows and junior faculty with a focus in clinical research in the field of lymphoma– the Foundation considers “lymphoma” to encompass all recognized lymphoma subtypes as well as chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). The program is two years in length and offers a broad education on clinical research and career development as well as managing career and quality of life issues. The goals of the LCRMP include:

- Provide mentoring and education to hematology/oncology fellows and junior faculty. The program will emphasize training in clinical research methods and design, statistical analysis, pathology, incorporating and interpreting correlative studies into clinical trials, and grant submission and funding. The program also aims to foster mentorship and research collaboration among experts and trainees in the field.
- Assist in the development of a specific clinical trial in patients with lymphoma and to set the foundation for grant development to support the trial. Study design and implementation will be discussed in a small group

setting consisting of experts in the field, statisticians, and other trainees in the program, where information, ideas, guidance, support and connections are shared, and where mentoring relationships can be developed.

- Provide continuing training, career development advice, and mentorship among trainees and experts in the field and to foster future participation and collaboration within the LRF through follow-up programming and activities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND FORMAT:

The LRF Scientific Advisory Board will select up to 8 applicants to become LRF Scholars and participate in the Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program. LRF Scholars attend an initial LCRMP workshop which is four days in length. **The workshop will take place March 3-7, 2020 in Scottsdale, AZ.**

LRF will convene a faculty of experts in lymphoma clinical research who will share their experience and knowledge throughout the program with the Scholars as a group and in small breakout groups. Faculty participating in the small groups and serving as mentors for the program will remain for the entirety of the program. In addition, faculty not only mentor Scholars at the workshop but will also be available to Scholars post-workshop. In addition, a handful of select presenters with specific knowledge for the didactic sessions or who have successfully obtained LRF grants will attend at least a portion of the program to present selected topics or to provide training in grant development and submission.

The workshop will consist of Scholars presenting their proposed clinical research projects, attending the content sessions, working with Mentors including a statistician, revising their proposed clinical studies and developing Specific Aims for a future grant submission, and presenting the revised protocol and Specific Aims of future grants at the completion of the workshop.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM:

The focus of the Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program is to enhance the ability of LRF Scholars to successfully design and administer clinical research studies and apply for grants to support related lymphoma research. The initial workshop curriculum supports this focus through:

- Formal didactic sessions
- Small group sessions with expert faculty
- The building of long-term mentoring relationships with appropriate experts
- The development of peer-to-peer relationships

Small group activities and didactic coursework will focus on clinical research design, implementation, and analysis and grant writing tips and strategies. In addition, there will be an emphasis on skills and relationship building among program Mentors and Scholars. Content will include:

- Protocol writing
- Formulating and expressing project aims
- Statistical design and interpretation of results
- Collaboration with translational and bench researchers
- Grant writing and grant opportunities
- Working with CTEP, the Cooperative Groups, pharmaceutical companies, and managing conflicts of interest
- Career development planning
- Protocol approval/ IRB interaction

- Clinical trial development and management
- Genomic research

Scholars are expected to present their initial trial at the start of the training and development meeting and present the revised trial at the end of the workshop. In addition, scholars will develop and submit a specific aims page for a career development grant in lymphomas.

In addition to the workshop, scholars will be supported throughout the following year by program faculty and LRF staff. In addition, scholars will attend two meetings (tentatively scheduled for October 2020 and 2021) in order to participate in LRF scientific meetings and mock grant review exercises.

ADDITIONAL SCHOLAR ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

1. **Fall 2020 Follow Up Meeting** – LRF Scholars will meet with the LCRMP Chairs and for a follow-up meeting held in conjunction with the fall meeting of LRF’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). Scholars will also attend a portion of the SAB meeting to observe the grant review process and participate in a practice grant review. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for two days in late October/early November. Travel to this meeting will be covered by LRF.
2. **Fall 2021 Follow Up Meeting** – LRF Scholars will attend the 2021 North American Educational Forum on Lymphoma, the Foundation’s largest patient education conference, and participate in a mini poster session during the Forum, as well as meeting with the LCRMP Chairs. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for September/October 2020; Scholar attendance will be required for the poster session and follow-up meeting only (most likely one business day). Travel to this meeting will be covered by LRF.
3. **Scholar Grants** – Grants in the amount of \$5,000 will be provided each year over two years¹ (\$10,000 total), to cover educational support such as tuition, registration fees, and travel for courses and meetings that are integral to their Career Development Plan, as well as supplies (such as computer hardware or software) or clinical trial expenses that will aid in professional development and/or project completion. Salary or other personnel expenses may not be charged to this grant. Please note that no cost extensions cannot be requested on Scholar Grants.
4. **Reporting and Evaluation** – Scholars will be asked to report on their progress at six months, one year and two years. They will also be asked to provide input and evaluation to the initial workshop and the follow-up meetings. Scholars may be contacted by LRF staff or program leaders for input and advice in improving the program in future years.
5. **Communications** – Scholars may be interviewed or be asked to provide content for Foundation communications, including but not limited to the website, newsletters, etc.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATIVE FACTORS:

Applications will be reviewed by members of the LRF Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). All projects must be focused on a proposed hypothesis-driven clinical research project in lymphoma. The project concept should be developed by the applicant and clearly supported by a **research mentor at their home institution** (associate mentors, who may or may not be at the applicant’s institution, are encouraged where their expertise will enhance the project). Only one

¹ Assumes a two-year project.

individual per program or division within an institution will be accepted (for example, two fellows within the same Hematology/Oncology fellowship program will not be accepted, but a fellow within a Hematology Fellowship and a fellow within a Radiation Oncology fellowship in the same institution could be accepted).

The review of applications will be based upon, but not be limited to, the following factors. Each factor will be judged in reference to its relevance to clinical research in lymphoma.

Applicant Factors

- Qualifications and demonstrated interest in lymphoma clinical research.
- Clinical research goals and objectives over and above the proposed project.
- Plans for two years immediately after the workshop to further the applicant's Career Development Plans.

Mentor Factors

- The Mentor's support and commitment to assisting the applicant in development and conduct of the proposed clinical research project, ensuring feasibility and commitment to completion of the study.
- The Mentor's support and commitment to the applicant, providing assistance and direction in the applicant's career development.

Project Factors

- Proposed project's research aims and their possible relevance and impact on the future of lymphoma treatment.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

1. Applicants must demonstrate a clear interest and commitment to a career in lymphoma clinical research. This commitment to a career focused on lymphoma-related research should be reflected in the applicant's career development plan and in the letter of support provided by their mentor.
2. Applicants for this award must be a junior faculty member in their first four years of a faculty position or trainees who are at least in their second year of one of the following ACGME accredited sub-specialty fellowship programs: Hematology/Oncology, Hematology, Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, or Hematopathology. Applicants should not be more than four years beyond completion if their fellowship or more than twelve years beyond completion of their MD or equivalent degree.
3. Applicants must be affiliated with a sponsoring institution in the U.S. or Canada for the duration of the LCRMP award. Citizenship is not required.
4. Applicants should not be participating in another competitively applied for mentorship (such as ASH's CRTI) during the LCRMP period (March 2020 through October 2022). Applicants who will have completed other mentorship programs prior to March 2020 are welcome.
5. Selected applicants are required to attend and participate in all LCRMP programs in their entirety including the 2020 workshop, follow-up programs (Fall 2020 and 2021), and LRF required communication, reporting, and evaluation.
6. Fluency in English.
7. Studies or proposals that are exclusively laboratory based are not appropriate for the LRF LCRMP. Proposals must involve clinical observation of human subjects and may include study or development of new diagnostic methods, therapies, and/or outcome measurements directed to patients with lymphoma are required.

8. All applicants must have an identified Primary Mentor at their home institution who is willing and able to provide financial support for the project and demonstrate a commitment to completing the proposal in order to ensure feasibility of the proposal. Associate Mentors, who may provide support for additional aspects of the project and be based at other institutions, are welcome but not a requirement.
9. LCRMP applications are self-initiated. LRF does not invite applications from selected individuals, institutions, or laboratories.

PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY – PubMed CENTRAL:

LRF funded researchers are required to submit, or have submitted for them, to the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central database an electronic version of the author's final manuscript including all modifications from the publishing and peer review process (the "postprint") upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication. This requirement applies to all grants awarded after May 1, 2012, whether LRF funds the research in whole or in part.

All scientific progress reports must include the PMC ID number (PMCnnnnn) to publications in Pub Med Central supported by the Lymphoma Research Foundation starting on May 1, 2012.

Application Process

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

All interested grant applicants must submit their applications online through proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>) by **5:00 PM EST on September 5, 2019**. Applicants are encouraged to contact LRF at researchgrants@lymphoma.org for questions or concerns relating to issues of eligibility for or responsiveness to this RFP.

To avoid being rushed at deadline time, applicants are encouraged to register and complete a professional profile at proposalCENTRAL **now**. Applicants should make sure their grants and contracts office has registered their institution and signing officials with proposalCENTRAL, and that they acquaint themselves with any internal approval processes required by their institution's grant office.

Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements, or that exceed page limitations, will not be reviewed.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORMAT:

Use the template supplied by PC and upload as a PDF. The Research Aims description should discuss the nature of the proposed research plan and include the following:

1. SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT
2. RESEARCH AIMS
3. BACKGROUND AND APPLICANT ROLE – This should include a detailed description of the contribution you, as the applicant, made to the development of this project and what your role will be in the execution of the project going forward.
4. PRELIMINARY STUDIES
5. RELEVANCE TO LYMPHOMA
6. RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODS -- Provide evidence of appropriate facility resources and define how the available patient study group will contribute to the outcome of the project. Support letters from pharmaceutical partners/other collaborating entities are strongly encouraged where applicable and should be included in the Appendix. If patient tissue samples are required for this project, please include plans for how these samples will be obtained.

7. **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION AND DATA ANALYSIS** – Please include in this section a plan for transitioning your project if you anticipate moving to a faculty position prior to the close of the LCRMP grant in October 2022, including if you plan to open the project at any new institution and/or if your current institution will support your involvement in the project even if you relocate.
8. **REFERENCES**

Limit sections 1-7 of your Research Plan to 7 pages, **including tables and figures**, with legible 11 point type and 1 inch margins. References are not included in the page limit. **Please note proposals that exceed page limits will not be reviewed.**

A **complete** application also includes the following:

1. **Application Cover Sheet:** Please fill out the requested information as completely as possible and upload as a PDF attachment.
2. **LRF Waiver:** The original of the Waiver must be signed by the applicant, the Primary Mentor, and an authorized signing official of the sponsoring institution (please confirm appropriate signing officials with your institution's grant office). Signatures in ink are required. A scan of the signed page must be uploaded as a PDF. Proxy and/or electronic signatures are not permissible. Please note LRF no longer requires the original signed document be mailed to the LRF office.
3. **Non-Technical Abstract:** This is a brief description (100 words or less) of the proposed research plan presented in terminology for the general public. It should be in language understandable to the average reader of a daily newspaper but still convey the purpose of the project.
4. **Technical Abstract:** In addition to describing the project using technical language, the Technical Abstract should explain (in 100 words or less) the significance of the research plan to the field of lymphoma. (Note: The non-technical and technical abstracts should explain the significance of the proposed work for patient treatment in lymphoma.)
5. **Keywords:** Please select all applicable keywords in each of the four Areas of Study categories. A thorough, accurate selection of keywords will enable LRF to match your application with appropriate reviewers
6. **Applicant's Biographical Sketch:** Please follow the current NIH format and upload as a PDF. If you are using the fellowship version of the template, please note the section on coursework completed is not required.
7. **Mentor(s) Biographical Sketch(es):** Please follow the current NIH format and upload as a PDF. Please follow the current NIH format and upload as a PDF. If any Associate Mentors are listed, they should also submit a biosketch.
8. **Individual/Career Development Plan:** Limit to three pages with legible 11 point type and 1 inch margins. Use the template supplied by PC, and upload as a PDF. The Career Development Plan should describe the course of action the Applicant will take over two-three years immediately after the training program. The Plan should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that, at the conclusion of this award, the Applicant will have acquired a high level of knowledge, skills, and experience in lymphoma clinical research. The Plan should include how the Applicant intends to participate in advanced courses, seminars, research meetings, and other educational activities at the sponsoring or an affiliated institution, or how such clinical research training will be otherwise acquired.

8. **Primary Mentor's Letter and Statement of Support:** Limit to two pages. The Primary Mentor's letter and statement of support should outline the mentor's experience with the applicant, the mentor's qualifications and prior experience in lymphoma, plans to assist and support the applicant, including a mention of any funding necessary to support the described proposal, and a commitment to aid in the applicant's future development. The Mentor's letter should also explain the applicant's contributions to the genesis of the proposed research, and estimate the amount of time (in percentages) the applicant will spend on research, clinical duties, and other activities that may be a part of their current position. **Please note your primary mentor must be based at your home institution.** If associate mentors are not being counted towards the blinded support letters (see below), please include their support letters in the appendix.
9. **Letters of Support:** List two additional individuals (which should include your fellowship program director or division director who are familiar with your past work and/or training) and who are providing letters of support. These letters may include any associate mentors on the project. proposalCENTRAL will automatically notify these individuals via email, and their (blinded) letters of support will automatically be included with your submission once uploaded. Please enter your letter writers in the application early, to ensure adequate time to submit a letter. **Letters must be fully submitted before the 5 pm EST deadline on September 6, 2018 or the system will prevent you from submitting your application.** For technical assistance submitting letters, please refer to the proposalCENTRAL technical helpline information on page 8.
10. **Current and Pending Research Support:** List all active and pending research support for the applicant in the "Other Research Support" section of the application. Include all individual and institutional support available for the proposed work during its duration. For each item, provide a source of support, identifying number, project title, name of Principal Investigator/Program Director, annual direct costs, and total period of support. Failure to provide evidence of sufficient supporting funds for the proposed research can invalidate the application. *Note: proposalCENTRAL now records other support in your personal profile. Follow the instructions in the application system to enter or import information from your profile to this section.*

Research support for the Primary Mentor should be indicated using the Mentor Support template and uploaded as an attachment; list all active support with support in lymphoma/CLL highlighted, and indicate if the support will apply to the project proposed in the application. Associate mentor support is required only if the support is funding any portion of the applicant's project.
11. **Budget:** Enter a budget in the proposalCENTRAL template outlining the planned expenses for the grant (\$5,000 each in Year 1 and Year 2). Allowable expenses include professional development expenses (travel and registration fees for relevant conferences, tuition for a course), a computer for your use in research, and expenses relevant to the research project. Lab equipment for the institution or personnel expenses of any kind are not allowable expenses. Institutional overhead is also not permitted. Please note that the project dates for Year 1 should start no earlier than April 1, 2019 and end October 31, 2020; Year 2 should be November 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021. Please note that no cost extensions cannot be requested for Scholar grants.
12. **Signature Page:** proposalCENTRAL will prompt you to generate a printable version of this page when you have completed your application. Original signatures from the applicant, sponsor, and institutional official are required. A scan of the signed page must be uploaded as a PDF. Proxy and/or electronic signatures are not permissible. Please note LRF no longer requires the original signed document be mailed to the LRF office.

APPENDICES:

The following additional documents **should be uploaded in PDF format** if available at the time of application. Appendices 1-5 (and any additional support letters) should not exceed 30 pages total. Publication reprints are not subject to the 30 page limit but should not exceed three publications total. Please note that when animal, human subjects, and biohazards certification has been obtained (if applicable to the project), applicants need only to include the confirmation that approval has been granted, not the entire assurance document.

1. **Other Research Support for Mentor:** See “Current and Pending Research Support” directions on pg. 6 of the RFP.
2. **Support Letters from Pharmaceutical Partners/Other Collaborators:** See “Research Proposal” on pg. 6 of the RFP.
3. **Vertebrate Animals Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF LCRMP Terms and Conditions, Section 10.
4. **Human Subjects Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF LCRMP Terms and Conditions, Section 10.
5. **Biohazards Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF LCRMP Terms and Conditions, Section 10.
6. **Publication Reprints:** Each application is limited to 3 (three) publications.

PLEASE NOTE--About attachments/appendices:

When uploading documents to proposalCENTRAL in the appendices, please be sure to follow the guidelines below in order to ensure that your attachments will be viewed by the reviewers as you intended.

- Review the permissions and security settings in the PDF attachment and be sure that the file is not password protected or locked for editing so that it can merge properly with the rest of the application when downloaded.
- Check all merged documents created in Adobe PDF to make sure that each page is merged properly.

To check that the entire application is correct and in the proper order, please select the blue hyperlink “Signature Page(s)” in the left menu tab. Then, click the red button “Print Signature Pages and Attached PDF Files.” This will create a merged PDF of your application, which includes the attachments that you uploaded. If any pages are missing, please contact PC customer support for further assistance.

FOUNDATION CONTACTS:

Whitney Steen
Senior Manager, Research Grants and Communications

Phone: 212-349-2910
Email: researchgrants@lymphoma.org

TECHNICAL HELPLINE:

Questions concerning use of the proposalCENTRAL electronic submission system should be directed to the proposalCENTRAL helpline, which is available for questions from applicants during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 pm EST), Monday-Friday.

Phone: 800-875-2562(Toll free) or 703-964-5840

E-mail: pcsupport@altum.com

APPLICATION DEADLINES AND TIMETABLE:

- **Application**

Submission Deadline: September 5, 2019 at 5:00PM EST.

EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN.

- **Review**

September-November 2019

All applications will be reviewed by the LRF Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).

- **Notification**

December 2019

Applicants will receive notification of funding decision no later than December 20, 2019. Individuals selected as LRF Grantees will receive with their notification an LRF Research Grant Agreement and Policy, Terms and Conditions for signature by the LRF Grantee, the Mentor, and the Sponsoring Institution.

- **Workshop**

March 3-7, 2020

Selected awardees will be expected to attend the LCRMP Workshop, which runs from the evening of Tuesday, March 3 to noon Saturday, March 7, 2020 in Scottsdale, AZ.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS:

Please follow the instructions on the proposalCENTRAL(PC) website and in this RFP to complete your application. You do not need to complete the application all at once; your application will be saved on the PC server until completed. Incomplete applications cannot be submitted. A complete application must include all of the items listed in the checklist below. All applications must be submitted in English.

You or your institution's grant office may also wish to review the sample Research Grants Policy, Terms and Conditions, and Grants FAQ, which are available on the LRF website at lymphoma.org/grants. All chosen awardees must adhere to all requirements as stated in the Policy, Terms, and Conditions. Please contact researchgrants@lymphoma.org if you or your institution has concerns or questions about the requirements.

After successful submission of an application, applicants will receive a confirmation email from proposalCENTRAL. **Please check that the email associated with your ProposalCENTRAL account is one where you wish to receive notifications about your application, as all response letters will be sent to that email.**

If selected for award, payments will be made semi-annually to the Sponsoring Institution, which will be responsible for disbursing funds to the LRF Grantee. If the Grantee leaves the Sponsoring Institution, the grant will be transferred to the Grantee's new Institution or payments will be ended early if the Grantee moves to a non-eligible institution or is otherwise unable to continue their research project and/or participation in LCRMP activities. The Institution and/or Mentor cannot transfer LRF Grant funds to a different researcher if the original recipient becomes ineligible or unavailable.

All LRF applications, application evaluations, and priority scores are considered confidential and are made available only to the SAB, the Board of Directors (BOD), LRF and PC administrative staff, and other LRF representatives involved

in the application process. Applications discussed during the final round of review may receive some feedback from the committee with their response letter, however, full critiques of applications, scores, and rankings are not made available to Applicants. Although LRF and PC endeavor to protect the confidentiality of proposal and evaluation materials, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Checklist for Applicants

Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program 2020

Use this checklist as a tool to help in preparing your submission. Ensure that you allow **enough time** to complete the application process to meet the deadline of **5:00 pm (EST) September 5, 2019**, as late applications **will not be accepted**.

Application and Submission Checklist

- Register and complete a professional profile at proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>).
- Ensure that your grants and contracts office has registered your institution and signing officials with proposalCENTRAL.
- Two (2) letters of support **in addition to** your Primary Mentor's letter, are required. Applications cannot be submitted if all support letters have not been uploaded - make sure your letter writers know and can comply with the application deadline.
- Begin the application process on the proposalCENTRAL system. You do not need to complete the application all at once; your application will be saved on the server until completed. ***Remember, incomplete applications cannot be submitted.*** See more on required Application parts below.
- Download and review the "Lymphoma Clinical Research Mentoring Program Policy Statement, Terms and Conditions." posted at lymphoma.org/grants. Applicants must adhere to all requirements as stated in the "Terms and Conditions." Please note that this policy statement has some significant differences from the "Research Grants Policy, Terms and Conditions" used for other LRF grant programs.
- Print the Waiver and Signature pages and provide signatures (in ink) by the Applicant, Primary Mentor, and the Sponsoring Institution's authorized official. Upload a scanned version of each signed page as a PDF. Proxy and/or electronic signatures are not permissible.
- Prepare the Application Cover Sheet (2 pages) and upload to Proposal Central as a PDF.

In addition, note the following required application parts:

- Research Proposal – Limit 7 pages, 11 pt type, and 1 inch margins, including tables and figures.**
- Applicant Biosketch**
- Applicant Career Development Plan – see page 5 for page limits.**
- Mentor Biosketch (es)**
- Primary Mentor Letter of Support**

- Two (blinded) General Letters of Support**
- Non-Technical Abstract**
- Technical Abstract**
- Areas of Study/Keywords – fill out through proposalCENTRAL.**
- Current and Pending Research Support**
- Budget—Fill out through proposalCENTRAL.**
- Appendices – other attachments needed to support the application (limit 30 pages total):**
 - Regulatory Documentation (IRB, etc.), if applicable to proposal – please note only confirmation of approval is required not the entire assurance.**
 - Mentor’s Research Support**
 - Support letters from collaborators/pharmaceutical partners, if applicable to proposal**
 - Publication Reprints – not required. Publications are not subject to 30 page limit but nor more than three (3) publications should be submitted.**