

Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program

Bank of America, N.A., Melissa MacGillivray Dane, and Susan Monahan, Co-Trustees

Frequently Asked Questions

Grant Cycle 2026

Many questions are answered in the 2026 King Guidelines: www.hria.org/grants/King

Applicants are highly encouraged reach out to HRiA Program Staff at KingAwards@hria.org for any questions or to confirm eligibility before the application deadline.

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General Eligibility

Guidelines state that a Mentor may submit only one fellowship candidate per application cycle. One of the postdoctoral fellows in our group with the same Mentor is currently funded by the King Trust. Would my Mentor still be able to sponsor me as a candidate?

Yes, you are eligible – two NEW people cannot apply from the same lab for the same application deadline.

Can my Mentor submit one fellow for Clinical and one fellow for Basic Science?

No, only one applicant per Mentor may apply per application cycle.

Is there a limit on how many applications may be submitted from one institution?

There are no institutional limitations on the number of candidates who may submit applications.

Do I need to have United States citizenship to receive the award? If not, is visa documentation required to receive the award?

United States citizenship is not required to apply or to receive the award, nor is visa documentation. Award recipients must be eligible to receive a postdoctoral fellowship for the duration of the award period. Please check visa requirements and anticipated changes in job title, if relevant, and confirm eligibility with your Office of Sponsored Research in advance of application submission.

Can the start date of the award be adjusted?

Yes, the Recipient may postpone the start date for up to three months, but the award must be activated on or before January 1, 2027.

Publications

I have a peer reviewed publication from my previous but not current post-doc lab, am I eligible?

Yes. Publications from previous post-doctoral research experiences count towards eligibility.

After graduate school I stayed in my thesis lab as a postdoc for one year. I have a peer reviewed publication from that postdoc, but not from my current postdoc lab. Am I eligible?

If the publication is from work done during the graduate thesis, then it is not sufficient to count towards eligibility. Peer reviewed publications must be from research conducted after receiving one's doctoral degree. Competitive applicants for this award typically have a first-author publication from their current postdoc lab.

Am I eligible if I have a co-author paper?

Yes, however competitive applicants typically have a first author paper from their current postdoctoral lab.

What about papers that are not yet accepted but available as a preprint and posted on a platform like bioRxiv?

Articles in press or submitted for review will count towards eligibility only if they are publicly available as a preprint (e.g. BioRxiv). For publications in press that are not and cannot be made publicly available, please contact program staff at KingAwards@hria.org to confirm eligibility.

Is the publication requirement the same for clinicians (who might be < 3 years into their post-docs) and PhD scientists? What if I have a publication from my clinical fellowship?

Yes, the publication requirement is the same for clinicians. Publications during clinical fellowships will be counted towards eligibility. Publications from medical school or residency will not be counted.

Research Area

Is there more information to help me determine if my project would align with basic or clinical research?



The King Fellowship definitions for basic, preclinical, clinical, and implementation research mostly aligns with that of the NIH:

Basic Research¹ is defined as a systematic study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind.

Preclinical Research² connects the basic science of disease with human medicine.

Scientists may develop model interventions to further understand the basis of a disease or disorder and find ways to treat it. Testing is carried out using cell or animal models of disease; samples of human or animal tissues; or computer-assisted simulations of drug, device, or diagnostic interactions within living systems.

Clinical Research³ includes research with human subjects that is:

1. Patient-oriented research. Research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens, and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator (or colleague) on the proposed study directly interacts with human subjects. It includes: (a) therapeutic interventions, (b) clinical trials, (c) development of new technologies, or (d) mechanisms of human disease that can be directly linked to detection, diagnosis, progression, or severity of disease. Excluded from this definition are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues that cannot be linked to a living individual.
2. Epidemiological and behavioral studies.
3. Outcomes research and health services research.

Implementation Science⁴ is the study of methods to promote the adoption and integration of evidence-based practices, interventions, and policies into routine health care and public health settings to improve our impact on population health.

Research projects involving patient derived tissue, samples, or data; or using cell culture or animal models seeking to understand basic science questions, should be directed to the King Trust Basic Sciences category.

To determine if you are doing human subjects research, you can utilize the following:

Decision Tool: Am I Doing Human Subjects Research? | grants.nih.gov

HRiA staff will automatically reassign your application to the other program should the research be misaligned with the program under which the application was received.

Research Experience

How do I determine my stipend level?

¹ <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/basic-research-definition>

² <https://ncats.nih.gov/translation/spectrum>

³ grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm#ClinicalResearch

⁴ <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/is/about>



Stipend levels are based upon the number of years of relevant full-time experience since completion of your doctoral degree as of the funding start date, October 1, 2026. For applicants without clinical training, this will be based upon years of full-time research experience. For applicants with clinical training, other experience such as time during clinical training programs may be considered as relevant experience. This will be determined by HRiA Staff, using applicant eligibility and research experience information provided in the application.

How do I determine completed years of postdoctoral research experience?

Example: If months of full-time postdoctoral research experience is 2 years and 10 months, check off 2 years on the Cover Page.

What do you mean by “Applicants must be working in an academic or medical institution in the State of Massachusetts and have the required minimum/maximum years of experience.”? Do you mean “must be working” at the time of application or at the time of the beginning date of the fellowship?

Applicants must be present and have started their work in a MA lab by the funding start date of the program (October 1, 2026).

Should I include my postdoctoral research experience in my former lab?

Yes - all postdoctoral research experience, former and current, should be counted. However, if you spent time in the graduate lab to finish up papers, etc. after receiving your degree, this time should not be counted.

I was a technician/research scientist for a year after receiving my doctoral degree. Does that time count as postdoctoral research experience?

Postdoctoral research experience is defined as full-time research after receiving one's doctoral degree, or completion of residency or equivalent for those with a MD, MD/PhD, PhD, DO, DPT, etc. Applicants should count all time spent engaged in research in a laboratory or similar professional setting for a temporary or defined period either domestically or abroad. This can include research experiences where the applicants official title or position was not “postdoctoral researcher”.

How do you count part-time research experience?

Part-time research experience is pro-rated. If you were conducting one year of postdoctoral research experience at 25% effort, then that one year will be counted as three months (12 months x .25 percent effort = 3 months). State this clearly in the Applicant Eligibility and Research Experience section and have your Mentor confirm the total years of research experience completed within their letter of support if invited to submit a full-stage application.

For individuals with clinical training, research conducted during research intensive years of clinical fellowship training where time spent on research was greater than 50% effort are counted as “full time research experience”.

I was a postdoc in a different state, does that time count?



Yes – all postdoctoral research experience, former and current, should be counted regardless of location. However, if you spent time in the graduate lab to finish up papers, etc. after receiving your degree, this time should not be counted.

How do I determine my eligibility if I hold a Ph.D. but do not hold an M.D.?

Candidates who hold a Ph.D. must have completed at least three years but no more than six years of postdoctoral training by the funding start date. This requirement is the same whether applicants are applying to the Clinical Research or Basic Science program. Candidates who hold a Ph.D. but have clinical training (such as clinical psychology specialties) may have no more than six years of postdoctoral training by the funding start date. Please reach out to HRiA staff (KingAwards@hria.org) to confirm eligibility.

Eligibility for those with Clinical Training

If I have completed medical school but not started residency, am I eligible?

No, eligible applicants must have completed clinical training required for licensing. Those with clinical training will be required to have 70% protected time for research if awarded.

I am a first-year postdoc following medical school. Am I eligible?

Those with clinical training are eligible if they have not completed more than six (6) years of cumulative full-time postdoctoral research experience since completion of residency (or similar clinical training). Clinicians in fields without formal internship and residency requirements (e.g. PhD Psychologists and PharmD applicants) may have up to six (6) years of cumulative research experience after completion of all clinical education required for licensing.

Do publications and research conducted during clinical education count as research experience/years or not? Or are they considered only as clinical years?

No, postdoctoral research experience is defined as full-time research after receiving one's doctoral degree. Time during research intensive years of clinical fellowship training (>50%) may be counted as post-doctoral research experience. In some cases, postdoctoral research may occur after the first doctoral degree but prior to starting residency/fellowship clinical training.

How do I calculate years of postdoctoral research experience if I am a physician and want to apply?

Physicians usually complete their residency and then enter fellowship programs to obtain additional clinical training as well as research training. Most ACGME-accredited subspecialty fellowship programs last three years. When physicians or researchers with clinical training are applying for King Trust Fellowships, they must have completed no more than six years of full-time postdoctoral research experience. This requirement may be completed at any time after award of their M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. or comparable degrees.

If your career progression does not align with anything described above or provided below as examples, please reach out to HRiA staff (KingAwards@hria.org) to confirm eligibility.

Example 1:



T. Smith, MD, PhD

- 2015 MD/PhD
- 2015 – 2016 Postdoctoral research year in laboratory setting
- July 2016 – June 30, 2019 Medical residency
- July 2019 – June 30, 2022 Fellowship in a Medical subspecialty – clinical training
- July 1, 2022 – Sept 1, 2026 Fellow in a Basic Science lab

ELIGIBLE? YES. When applicants with clinical training apply, they must have completed no more than six years of full-time postdoctoral research experience by the funding start date. All postdoctoral research experience is counted towards the total. Dr. Smith has completed 1 year (2015 – 2016) PLUS 4 years, 2 months (July 2022 – Sept 2026) for a total of 5 years, 2 months postdoctoral research experience, which is within the 2026 program eligibility.

Example 2:

J. Jones, MD

- 2019 MD
- 2019 – Sept 30, 2022 Medical Internship & Residency
- Oct 1, 2022 – Sept 30, 2024 Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship – clinical training
- Oct 1, 2024 – Sept 30, 2026 Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship – research intensive

ELIGIBLE? YES. Physician scientists with clinical training must have completed no more than six years of full-time postdoctoral research experience by the funding start date. Applicants are encouraged to apply during the final year of their fellowship. Dr. Jones will have completed 2 years (2024 – 2026) of full-time postdoctoral research experience by the funding start date.

Example 3:

J. Rodríguez, MD, PhD

- 2019 MD/PhD
- 2019 – July 31, 2022 Pediatrics Internship & Residency
- August 1, 2022 – Oct 1, 2026 Postdoctoral Fellowship

ELIGIBLE? YES. Dr. Rodríguez has had clinical training and completed medical residency July 31, 2022. Therefore, they would start counting postdoctoral research experience beginning August 1, 2022. By the funding start date of the program, they will have completed 4 full years, plus 2 months, of postdoctoral research training.

Example 4:

E. Liu, MD, PhD

- 2018 MD
- 2018 PhD
- 2018 – January 31, 2020 Medical Internship
- February 1, 2020 – October 1, 2026 Postdoctoral Fellowship

ELIGIBLE? NO. By the funding start date of the program, Dr. Liu will have earned 6 years and 8 months of postdoctoral research experience. This exceeds the maximum of exactly six years allowable. However, Dr. Liu may be eligible if 8 months of the postdoctoral fellowship



was occupied by family or medical leave, or other extenuating circumstances as described in the guidelines.

Example 5:

M. James, PhD

- 2024 PhD in clinical psychology
- May 2024– September 2026 Clinical Psychology Fellowship

ELIGIBLE? YES. By the funding start date, Dr. James has completed clinical training through their clinical fellowship and is eligible under the criteria that they have completed less than 6 years of full time research experience.

Pauses to Research Experience

Do you count the time spent conducting research for a second doctoral degree as postdoctoral research experience?

No, the time spent conducting research for a second doctoral degree does not count as postdoctoral research experience.

My institution was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Do I have to count that time as post-doctoral research experience?

If research was interrupted for extenuating circumstances, including the COVID-19 pandemic, these months are not considered part of the full-time research experience. Eligibility extensions for COVID-19 related research disruptions are limited to a maximum of six (6) months. For example, if the Applicant experienced institutional or research lab shutdowns, visa, travel or other issues that significantly disrupted research activities, and the Applicant was not able to be productive with remote work during this time, then those months should be excluded. Any exclusions must be documented by the Mentor in their Letter of Support if the applicant is invited to submit a full-stage application. However, if the Applicant was able to continue working remotely during this time, then no exclusions should be made.

If I have a gap in my research experience for which I took time off (e.g. parental leave) am I eligible?

For all applicants, if research was interrupted for family or medical leave, or for other extenuating circumstances (including COVID-19, military leave), these months are not considered part of the full-time research experience and should be excluded. Periods of research training in a degree-granting program (i.e., study for a Ph.D., MPH, MSc, or second degree) should be excluded. All gaps in research experience must be documented by the mentor within their letter of support (if submitting a full-stage application). You are eligible if research experience, excluding documented gaps, is between 3–6 years for those without clinical training, or less than 6 years for those with clinical training.

Do you require HR documentation for parental leave? Will a letter from the supervisor suffice?



We do not require formal documentation for parental or other leave. However, your mentor must note any pauses in research experience within their letter of support (if applicant is invited to submit a full-stage application).

Other Funding

I already have a funded fellowship and am looking for research support for my project. Am I still eligible to apply for the King Trust Fellowship?

No, the two-year King Trust Fellowship supports stipend, a 10% fringe allowance, and a flexible \$25,000 research allowance. It is not acceptable to concurrently hold a named fellowship from another source that supports a full salary. Please reach out to HRiA staff at KingAwards@hria.org to confirm eligibility.

Are you eligible to apply if you intend on applying or have a pending K?

Yes, but you will not be allowed to accept the King award should you receive a K award. If you receive a K award after your King Award has already commenced, you will need to relinquish the King Award.

If my mentor has funding like an R01, will that affect my application?

No. You may be listed as personnel and receiving support from the R01. Applicants may not receive support for project work that is already supported by their mentor's R01.

I am on a T32 award now, am I eligible?

Applicants are eligible to apply if they are on a T32. However, due to policies regarding funding overlap, applicants will likely be required to relinquish T32 funding upon receipt of a King Award.

What constitutes a Career Development Award?

Career Development Awards are defined as awards that:

- 1) Have dedicated support for salary and may support additional research expenses;
- 2) Require a mentor;
- 3) Are designed to support the awardees transition toward independence

Some examples of Career Development Awards that would deem an applicant ineligible include:

- The HHMI Hannah H. Gray Fellows Program
- The Helen Hay Whitney Foundation Fellowship
- The AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship
- The ASH Fellow to Faculty Scholar Award
- The Simons Foundation Fellows-to-Faculty Award



Independence, Titles, and Change of Status

How do you define non-independent research?

Non-independent training positions may include the following: the candidate's research is entirely funded by another investigator's grant or conducted entirely in another investigator's assigned space; the candidate has not received a start-up package from the university; the candidate may also not be allowed by institutional policy to hire postdoctoral fellows or technical staff or be the responsible supervisor of graduate students; finally, the candidate may lack other rights and privileges of faculty such as attendance at faculty meetings.

If I have been promoted to an Instructor, am I eligible to apply?

It is recognized that many different titles are given to researchers and clinician scientists who are engaged in postdoctoral research. If the applicant is still engaged in non-independent mentored research within the eligibility window, they are eligible to apply.

I was a postdoc for 5 years and was then promoted to instructor position which I have held for 2 years. Am I eligible?

Most likely, no. If the applicant is still engaged in non-independent mentored research with the title of Instructor, then this time should be counted as postdoctoral research experience. In this case, that would be a total of 7 years in non-independent postdoctoral training positions.

If I get an instructor position out of my current institution, can I take this funding to my next position?

Awards are made to the Institution where the named Recipient is conducting research. If the Recipient or Mentor plans on moving to another non-profit academic, medical, non-governmental or research institution during the award period, the Recipient will notify and seek approval from the Administrator to continue the Project at the Recipient's new institution.

What if my Fellowship Status Changes?

Applicants promoted to an independent faculty position on or before the funding start date indicated in the Guidelines are not eligible to accept a King Award.

Following receipt of a fellowship, any change in academic status must be reported to HRiA Staff. It will then be determined on a case-by-case basis whether or not the fellowship can continue.

What happens if I get promoted during my award?

The Recipient and the Mentor must notify the Administrator of any change in the Recipient's academic status at least 30 days prior to such change. If the awardee is promoted to a position that is still a non-independent mentored research position, there will be no change in the award. However, in the event of a significant change in the Recipient's academic status, including a promotion conferring independent faculty status or its equivalent, the Recipient will likely need to relinquish the award and return any remaining unspent funds.

