



KL2 Program Request for Applications (RFA) Program Brochure Start Date: July 1, 2026



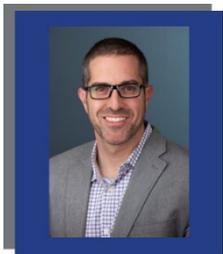
FRONTIERS
CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE INSTITUTE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

LOI DUE:

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

FULL APPLICATION DUE:

Wednesday, December 17, 2025



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Frontiers CTSI KL2 Program

About the Program

The Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) KL2 Program is a rigorous training opportunity designed to cultivate a skilled cadre of early-career translational researchers. Supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical and Translational Science Award, the KL2 Program provides scholars with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to drive innovative and impactful clinical and translational research. Through a combination of mentorship, education, and hands-on research experience, the program aims to foster a culture of excellence, collaboration, and innovation among its scholars, ultimately leading to improvements in health outcomes for individuals and communities.

The KL2 has three main components:

1. Developing productive and beneficial mentoring relationships
2. Completing a core curriculum focused on advancing in a career as an independent translational investigator
3. Successfully conducting a translational research project

At the heart of the KL2 Program is a strong emphasis on mentorship. Scholars work with experienced mentors who provide guidance and support in training, research, and career development. With access to a wide range of mentors and resources, scholars have the opportunity to develop into independent researchers capable of addressing complex health challenges. The program also offers a tailored core curriculum that includes training in clinical and translational research, as well as career development activities. By providing scholars with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support, the Frontiers CTSI KL2 Program aims to nurture the next generation of leaders in translational science.

Questions regarding the program can be sent to the KL2 & TL1 Program Director, Holly Zink, Ph.D. at hzink2@kumc.edu.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

The KL2 Program offers a range of benefits designed to support scholars in their development as independent clinical and translational researchers. These benefits include:

- **Salary support for up to 75% protected time*** (9.0 Calendar Months) dedicated to the proposed research and training plans. Salary support will be provided up to \$120,000.
- **Provided \$25,000 in research funds per year***, which can be used for project supplies, publication costs, and travel to conferences or workshops. (The average total amount budgeted per scholar must not exceed \$180,000 in direct costs per year.)
- **Provided \$2,000 in research travel funds per year***, which can be used to attend the Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) annual conference and/or a discipline-specific conferences for the distribution of research results.
- **Up to two years of training** in a collaborative, supportive environment, providing scholars with the opportunity to engage with a multidisciplinary group of peers and mentors.
- **Intensive mentored research experience**, ensuring scholars receive guidance and support from experienced researchers throughout their projects.
- **Formal training in clinical and translational research**, including coursework and seminars to enhance scholars' research skills and knowledge.
- **Assistance toward securing independent funding by the end of Year 2**, helping scholars transition to the next stage of their research careers.

*Financial support is contingent on availability of funds. Some positions may be contingent on receiving departmental financial support. Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute at the University of Kansas is part of a nationwide network of Clinical and Translational Science Awards institutions working to speed the research process from scientific discovery to patient care. Frontiers supports the spectrum of translational research, from animal health studies to community-based and population health outcomes research. Frontiers recognizes that multidisciplinary teams are essential to improve health, and of utmost importance are the partnerships and collaborations with communities, families, and individuals. Frontiers is supported by a five-year, \$25 million grant from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) of the NIH.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

[Dr. Matthew W. Mosconi, Ph.D.](#) is the Director of the Kansas Center for Autism Research and Training (K-CART) at the University of Kansas. He also serves as a Senior Scientist and the Associate Director of the Life Span Institute, Professor of Clinical Child Psychology, and co-Lead of the KL2 training program within Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

[Dr. Nicole \(Nikki\) L. Nollen, B.S., M.A., Ph.D.](#) is Professor of Population Health at KUMC with expertise in health outcomes research, co-lead of the Cancer Prevention and Control Program within the University of Kansas Cancer Center, and co-Lead of the KL2 training program within Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

MENTORING

Mentoring is a cornerstone of the Frontiers CTSI KL2 Program, playing a vital role in shaping the development and success of our scholars. We believe that effective mentorship is multifaceted, encompassing scientific guidance, career navigation, and personal support. Each KL2 Scholar works with a primary mentor and mentorship team, providing a wide range of perspectives and expertise. Additionally, scholars have access to KL2 Program Directors who serve as active mentors throughout the program. Our approach to mentorship emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement, reflecting the nature of translational research.

As part of the scholar's seminar series, scholars also receive training from the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). Frontiers CIMER-trained faculty and staff facilitate research mentor and mentee training for individuals at all career stages, ensuring that scholars are equipped with the skills and knowledge to foster effective mentoring relationships. Through CIMER, scholars learn new approaches and resources for advancing mentoring relationships, aligning expectations, fostering effective communication, and , and building a network of mentors and mentees.

CORE CURRICULUM

Our Core Curriculum is designed to equip scholars with the skills and knowledge necessary to become successful translational scientists. Central to this curriculum is the integration of the "Seven Characteristics of a Translational Scientist," which include being a domain expert, boundary crosser, team player, process innovator, skilled communicator, systems thinker, and rigorous researcher. Through a combination of didactic coursework, hands-on training, and mentorship, scholars develop these characteristics independent of their particular areas of expertise.

The curriculum includes tailored didactic coursework that covers a range of topics essential for translational research, such as grant writing, scientific writing, systematic reviews, clinical trials, and responsible conduct of research. Scholars also participate in the Frontiers Scholar Seminar Series, which includes training from the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). This training helps scholars develop effective mentoring relationships and fosters a culture of excellence in research mentoring. Additionally, scholars can enroll in degree programs and training workshops that align with their career goals and enhance their skills in translational research. Through this comprehensive curriculum, scholars gain the knowledge and expertise needed to drive innovative and impactful clinical and translational research.



TAILORED DIDACTIC COURSEWORK

The Tailored Didactic Coursework component of our program offers KL2 Scholars a range of options to enhance their skills and knowledge in clinical and translational research. Scholars have the opportunity to participate in the following degree-granting programs that provide comprehensive training in critical areas of translational research, including informatics, biostatistics, and clinical research methods.

- [Master of Science - Clinical Research \(KUMC\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Bioinformatics \(UMKC\)](#)
- [Certificate in Clinical Research \(UMKC\)](#)
- [Graduate Certificate - Health Data Science \(KUMC\)](#)

In addition to degree programs, scholars can enroll in various workshops, symposia, and training programs that align with their career goals and interests. All clinical and translational researchers require opportunities to improve their skills and learn new approaches. Frontiers is committed to offering relevant, timely and high value training reflecting a comprehensive range of clinical and translational research topics, including (but not limited to) best practices for engaged research, translational research participant recruitment and retention methods, practice facilitation and other useful tools and techniques. Frontiers leverages the expertise among Frontiers partner institutions to offer special training in entrepreneurship and implementation research, including through select courses, such as

- Grant Writing (KUMC – PRVM 872) -- **Required**
- Scientific Writing (KUMC – PRVM 873) -- **Required**
- Systematic Reviews (KUMC – PRVM 869)
- Responsible Conduct of Research (KUMC – PRVM 853) -- **Required**
- Clinical Trials (KUMC – BIOS 810)
- Scientific Rigor and Reproducibility (KUMC – BIOS811)
- Implementation Science
- Biostatistics for Clinical and Translational Researchers
- Informatics (REDCap) and HERON Training

MENTORED RESEARCH PROJECT

The Mentored Research Project is at the core of the KL2 Program, offering scholars the opportunity to engage in transformative clinical or translational research under the guidance of experienced mentors. Each scholar, supported by their mentor team, develops and implements a research project tailored to the program's two-year timeframe and available resources. This project is expected to lead to academic products such as scientific presentations, peer-reviewed publications, and the preparation of grant proposals. The research conducted during the KL2 Program is designed to advance scholars' careers, with the goal of achieving independence and securing future funding, such as individual career development awards (e.g., K01, K08, K23) or R funding equivalents.

Projects within the KL2 Program can take various forms, ranging from providing preliminary or pilot data for future grants to being definitively hypothesis-testing. The scope and methodology of each project are tailored to the specific research questions and objectives, ensuring that scholars gain valuable experience in designing and executing impactful research. Scholars are expected to submit at least two original papers for peer-reviewed publications each year and to have submitted a meritorious application for the next stage of funding within Year 2 of the KL2 Program. This emphasis on scholarly output and grant preparation equips scholars with the skills and experience needed to succeed as independent researchers conducting clinical and translational science.

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below:

Criteria	Details
Candidate's Preparedness and Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the candidate's preparedness for the proposed research training plan. Consider the context, for example, the candidate's stage of training and the opportunities available.• Assess whether the candidate and sponsor statements as well as the referee letters provide convincing evidence that the candidate possesses qualities (such as scientific understanding and previous

	<p>evidence of productivity) that will improve the likelihood of a successful research training outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider if the candidate has demonstrated a need for additional training in the key areas specified within the training plan. Will training in these areas benefit the candidate and help them transition to independence.
<p>Research Training Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the rigor and feasibility of the research training project and how completion of the project will contribute to the development of the candidate as a research scientist. • Evaluate the goals of the overall research training plan and the extent to which the plan will facilitate the attainment of the goals. • Discuss whether the research training plan identifies areas of needed development and contains appropriate, realistic activities and milestones to address those needs. • Consider whether the sponsor(s), scientific environment, facilities, and resources are adequate and appropriate for the proposed research training plan.
<p>Commitment to Candidate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess whether the sponsor(s) is qualified and presents a strong mentoring plan appropriate to the needs and goals of the candidate. • Evaluate the extent to which the sponsor(s) and organizational commitment is appropriate, sufficient, and in alignment with the candidate's research training plan. • Consider whether the level of commitment provided will contribute to the successful completion of the proposed plan and allow the candidate to advance to a productive career in the biomedical research workforce.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the KL2 Program requires applicants to meet the following criteria:

- Be a United States citizen or non-citizen national, or have legal admission as a permanent resident.
- Hold a doctoral level degree (MD, DO, DDS, PharmD, PhD, DVM, or equivalent degree) and have completed all clinical training by the time of KL2 appointment.
- Have prior training in clinical research methods, with preference given to individuals who have already completed master's or PhD-level training in a relevant program.
- Be appointed to a faculty position by the time of KL2 appointment. **Applicants do not need to have a faculty appointment at the time of submitting the LOI. If invited for the full application, the letter from the Department Chair/Division Chief must indicate a date for faculty appointment to begin, and that date must be effective on or before July 1, 2026. Faculty appointment cannot be contingent on receipt of the KL2.**
- Have a commitment from the Frontiers partner institution, school, or department to provide 75% protected effort for the scholar to direct towards the KL2. Clinicians in certain specialties who need to maintain procedural skills may be allowed to commit only 50% research effort.
- An incoming KL2 Scholar cannot be or have been a PD/PI on an R01, R29 or subproject of a P or U grant, independent mentored career development (K-series) grants, or other equivalent research grant from PHS except for an R03 or an R21.

Please note that NIH-funded spots in this program are limited. However, there is an opportunity for applicants to be considered for an Institutionally-Funded spot. **If selected for an Institutionally-Funded spot, the applicant's department will be responsible for covering the costs associated with the award.** We encourage departments to support their applicants in taking advantage of this valuable training and development opportunity.

LETTER OF INTENT

Interested applicants should submit the following documents:

1. [Applicant Information \(REDCap Form\)](#)
2. **Research Project** Title, Abstract, and Research Area
3. **Acknowledgement** of Department Chair Permission to Submit LOI/Application
4. **Letter of Intent (2 Pages)**: Outline career goals, preliminary plans for mentorship and training, and a brief plan of the anticipated program of research.
5. **Applicant NIH Biosketch.**
6. **Primary Mentor NIH Biosketch.**

Questions regarding the application process can be sent to the KL2 & TL1 Program Director, Holly Zink, Ph.D. at hzink2@kumc.edu.

FULL APPLICATION

Invited applicants should submit the following documents:

1. [Applicant Information \(REDCap Form\)](#)
2. **Applicant NIH Biosketch**
3. **Applicant Training and Mentorship Plan (3 Pages Total, template provided)** that includes:
 - **Career Potential:**
 - Summarize your career productivity to-date, e.g., number of publications total, number of first authored publications, number of oral presentations and/or poster sessions at national conferences, notable honors or awards, involvement in prior fellowship or research award proposals.
 - **Long-Term Career Goal:**
 - Short 1-2 sentence description of your overall program of research
 - **Short-Term Career Goals and Training Needs:**
 - Within this section, clearly identify areas of expertise and gaps in your training that will be addressed through the current award. These gaps/training needs must be aligned with your research plan. For example, if you are proposing a secondary data analysis for your research project and you have limited/little experience working with large datasets and/or advanced statistical knowledge, then strongly

consider a statistics-related training goal. Further, if your first training goal is statistics-related, then your primary mentor should be someone with advanced statistical knowledge and expertise.

- Include a Venn diagram that shows your current expertise and the expertise to be enhanced and gained through this award (see example application)

- **Timeline and Plans for Application for Subsequent Grant Support**

- Explicitly state what the next steps will be – i.e., how will the training and data gathered during the award period inform that next grant, what will that grant be, and when will it be submitted. For KL2's, an NIH career development award submitted during Year 2 is the most common scenario although R-series or foundation grants are also possible.
- Indicate how the KL2 will provide supports or opportunities above and beyond current activities and will make you more competitive for identified next steps.

- **Career Goals, Training Objectives, and Training Activities During Award Period**

- For each gap/training need identified in A3, list the targeted goal of training and use the headings provided to describe the *coursework/workshops, mentored research experience, and professional development activities* that will be undertaken to pursue this goal. Do not delete any of these subheadings.
- Use the template provided to create a training table (not included in training plan page limit) that indicates when each of the training activities will be completed.

- **Oversight Plan**

- How will your mentoring team work together to ensure that your training and research goals are being met and, if needed, to modify or set new goals?
- How will progress be assessed?

- **Training Objectives and Training Activities Table (1 page not included in the 3-page Training Plan page limit)**

- Template provided

4. Research Strategy (3 Pages Total, including Specific Aims):

- **Specific Aims (1 Page):** The specific aims page is 1 page long and should provide a concise summary of the proposed research plan along with a list

of the specific aims and relevant hypotheses. All aims should be achievable within a 2-year time frame. Summarize the expected outcomes(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. NOTE: Your Specific Aims page will be uploaded as a separate document and WILL count in the total page limit (3 pages).

- **Significance:** Explain the importance of the problem or the critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses. Explain how scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice will be advanced. How will the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field be changed if the proposed aims are achieved(i.e., describe the potential impact on the field(s))? Include brief background data with appropriate citations . Although some background is needed, you also need to convince the reviewer that results stemming from your hypothesis and plan will be important. Don't short-change this section, but make sure you leave enough room for the Approach section.
- **Innovation:** Describe any novel concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or intervention(s) to be developed or used. Emphasize any innovative conceptual framework or approach you are using: why is your approach better than what has been done before; what makes it novel? Innovative methods, innovative equipment, or an innovative way of looking at a problem can be emphasized. One or two paragraphs are generally sufficient for the Innovation section.
- **Approach:** Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Discuss potential problems and alternative strategies. If you have any preliminary findings that support the aims of the project, include them in the Approach section. Outline methodology in enough detail to be understood by an expert investigator who may not work directly in your area of the field. Proposed activities should be feasible with the amount provided for training-related expenses

over 2 years (usually ~\$20,000 per year), or convincing evidence provided of how your department/center will provide additional resources.

- **Literature Cited:** (Not counted against page limit).

5. **Primary Mentor's and Secondary Mentor's Biosketches**

6. **Primary Mentor's and Secondary Mentor's Letters of Reference (two separate letters/uploads):** In two pages or less (PDF format), describe the qualities and potential of the fellowship applicant for the research training for which support is being requested (predoctoral, postdoctoral, or senior fellow). This should include your evaluation with special reference to:

- Research ability and potential to become an independent researcher
- Adequacy of scientific and technical background
- Written and verbal communication abilities including ability to organize scientific data
- Quality of research endeavors or publications to date, if applicable
- Perseverance in pursuing goals
- Evidence of originality
- Need for further research experience and training
- Familiarity with research literature
- Mentor's commitment to:
 1. Assure adequate and sustainable time and commitment;
 2. Confirm that adequate space, facilities, and resources will be made available for the successful completion of research projects;
 3. Confirm that you reviewed the mentee's research plan;
 4. Attend biannual Frontiers Training Center scholar/mentor meetings, participate in mentor training activities, and take part in grant mock reviews and monthly seminars as appropriate; and
 5. Acknowledge that if awarded, the Applicant will cite the Frontiers CTSI grant on all work that the awardee contributes to while funded, including work that is published afterward.
- Referees may provide any additional, related comments that they believe will help reviewers evaluate the merit of the fellow's application.

7. **Division Director/ Department Head Letter of Reference:** In two pages or less (PDF format), acknowledge:

1. commitment to ensure the applicant meets the required protected time to conduct research, coursework, and other Frontiers CTSI programmatic activities. This is currently set as 75% for the KL2;
 2. description of the division/department/school's resources (financial and other) that will be provided to the applicant, as a reflection of the department's long-term commitment to the applicant's career development. Address plans for further development after the period of the CTSI award and the applicant's motivation and likelihood to become an independent investigator;
 3. assurance the Primary Mentor supports the applicant's career development and training plan.
- Referees may provide any additional, related comments that they believe will help reviewers evaluate the merit of the fellow's application.

Frontiers CTSI KL2 Program

FULL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- LOI Application (REDCap Form)
- Applicant Information (REDCap Form)
- Applicant Career Goals and Training Objectives (3 pages)
- Research Strategy (3 Pages, including Specific Aims)
- Primary Mentor Letter of Reference
- Secondary Mentor Letter of Reference
- Division Director/Departmental Chair Letter of Reference

Questions regarding the application process can be sent to the KL2 & TL1 Program Director, Holly Zink, Ph.D. at hzink2@kumc.edu.

Start your Application Today!

Visit the Website or Scan the Code:

<https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=XDHAW3HLTK43KYT7>



Funding Cycle Timeline

The Frontiers KL1 and TL1 Programs are designed to foster the development of early career faculty, postdoctoral and predoctoral students interested in conducting groundbreaking clinical and translational research. To learn more, please reach out to the KL2 & TL1 Program Director, Holly Zink, Ph.D. at hzink2@kumc.edu.

RFA Release

KL2 Program:

Monday, July 28, 2025

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

Monday, July 28, 2025

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

Monday, July 28, 2025

LOI/Meeting Due Date

KL2 Program:

Wednesday, October 15 (LOI)

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

Wednesday, December 3 (Mtg)

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

Wednesday, October 15 (LOI)

Application Due Date

KL2 Program:

Wednesday, December 17, 5pm

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

Wednesday, December 17, 5pm

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

Wednesday, December 17, 5pm

Award Notification

KL2 Program:

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Orientation Meeting

KL2 Program:

April/May 2026

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

April/May 2026

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

April/May 2026

Start Date

KL2 Program:

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

TL1 Predoctoral Program:

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

TL1 Postdoctoral Program:

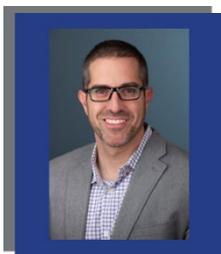
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