

To: School of Medicine Faculty
From: Katherine L. Nathanson, MD and Matthew D. Weitzman, PhD
Co-Chairs, PSOM Limited Applications Selection Committee
Re: 2025 Brain Research Foundation (BRF) - Scientific Innovations Award (SIA)
<https://www.thebrf.org/scientific-innovations-award/>
https://thebrf.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2025_SIA_Guidelines.pdf

The Brain Research Foundation's (BRF) Scientific Innovations Award (SIA) Program provides funding for innovative science in both basic and clinical neuroscience. This funding mechanism is designed to support creative, exploratory, cutting-edge research in well-established laboratories, under the direction of established investigators.

The BRF has invited the University to nominate one senior faculty member (Associate or Full Professor) to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the Scientific Innovations Award (SIA). The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) is managing the final candidate review and selection process. Each school within the University may put forth one nominee.

Eligibility:

- A full-time associate or full professor, working in the area of studies of brain function in health and disease.
- Current major NIH or other peer-reviewed funding is preferred but **evidence of such funding in the past three years is essential**.
- Studies should be related to either normal human brain development or specifically identified disease states. This includes molecular and clinical neuroscience as well as studies of neural, sensory, motor, cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning in health and disease.
- The grant proposal must detail a new research project that is not funded by other sources.
- The grant is not to be used as a source of bridge funding.
- For any sponsored research projects, the applicant must be eligible to serve as Principal Investigator for the project, unless otherwise noted in the LSO. Please see [Penn's PI Eligibility requirements](#) to ensure you are eligible.

Ineligibility:

- PI is ineligible if they are an assistant professor, research associate professor, or professor emeritus.
- PI is ineligible to submit more than one BRF SIA proposal in a funding period.
- PI is ineligible if they have BRF funding that will overlap this grant period.
- PI is ineligible if they have been awarded prior BRF funding, but have failed to submit scientific and financial reports at the end of their grant period.
- PI is ineligible if they are a member of the BRF Scientific Review Committee, or are a relative of BRF a representative, including the SRC, as defined by the Foundation.

Objectives:

- The objective of the SIA is to support projects that may be too innovative and speculative for traditional funding sources but still have a high likelihood of producing important findings.
- It is expected that investigations supported by these grants will yield high impact findings and result in major grant applications and significant publications in high impact journals.
- This should be a unique project for senior investigators who are encouraged to stretch their imagination into areas that can substantially change an area of research.

Funding and Award Period:

The total award is limited to \$150,000 (direct costs) for a two-year grant period. The first grant payment of \$75,000 will be made upon completion of the SIA Acceptance Form. The final payment of \$75,000 will be made contingent upon receipt of a Preliminary Progress and Financial Report. Funds must be utilized within the grant period. Please see the [complete guidelines](#) for additional information regarding funding and allowable costs.

PSOM Limited Applications Committee LOI Submission Guidelines

Each nominee must submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Cover page: Applicant name, department, school, academic rank and track, email address, phone number and research project title.
- Research Proposal (no longer than 2 pages and must have a title) that describes the rationale, approach and timeline for completion. References are not included in the two-page limit.
 - Note: Include a closing paragraph that explains how this research will develop (next steps).
- CV or biosketch (using current NIH format) with other support page, including current and pending funding with annual award amounts.

Materials must be submitted as a single pdf in the following order: Cover page, research proposal, references, and NIH Biosketch. The subject line should read: SIA_Candidate's Surname_Candidate's first name e.g. SIA_Smith_Jane.

Proposals must be submitted by **9:00 AM, Thursday, May 2, 2024** to Kaitlyn Hagarty at kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine.upenn.edu. If you have any questions, please contact Kaitlyn at kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.