

To: School of Medicine Faculty
From: Katherine L. Nathanson, MD and Scott D. Halpern, MD, PhD
Co-Chairs, PSOM Limited Applications Selection Committee
Re: W. M. Keck Research Program in Medical Research and Science & Engineering
<https://www.wmkeck.org/research-overview/>

The University has been invited to submit one proposal for each of the two W. M. Keck Research Program grant categories for the June 2025 grant cycle: (1) Medical Research and (2) Science & Engineering. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) will oversee the final proposal review and selection process for the June grant cycle. The proposal selection is a two-step process:

- **Step #1:** Each School may submit a one-page concept paper for a project that has been previously reviewed by federal agencies (but not awarded). **Candidates MUST include the federal agency reviews with the concept paper.** An internal panel will review and identify which concept papers will be presented by OVPR (acting as the [designated institutional liaison](#)) to the Foundation for concept counseling in July-August 2024.
- **Step #2:** Based on the Keck Foundation's feedback on the concept papers, one proposal for each of the two grant categories will be selected for a Phase I Application due November 1, 2024.

Purpose

The Keck Foundation seeks to generate far-reaching benefits for humanity by supporting pioneering discoveries in science, engineering, and medicine. By funding **high-risk/high-impact** work of leading researchers, the Foundation seeks to lay the groundwork for new paradigms, technologies, and discoveries that will save lives, provide innovative solutions, and add to the understanding of the world.

Keck Funding Guidelines

Interested applicants are encouraged to review complete funding guidelines on the Foundation's [website](#).

- Basic research (not translational or clinical research) with the potential to develop breakthrough technologies, instrumentation, or methodologies (proposal needs to convey a rigorous, scientific approach)
- Research that falls outside the mission of public funding agencies (successful proposals must have been reviewed and declined by NIH, NSF, etc. for being high-quality but "too risky"; reviewer comments must be included with the concept paper and will be submitted as an attachment with the Phase I application)
- Interdisciplinary research that has the potential for transformative impact, such as the founding of a new field of research, enabling observations not previously possible, or altering perceptions of a previously intractable problem.
- Keck will not fund a project that is narrowly focused on a specific disease.

Award details

- The Foundation states that grants range from \$1 million to \$5 million, but recent awards have typically been ~\$1 million. Please see the Foundation's [grant abstracts](#) for examples of funded projects and award amounts.

PSOM review process:

Candidates must submit the following in the order below:

- **Cover page:** Candidate name, academic rank, department, email address, phone number, title of proposal, and grant category (i.e., Medical Research or Science & Engineering).
- **Concept paper:** Concept papers are limited to **one page**, single-spaced, using 12-point font and 1-inch margins. References may be included on a separate page. Concept papers **MUST** include:
 - Project title
 - An abstract/overview of the research proposed, which situates the research in the field and answers “so what?” for a lay audience. Clearly describe what is truly unique and potentially transformative about this project.
 - A mention of any pilot studies or data – including unpublished findings – that support the idea.
 - A brief description of the methodologies and key personnel.
 - A description of potential outcomes such as new devices, new processes, or paradigms.
 - A brief justification of the need for Keck support; proposals previously declined from federal agencies are critical to obtaining Keck support; justification for Keck support must address federal reviews in the concept description.
 - An estimated budget breakdown (no larger than \$1 million), by major areas, e.g., personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc. Concept papers **MUST** describe the availability of and a strategy for securing matching support within your administrative/academic unit.

Materials must be submitted in a single pdf file in the following order: Cover page, concept paper.

The pdf document should be titled as follows: Keck__InvestigatorSurname_Investigator first name. For example: Keck_Doe_Jane.pdf.

Proposals must be submitted by **9:00 AM on Monday, June 17, 2024** to Kaitlyn Hagarty at kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine.upenn.edu. If you have any questions, please contact Kaitlyn Hagarty at Kaitlyn.Hagarty@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.