

PERFORM-KUH: Philadelphia Program for Mentored Research Training in Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases

Request For Applications:

Training Program for Pre-docs and, PhD and MD Post-docs for Research Careers in Kidney, Benign Urology, and Benign Hematology Science

PERFORM-KUH is accepting applications from predoctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and clinical residents for mentored traineeships in nephrology, benign urology, and benign hematology research.

These training fellowships provide salary stipends and access to tuition and other support administered via an NIDDK-sponsored NRSA institutional grant. They also provide a training environment enhanced for mentoring, networking and professional development.

Upcoming due dates and number of available slots:

	Current Round	Next Round	
Type & # Open Fellowship Slots	Pre-doc: 1 Post-doc: 1*	Pre-doc: 1	Post-doc: 4
Application Due	March 17	Feb 2, 2026	Dec 1, 2025
Interview Finalists	May 1	April 6, 2026	Jan 12, 2026
Admissions Decision	June 1	May 1, 2026	Feb 2, 2026
Fellowship Starts	July 1	July 1, 2026	July 1, 2026

* There will be at least one post-doctoral fellowship available beginning as early as July 1, 2025.

ABOUT PERFORM-KUH

The **Philadelphia Program for Mentored Research Training in Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases (PERFORM-KUH)** provides trainees and early-stage investigators the training and resources they need to become successful independent investigators in kidney, benign urology, or benign hematology (KUH).

Workforce studies, commissioned by national nephrology, urology, and hematology societies, express well-founded concern for sustaining an adequate research workforce in KUH. Given these challenges and building upon the complementary strengths of multiple academic institutions in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, the Philadelphia Program for Mentored Research Training in Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases (PERFORM-KUH) provides a comprehensive, integrated training program that encompasses research training in science related to kidney, benign urology, and benign hematology--across the lifespan. It provides an environment that enables training in state-of-the-art scientific principles and methodology, that encourages creativity, that guides professional development, and that provides mentoring and sponsorship that facilitates establishing independent career growth.

PERFORM-KUH is dedicated to stimulating early interest in KUH scientific careers from amongst a diverse population and will strive to lower perceived barriers to entering KUH career pathways. The PERFORM-KUH training community is assembled from talented trainers and trainees at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University and affiliated Fox Chase Cancer Center, Jefferson University, and Drexel University.

AWARD EXPECTATIONS

PERFORM-KUH supports four (4) predoctoral-level and seven (7) MD or PhD postdoctoral-level trainees each budget year. Trainees are supported for an initial twelve-month appointment and will receive a second year of support, contingent upon satisfactory progress during their initial appointment. A third year of support is possible in rare circumstances but should not be expected.

Appointments are supported by a Ruth L. Kirschstein Institutional National Research Service Award (NRSA) administered via an institutionally administered NIH TL1 grant mechanism. Trainees receive a monthly stipend, tuition support, and funds to purchase training-related items and cover travel expenses to present at scientific meetings or conferences at NRSA levels. Trainees are eligible to receive NRSA childcare support to defray childcare costs provided by a licensed childcare provider. Trainees are expected to comply with all applicable NIH policies and their institutional requirements associated with their appointment.

Appointed trainees are required to engage in research relevant to the mission of the Division of Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases (KUH) within NIDDK. This includes basic, translational, and clinical research in any of the following areas (<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/about-niddk/offices-divisions/division-kidney-urologic-hematologic-diseases>):

- Kidney: All aspects of kidney related science across the life spectrum
- Benign Urology: Science related to normal urological function or non-cancer related urological disease or clinical care across the life spectrum
- Benign Hematology: Science related to normal hematological system function or non-cancer related blood diseases across the life spectrum

Trainees will participate in an integrated didactic and cross-disciplinary mentored research program personalized to their individual needs and develop an Individual Development Plan that will be updated and discussed at regular progress meetings. Each trainee will have a mentoring team comprised of a primary mentor and one or two secondary mentors who are faculty at a PERFORM-KUH partner institution. Primary mentors will be accomplished KUH independent investigators who are committed to the career development of their mentees and who are PERFORM-KUH approved program faculty (trainers). Secondary mentors are established investigators from a discipline different than that of the primary mentor and are invested in and significantly enrich the experience and development of the trainee.

All trainees are expected to submit first-author manuscripts based on their mentored research project. Submission of an individual fellowship grant (NIH or other) is a requirement for trainees appointed for a second year.

All trainees must actively participate in professional development and network activities designed to establish a city-wide KUH training community and enhance their knowledge of interdisciplinary research, such as professional development seminars, workshops and symposia, journal clubs, research in progress, peer and near-peer networking opportunities and program committee meetings. All trainees are required to participate in bioethics training and provide any requested information necessary for progress reports, etc., in a timely fashion. All trainees are also required to acknowledge this TL1 in any subsequent publications and notify the TL1 administrator.

ELIGIBILITY

The NIH requires that trainees are citizens or noncitizen nationals of the United States or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence at the time of appointment.

Predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows with diverse backgrounds (defined as demographic and/or scientific diversity) or disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Predoctoral Trainees

- Eligible students must have received a baccalaureate degree and be enrolled in a program leading to a PhD or an equivalent research doctoral degree program at one of the five Philadelphia PERFORM-KUH partner institutions.
- Students in graduate PhD programs must complete their qualifying exam or candidacy equivalent prior to receiving award.
- Students must be in good academic standing and have the approval of their program to enroll in this TL1 program.
- Appointment to PERFORM-KUH is expected to be full-time for a continuous 12-month period. Trainees will receive a second and subsequent full-time and continuous 12-month appointment, assuming that they remain in good standing.

Postdoctoral Scholars

- Postdoctoral scholars must have received, as of the beginning date of the TL1 appointment, a PhD, MD, or comparable doctoral degree from an accredited domestic or foreign institution. Comparable doctoral degrees include, but are not limited to: DDS, DMD, DC, DO, DVM, OD, DPM, ScD, EngD, DrPH, DNSc, DPT, PharmD, ND (Doctor of Naturopathy), DSW, PsyD, as well as a doctoral degree in nursing research.
- Trainees must commit an average of at least 40 hours per week to their research training with a primary mentor at one of the five Philadelphia PERFORM-KUH partner institutions. While clinical trainees must devote an average of 40 hours/week to research training, they can also devote time beyond this requirement to clinical training or care.
- Appointment to PERFORM-KUH is expected to be full-time for a continuous 12-month period. Trainees are eligible for a second full-time and continuous 12-month appointment pending satisfactory progress during initial appointment.
- All appointed Postdoctoral Trainees must agree to a service payback obligation incurred during initial 12 months of postdoctoral Kirschstein-NRSA support. A second appointment year in PERFORM-KUH will serve to meet the payback obligation requirement.

PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Watch information session on PERFORM-KUH website: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/philly-perform-kuh/>
2. Email interest to Program Manager: philly_perform_kuh@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Complete PERFORM-KUH REDCap Questionnaire: <https://redcap.link/nfts8ons>
2. Submit the following items on REDCap:
Format – 11-point Arial font; 0.5-inch margins or greater; Upload single PDF document in order of the below
 - a. Trainee/Fellowship NIH Biosketch [<https://tinyurl.com/ys26abwm>]
 - b. Research Project Plan (1-page maximum not including references)
 - i. NIH Specific Aims page format including a brief Intro, Hypothesis, Aims, Experimental Approach, and Scientific Impact.
 - c. Personal Statement (3-page maximum)
 - i. Describe short-term educational/training goals and motivation for longer-term career goals and explain impact that the planned training would have on career direction and development.
 - ii. Describe why mentor and institution were selected for training and how the selected research environment will facilitate research career development in areas of either kidney, benign urology, or benign hematology.
 - iii. Please include relevant involvement in community outreach or personal circumstances that should be considered in decision-making by admissions committee.
 - d. Mentor Statement of Support & Training Plan (6-page maximum)
 - i. Affirms commitment to trainee.

- ii. Mentor's research support available.
 - iii. Mentor's training record and current training environment including the number of trainees being supervised presently.
 - iv. Training Plan developed specifically for the applicant including how and with what frequency the mentor will interact and supervise the trainee.
 - v. Commitment to facilitating and participating in a regular mentorship committee program as specified by the trainee's local training program and integrated with that of PERFORM-KUH.
 - e. Mentor NIH Biosketch
 - f. Reference Letter
 - i. For pre- and post-docs: One detailed recommendation from an individual outside mentoring Lab.
 - ii. For clinical fellows: One statement of support from the Department Chairman, Division Chief, or Training Program Director describing relationship with applicant, an assessment of the applicant's qualities and commitment to a research career, and stating the Department/Division's assurance to protect the trainee's effort for a minimum of 40 hours per week for research training.
3. For finalists: Small group interview, as necessary

EVALUATION

The review committee consists of 3 or more Philadelphia PERFORM-KUH program faculty representing each of the KUH disciplines and different partner institutions. Committee members review each application based on the criteria listed below and consider the impact of lived experiences on the candidate's career choices and academic trajectory, and the likelihood that a TL1 fellowship will enhance the candidate's progression to a productive independent scientific research career in a KUH related research field.

Evaluation criteria:

- Record of academic achievement
- Research training plan.
- Clarity of written communication
- Clarity of oral communication
- Motivation for pursuit of an academic research career
- Alignment of trainee interests with KUH research priority areas
- Commitment of mentoring team to the candidate
- Referees' assessments of candidate's academic & research accomplishments (post-doc only)

CONTACT

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