

Tips and tricks for writing a “Career Development Plan” for a Career Development Award (K or equivalent)

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Know where the “Career Development Plan” fits in the overall structure and scoring of a CDA

- **Purpose of a CDA:** “Provides support and protected time (3-5 years) for an intensive, supervised career development experience . . . that [will] lead to research independence”
- **Scoring**
 - Overall Impact (1-9)
 - Review Criteria (each 1-9)
 - Candidate
 - Career Development Plan
 - Research Plan
 - Mentors
 - Environment and Institutional Commitment

~1/2 score is contributed by candidate/mentors/career plan

Know the review criteria of the “Career Development Plan”

- “What is the likelihood that the plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate and lead to scientific independence?”
- “Are the candidate's prior training and research experience appropriate for this award?”
- “Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career development plan appropriate when considered in the context of prior training/research experience and the stated training and research objectives for achieving research independence?”
- “Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the candidate’s research and career development progress?”

Like describing the “Significance” of a research proposal, a gap-based approach is effective



Justify need for CDA and use of protected time



Include the essential components of how CDA will address gap in training. Be specific and thorough.

- **Career goals and objectives**
 - “My goal is to become an independent investigator...”
- **New research skills**
 - Link to Aims of “Research Plan” and mentors’ expertise
 - “In Aim 2, I will learn aspects of data mining...”
- **Didactics and coursework**
 - “Epi 211: Big Data Analytics: This course will...”
 - Responsible Conduct of Research (required)
- **Advancing professional/leadership development**
 - Developing independence from mentor
- **Conferences, paper writing, and grant writing**

Detail milestones to show plan for progress and timeline leading up to R-level application

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mentors	Driver (primary mentor): weekly individual meetings (4 hrs/month)				
	Munshi (co-mentor): bimonthly (1 hr/month)				
	Gaziano (co-mentor): bimonthly (1 hr/month)				
	Brophy (co-mentor): bimonthly (1 hr/month)				
	Kim and Gagnon (consultant mentors): once every 3 months (1hr/month)				
	All-Mentor Meetings: Every 6 months, formal monitoring and evaluation of research and career development				
Courses	Harvard Catalyst Grant Review and Support Program (GRASP) and Successful Grant Writing Strategies				
	Epi 221 and Epi 286: Pharmacoepidemiology				
		Leadership Strategies for Researcher			
			Fundamentals of Clinical and Translational Research		
				Clinical Trial Design	
Meetings	GRECC Ideas Seminar (2 hrs/month)				
	GRECC Journal Club (2 hrs/month)				
	VA Boston Medicine Grand Rounds (4 hrs/month)				
	Boston Older Adult Independence Center Conferences/Aging Researchers in Early Stages (4 hrs/month)				
	2 national meetings per year: one geriatric and one oncology (e.g. American Geriatrics Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology)				
	Geriatric co-management clinic ½ day per week and 1 month of inpatient attending at VA Boston (≤25% effort, 32 hrs/month)				

As a guide, use trusted resources and a few examples of applications from funded investigators

- <https://epibiostat.ucsf.edu/k-grant-writing-workshop>
 - Helpful slides and examples
- Check for local grant application courses and guidance from mentors and other young investigators
- *The Grant Application Writer's Workbook*
 - <http://www.grantcentral.com/workbooks/>

