Predoctoral Fellowship Program for

Autistic Scientists

2023

autism speaks®

Request for Letters of Intent & Applications

DEADLINES

Letter of Intent (LOI) due on or before:
December 6, 2022 | 8:00 p.m. (U.S. Eastern Time)

Letter of Intent decisions:
week of December 19, 2022

Recommendations due on or before:
January 24, 2023 | 8:00 pm (ET)

Application due on or before:
January 31, 2023 | 8:00 pm (ET)

Application Notifications:
July 2023

Letters of Intent (LOI) and applications received after the deadline **will not be accepted** unless permission has been previously granted.

Questions?
Contact Joan New,
Grants Manager
609-228-7313
jnew@autismspeaks.org

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span. Our goal is to support autistic people, their autistic and/or non-autistic family members and the broader autism community through fostering strengths and ameliorating the most disabling challenges. We provide advocacy and support; promote understanding and acceptance of autism; and facilitate basic and clinical/translational research that aims to improve the well-being of autistic people. We support autistic people, their families and the broader autism community with resources, online tools and through the production/dissemination of accurate information about autism and associated challenges across the life span.

The historical absence of autistic voices from autism research has contributed to a growing disconnect between researchers and the communities they hope to serve. Alongside recent calls for more stake-holder involvement in all stages of the autism research process, a greater number of openly autistic people have begun to pursue careers in autism research. Autism Speaks believes that a critical first step to increasing autistic research career success is financial support. We therefore developed a new predoctoral fellowship that will support a promising cadre of autistic early career scientists who will choose and remain with autism research. By providing financial support to autistic researchers during their doctoral training, we hope to increase success for individuals whose combination of academic expertise and lived experience can greatly impact the broader field of autism research.

Autism Speaks invites applications from *autistic* doctoral students interested in pursuing careers in autism research.

Note: *Non-autistic doctoral students are directed to the general Predoctoral Fellowship request for applications (RFA) which will most likely be released in December 2022. Join the* **RFA notification list** *to get an email when any RFA is released.*

The primary purpose of the predoctoral fellowship is to provide funding to support exceptional research training opportunities for highly qualified candidates. Fellows will work directly with mentors who are leading autism researchers across a wide variety of fields broadly related to autism research. We encourage applications on all topics, but applications on the following topics are particularly encouraged:

- Adult transition and life course outcomes (including aging and older adulthood)

- Behavior dangerous to self and others, including certain self-injurious behaviors, and innovative, person-centered supports and interventions (e.g., addressing social or environmental triggers of behaviors) to promote physical and emotional well-being

- Co-occurring medical and mental health conditions (particularly seizures and GI problems/microbiome), with an emphasis on intervention studies and can also include immunology/inflammation

- Development and validation of measures:
  – Examining outcomes important to community members (e.g., well-being)
  – Including novel or non-traditional modalities (e.g., machine learning, biological measures)

- Gender, sexual health and/or reproductive health

- Innovative implementation of technology to enhance reach and impact of services, with an emphasis on diagnosis and intervention in low resource settings

- Pre-clinical studies aimed at helping to ameliorate the most disabling challenges associated with autism

- Research addressing interactions with service systems that can inform systematic policy changes

- Research that benefits communities who experience compounded marginalization *(for research that involves human participants, Autism Speaks will prioritize study designs that include and benefit the diversity of the community that we serve)*

- Studies addressing the mental health and well-being of autistic people (as defined by them)

- Studies that focus on individuals who experience autism with intellectual disability, who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), or those for whom communication solutions are unavailable

Award

- The Predoctoral Fellowship Awards for autistic researchers will be granted to qualified predoctoral students.

- The Autism Speaks **two-year** Predoctoral Fellowship awards **$37,000 USD** per year.

- This includes a stipend of **$26,000 USD plus a $11,000 annual allowance.**

- The **annual allowance** can be used for research costs and supplies, professional travel, fringe benefits and/or tuition reimbursement. **Indirect costs are not allowed.**

- During the two-year fellowship, awardees are ineligible to accept other grants and awards that fund the fellow's stipend without explicit permission from Autism Speaks.

Predoctoral Eligibility and Roles

- The candidate must be an enrolled student in a program leading to a research doctorate (such as a Ph.D. or Sc.D.) or a combined degree (such as an M.D./Ph.D.) in an academic department of an accredited university or health/medical institution.

- Eligible applicants and institutions DO NOT need to be located in the United States. International applications are encouraged.

- The candidate must have two or more years remaining before completing their program.

- The selected predoctoral fellow must spend at least 80% of their professional time engaged exclusively in their Autism Speaks autism research-related activities for the duration of the award and cannot simultaneously hold another fellowship award during the support period.

- Prior to application, predoctoral candidates must have an identified mentor for their fellowship.

- Autism Speaks is dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion and encourages applications from Black, racialized/visible minority, Indigenous/Aboriginal people, women, 2SLGBTQ+ persons and all other qualified applicants.

For assistance, contact: ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***

Mentors

- A mentor is typically the candidate's doctoral advisor, but other potential mentors meeting all requirements outlined below may also be considered. The mentor is not required to work at the same institution as the fellow.

- Mentors must have a Ph.D. and/or an M.D. or equivalent degree and be an investigator with an academic or research institutional appointment (tenured, tenure-track or equivalent position).

- The mentor must be affiliated with an academic or nonprofit research institution with a research mission and administrative infrastructure.

- Non-academic institutions must have tax-exempt status documented under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, or similar classification outside the United States.

- The mentor's training experience should also be documented in their *NIH biosketch*.

- Prior to the start of the grant, the primary mentor must complete the *Autism Speaks WIN online training* for managers of autistic employees (a 40-minute course).

Important Note

*Students can only submit **one** application in response to this 2023 RFA. **Mentors can be listed on only one student's application.***

Institutional Approval

Each academic institution has its own procedure for submitting grant applications. The Responsible Official (RO) is an institutional official who oversees how grants are administered and funds are distributed. They are authorized by the institution to apply for grants.

Fellowship applicants cannot submit a grant application without the RO's approval. A mentor cannot serve as an RO. To determine your school's grant procedure, first ask your mentor, department head or office of graduate studies to explain your institution's guidelines for grant submissions and to identify the official responsible for grants.

It is the mentor's and applicant's responsibility to contact their Office of Sponsored Projects or Research Administration (or the equivalent) to identify the RO for this application and establish an internal timeline for the RO to review the application before the official due date. Pay attention to the length of time a RO needs to review an application for submission – this will affect your timeline. The RO will review and submit the final portion of the application.
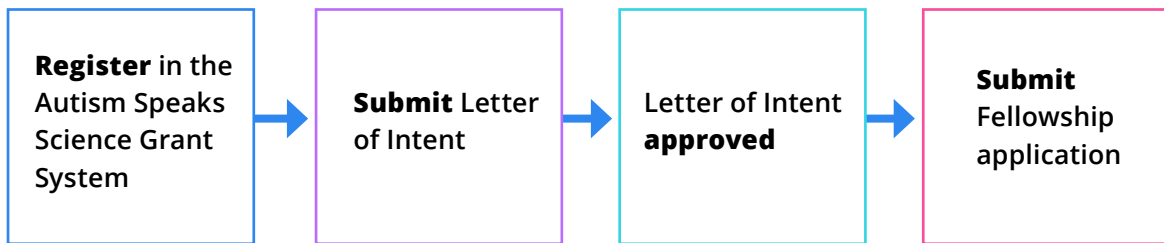
Letter of intent (LOI) forms are completed and submitted by the applicant; however, the RO must be named and will be included on notifications.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Important Note

*Students can only submit **one** application in response to this 2023 RFA. **Mentors can be listed on only one student's application.***

Before starting this process, we recommend closely reading the entire fellowship application and discussing the fellowship opportunity with your mentor.

| **Register** in the Autism Speaks Science Grant System | → | **Submit** Letter of Intent | → | Letter of Intent **approved** | → | **Submit** Fellowship application |

Registering in the Autism Speaks Science Grant System

You must submit all application materials through the _**Autism Speaks Science Grants System**_. Before completing your application, you must set up a profile. We recommend using Chrome, Firefox, Safari or Edge. Mobile browsers and tablet-based browsers are not currently supported by our system.

For this program, the student applicant must be the one to register in the system. If you are new to our system, you'll need to register with your institutional/school email address and create a password. Once you are registered, you can log in using your email.

To log into our system, you must use Google Authenticator. Instructions for Google Authenticator can be found in the _**Authentication Guide**_.

Your Profile

Before beginning any applications, you are required to fill out the profile section. Once you have completed your profile in the Autism Speaks Science Grants System, you will be part of our system and not required to re-enter this data each time you apply for a grant or submit additional information.

*Sections marked with an * are required.*

To save your information, click "Done" after the entry.

Gender, Race & Ethnicity: Autism Speaks is deeply committed to creating a more equitable and accessible world for those we serve. By elevating diversity inside and outside of our organization, we are working to address biases and disparities, champion equity-focused innovations and further enhance the lives of people on the spectrum. Please select the options that best reflect your gender, race and ethnicity.

Degrees Earned: Along with selecting any degree that you have earned, please include your current student standing. Please choose either "Doctoral Candidate", "Ph.D. Candidate" or "Psy.D. Candidate". Your candidate status in your profile doesn't affect the review of your application.

Email: This field will be populated with the email address you entered on the registration page.

Institution: Type in the institution where you will complete your doctoral work. When you type in your institution's name, our database will provide suggested names. If your institution is listed, please use our database listing. If not, please click to add your institution to our database.

At the bottom of the profile, you will find the menu to take you to the application section. When you are ready to start your Letter of Intent, click "Go to Applications". Choose "Start a new LOI or application" and then choose "Predoctoral Fellowship for Autistic Scientists 2023".

Submitting your Letter of Intent

The Predoctoral Fellowship program requires you, the student, to submit two separate applications: the Letter of Intent (LOI) and fellowship application. After an LOI has been approved by our review committee, applicants will be granted access to the full fellowship application.

Your LOI allows us to determine if your research proposal fits our interests and organizational priorities. We also use the LOI to determine what expertise we need in the fellowship application review process to fairly assess your proposal. You will not need to fill out an entire fellowship application for research that doesn't fit our interests.

The information on your LOI doesn't have to be overly specific. We understand that things might change in the time between writing the LOI and writing the fellowship application. Specific information is required when you write the fellowship application, but for the LOI, focus on the research idea, its impact and what research skills you will develop.

All LOIs require you to fill out two webpages in our Science Grant System: the "Basic Information" page and the "LOI Form" page. Information on these pages can be edited up until you submit your application. Our system will autofill some information, including the "Principal Investigator" and "Institution" fields. For the predoctoral fellowship, the student is always the principal investigator.

The Basic Information Form

Application Title
Limit: 100 characters including spaces. A grant title is not the same as a publication title. Avoid cute or ambiguous titles.

Scientific Abstract
Limit: 1,500 characters including spaces. A good grant proposal abstract requires a description the problem, the research objectives and expected outcomes, the research activities and who will be impacted by this research. The purpose of a grant abstract is to get the reviewers interested in the project. Information on grant proposal abstracts can be found below:

[NIH - What to include in a project summary](#)

[Yale - How to write a proposal](#)

Key Personnel: Mentors & Consultants
Start by entering the person's last name. The system will find potential matches. If you see the person you are looking for in the list of suggestions, choose them. If not, scroll to the bottom of the list and choose "Add to the database". You will need to know the email address and the name of the institution to add a new person.

Include your mentor. Mentors are discussed on **page 4** of this RFA – please refer to that section. Your mentor is expected to have a deep understanding of autism. If you have any questions regarding your mentor, please contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or *jnew@autismspeaks.org*.

Consultants are other professors, researchers or professionals who will be involved in your research. A data scientist who provides statistical analysis guidance and is not your mentor would be considered a consultant. Information on the various roles in a research project can be found at *[NIH: NIAID - Identify Research Project Roles with Precision](#)*

Responsible Official (RO)
See the "Institutional Approval" section on **page 4** of this RFA. The system will present a list of officials from your institution who are already in our system. If the name you are seeking is not in the list, choose "Other Official" and then complete the entry with their first and last name and their institutional email. It is not the responsibility of Autism Speaks to determine your RO.

Keywords
Your selections in the following four areas will be used to select expert reviewers who are knowledgeable about the topic of your application.

   1. Subject Studies
   A menu is provided to describe your subjects. The four main categories include: Human Participants, Animals, Biomaterial (Human & Animal Derived) and Not Applicable.

2. Research Areas

Pick the top 3 research areas that best describe your research.

3. General Topics

Pick the single topic that best describes your research.

4. Subject Areas

This provides a deeper description than the general topics area. Pick up to 6 areas in order of relevance.

The LOI Form

The LOI form requires you to upload the **NIH biosketches** and the **primary mentor's statement of commitment**. Other fields are text boxes or drop-down lists.

Expected Graduation

Candidates must have two or more years remaining to complete their doctoral program (see "Eligibility & Roles" section on **page 3** of this RFA for more information).

Priority

Select the primary priority that this application is addressing from the list below (also on **page 2** of this RFA). If the proposed project does not address any of the listed priorities, select "None of the above."

- Adult transition and life course outcomes (including aging and older adulthood)

- Behavior dangerous to self and others, including certain self-injurious behaviors, and innovative, person-centered supports and interventions (e.g., addressing social or environmental triggers of behaviors) to promote physical and emotional well-being

- Co-occurring medical and mental health conditions (particularly seizures and GI problems/microbiome), with an emphasis on intervention studies and can also include immunology/inflammation

- Development and validation of measures:
    – Examining outcomes important to community members (e.g., well-being)
    – Including novel or non-traditional modalities (e.g., machine learning, biological measures)

- Gender, sexual health and/or reproductive health

- Innovative implementation of technology to enhance reach and impact of services, with an emphasis on diagnosis and intervention in low resource settings

- Pre-clinical studies aimed at helping to ameliorate the most disabling challenges associated with autism

- Research addressing interactions with service systems that can inform systematic policy changes

- Research that benefits communities who experience compounded marginalization *(for research that involves human participants, Autism Speaks will prioritize study designs that include and benefit the diversity of the community that we serve)*

For assistance, contact: *jnew@autismspeaks.org*

- Studies addressing the mental health and well-being of autistic people (as defined by them)

- Studies that focus on individuals who experience autism with intellectual disability, who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), or those for whom communication solutions are unavailable.

Impact

No limit but please be concise.

Using lay language, provide a brief explanation of how this work will impact autistic people, their autistic and/or non-autistic family members and caregivers, and the broader autism community.

Your abstract should identify who will be impacted by this research. Your impact statement should focus on how the research will impact autistic people and autism communities.

Training Plan Summary

Limit: 4,000 characters including spaces.

Outline what skills or knowledge you will gain from this research, how you will gain the skills or knowledge and how these new skills or knowledge will contribute to your career development. Include training activities outside of the research project (courses, rotations, conferences, etc.)

Applicant's NIH Biosketch

Limit: 5 pages.

All applicants are required to download and complete the ***NIH Non-fellowship Biosketch***. NIH biosketches are standard requirements for many grants. We recommend anyone planning a research career in autism to create an NIH biosketch.

Format as a PDF. You can use NIH default margins and fonts. Upload your completed biosketch. **Do not use the NIH Fellowship Biosketch.**

Primary Mentor Biosketch

Limit: 5 pages.

Upload your mentor's NIH biosketch. Format as a PDF. You can use NIH default margins and fonts.

Statement of Commitment from the Primary Mentor

Upload as a PDF.

Format: 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

This statement describes the availability of resources essential to achieving the specific aims and career goals of the fellow. Explain how the mentor's training experience will benefit the fellow. **This is not a letter of recommendation for the fellow.**

LOI Deadline

LOIs must be submitted before **December 6, 2022, 8:00 pm (ET)**. See all deadlines on **Page 1**.

Applications or Letters of Intent received after the deadline **will not be accepted** unless permission has been previously granted by the Autism Speaks Grants Office, and then only due to rare and unavoidable circumstances. **It is the applicant's responsibility to plan around holidays or any special circumstances at their institution**. To request an extension, send an email to Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or *jnew@autismspeaks.org*.

All decisions made by Autism Speaks in regard to late submissions will be final.
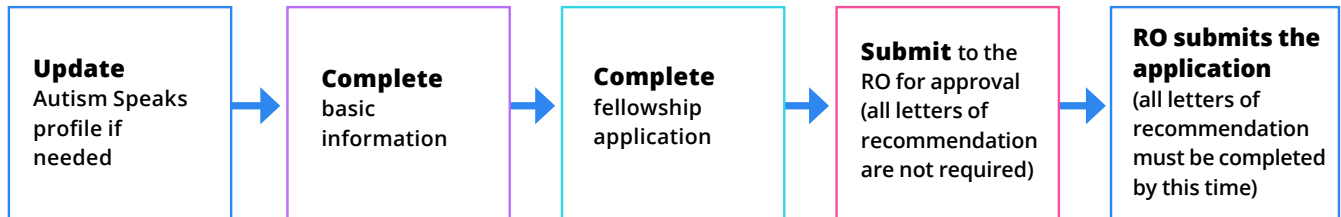
LOI Review

The applicant will receive a notification email after Autism Speaks staff reviews the submitted LOI. Specific instructions for the fellowship application will be sent with the LOI notification. Applicants with approved LOIs will be invited to complete the full application in the Autism Speaks Science Grants System.

All LOI decisions are final and no comments or feedback will be available.

SUBMITTING YOUR FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

Recommendations are due on or before **January 24, 2023, 8:00 pm (ET)**

Fellowship application is due on or before **January 31, 2023, 8:00 pm (ET)**

Update Autism Speaks profile if needed	→	**Complete** basic information	→	**Complete** fellowship application	→	**Submit** to the RO for approval (all letters of recommendation are not required)	→	**RO submits the application** (all letters of recommendation must be completed by this time)

After your LOI has been approved, you will be invited to complete the fellowship application. This application is different from your LOI application. Some of the information we asked for in the LOI is also required here. Our reviewers do not have access to your LOI, so we ask that you re-enter some information on the fellowship application.

Many of our grant reviewers are familiar with NIH applications, and many of our fellowship application requirements are similar to NIH applications. Examples of NIH applications can be found *here*.

If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or *jnew@autismspeaks.org*.

Profile
Update your Autism Speaks Science Grants System profile if necessary.

ORCID ID
Autism Speaks policy requires all applicants and mentors to link their ORCID profiles to their Autism Speaks profile. Applicants cannot move to the application process until this is complete. You can register for an ORCID ID number *here*.

> **Note: Your mentors are also required to link their ORCID profiles to their Autism Speaks profile.** Your application won't be reviewed until all mentors have completed this process.

The Basic Information Form

This is the same page completed in the LOI, except for the addition of the "Letters of Recommendation" section.

Application Title
Limit: 100 characters including spaces. A grant title is not the same as a publication title. Avoid cute or ambiguous titles.

Scientific Abstract
Limit: 1,500 characters including spaces.

A good grant proposal abstract requires a description of the problem, the research objectives and expected outcomes, the research activities and who will be impacted by this research. The purpose of a grant abstract is to get the reviewers interested in the project. Information on grant proposal abstracts can be found below:

NIH – What to include in a project summary

Yale – How to write a proposal

Key Personnel: Mentors & Consultants
Start by entering the person's last name. The system will find potential matches. If you see the person you are looking for in the list of suggestions, choose them. If not, scroll to the bottom of the list and choose "Add to the database". You will need to know the email address and the name of the institution to add a new person.

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Consultants are other professors, researchers or professionals who will be involved in your research. A data scientist who provides statistical analysis guidance and is not your mentor would be considered a consultant. Information on the various roles in a research project can be found at
NIH: NIAID - Identify Research Project Roles with Precision

Letters of Recommendation
Add your non-mentor referees here. Manage mentors in the "Key Personnel" section. All mentors and non-mentor referees will be listed here with the status of their recommendations.

Resubmission Info
For the current funding cycle, there are no resubmissions.

Responsible Official (RO)
See the "Institutional Approval" section on **page 4** of this RFA. The system will present a list of officials from your institution who are already in our system. If the name you are seeking is not in the list, choose "Other Official" and then complete the entry with their first and last name and their institutional email. It is not the responsibility of Autism Speaks to determine your RO.

Keywords

Your selections in the following four areas will be used to select expert reviewers who are knowledgeable about the topic of your application.

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A menu is provided to describe your subjects. The four main categories include: Human Participants, Animals, Biomaterial (Human & Animal Derived) and Not Applicable.

2. Research Areas

Pick the top 3 research areas that best describe your research.

3. General Topics

Pick the single topic that best describes your research.

4. Subject Areas

This provides a deeper description than the general topics area. Pick up to 6 areas in order of relevance.

2023 PREDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Important Note

Applications cannot be submitted by the Responsible Official unless all Letters of Recommendation are submitted.

While working on the application, you should "Save as Draft" as you make progress. This allows you to return to different sections of the application and complete it over time without losing your work.

Priority

Select the primary priority that this application is addressing from the list below (also on **page 2** of this RFA). This is expected to be the same selection from your LOI. If the proposed project does not address any of the listed priorities, select "None of the above."

- Adult transition and life course outcomes (including aging and older adulthood)

- Behavior dangerous to self and others, including certain self-injurious behaviors, and innovative, person-centered supports and interventions (e.g., addressing social or environmental triggers of behaviors) to promote physical and emotional well-being

- Co-occurring medical and mental health conditions (particularly seizures and GI problems/microbiome), with an emphasis on intervention studies and can also include immunology/inflammation

- Development and validation of measures:

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   – Including novel or non-traditional modalities (e.g., machine learning, biological measures)

- Gender, sexual health and/or reproductive health

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- Studies addressing the mental health and well-being of autistic people (as defined by them)

- Studies that focus on individuals who experience autism with intellectual disability, who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), or those for whom communication solutions are unavailable

Impact

Limit: No limit but please be concise.

Using lay language, provide a brief explanation of how this work will impact autistic people, their autistic and/or non-autistic family members and caregivers, and the broader autism community.

Your abstract should identify who will be impacted by this research. Your impact statement should focus on how the research will impact autistic people and the autism community.

Letters of Recommendation
Secure three (minimum) to five (maximum) confidential recommendations.
No uploads—recommendations are submitted through an online form with text boxes accessed through the
Autism Speaks Science Grants System.

These submissions must be received on or before January 24, 2023, 8:00 pm (ET).

All mentors and non-mentor referees named in the "Basic Information" section of the application must complete a recommendation. Once the LOI is accepted, the named mentors will receive email notifications with instructions for submitting recommendations. As referees or mentors are added to the application, they will receive the instructional email.

Applicants will not have access to view the recommendations. The typical applicant has recommendations from a primary mentor and two other referees.

Even though instructions will be emailed to mentors and referees, it is the responsibility of the fellowship applicant to make sure each mentor and referee, along with the RO, have the below instructions:

- Instructions for applicants and responsible officials can be downloaded ***HERE***.

- Instructions for mentors and referees can be downloaded ***HERE***.

When submitting recommendations, the following information about the candidate will be requested (a text box for each, no character limits):

- Commitment to a career focusing on autism-oriented research

- Potential for conducting research

- Adequacy of scientific and academic background, with specific reference to the candidate's academic and research endeavors, including any publications, to date

- Evidence of originality

- Specific areas of further research training that would benefit the candidate

- Any additional related comments that the referee may wish to provide

Research Plan

Limit: 6 pages.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

Information to include:

- Specific aims, background and significance/relevance to autism.

- Study design and methodology for achievement of specific aims.

- Preliminary data is optional. Note that any relevant publications, high resolution photographs or other supporting material can be uploaded under "Exhibits". These do not count toward the 6-page limit.

For research that involves human participants, Autism Speaks prioritizes study designs that include and better reflect the diversity of the autistic community.

Timeline

Limit: 2 pages.

Upload as a PDF, Word doc, Excel file or picture. All text should be no smaller than 11-point Arial font.

Create a timeline showing the expected milestones for achievement.

Data Analysis Plan or Statistical Analysis Plan

Limit: 1 page.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

Explain the data analysis methodology. If there is none, upload a memo to that effect.

Individualized Development Plan (IDP)

Limit: 3 pages

Note: Both the mentor and the fellow are required to sign this document before uploading.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers. No specific template is required—just cover the information explained below.

The predoctoral fellowship program is dedicated to encouraging promising scientists to join the autism research community as productive researchers. The mentor's role is to foster the development of the fellow's overall knowledge of autism and assist the fellow in meeting their career goals.

The mentor must provide a tailored IDP for the applicant. The plan must list experiences that are specific and individualized that build on the fellow's previous experiences while expanding their knowledge and experience in autism research. These may include lived experiences, past work experiences, advocacy work, coursework, workshops, seminars, clinical experiences and collaborative interactions with other researchers within and outside the field of primary study, in relation to the applicant's research career goals.

For assistance, contact: *jnew@autismspeaks.org*

The training should add value above and beyond previous educational and research experiences. In this section of the application, describe the research training environment and available resources (facilities, equipment, study populations and intellectual activities).

The applicant must also relate the expected value of the proposed fellowship experience and research training program to their needs in preparation for a career as an independent researcher in the area of autism.

The IDP must include:

- List of experiences that are specific and individualized to the fellow
- A description of the research and educational environment (facilities, equipment, study populations and intellectual activities)
- A statement of commitment to provide resources essential to achieve the specific aims and career goals of the fellow
- A statement of the applicant's expected value of fellowship experiences

Responsible Conduct of Research Plan

Limit: 3 pages.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

Responsible conduct of research is essential to most of the professional activities that are related to a research career. A Responsible Conduct of Research Plan outlines all previous, current and future instruction in the responsible conduct of research.

These plans may include coursework as well as individual and/or group training sessions with faculty and should detail the duration and frequency of instruction. The mentor's role in promoting and ensuring the responsible conduct of research must also be described.

Responsible conduct of research activities include instruction on topics like:

- Conflicts of interest – personal, professional and financial
- Policies regarding human subjects, live vertebrate animal subjects and safe laboratory practices
- Sponsor/fellow responsibilities and relationships
- Collaborative research, including collaborations with industry
- Peer review, including confidentiality and disclosure of participation by anyone not directly assigned to the materials under review
- Data acquisition; laboratory tools; and data management, sharing and ownership
- Research misconduct and policies for handling misconduct
- Responsible authorship and publication, with topics including fabrication, falsification and plagiarism
- The scientist as a responsible member of society, contemporary ethical issues in biomedical research and the environmental and societal impacts of scientific research

For assistance, contact: *jnew@autismspeaks.org*

Participating in online-only courses alone will not be considered sufficient instruction in the responsible conduct of research. These courses should still be mentioned. *Online-only courses are those where the student interacts <u>only</u> with the online platform. Courses conducted over video conferencing are <u>not</u> online courses for this purpose.*

In addition, while training in professional ethics, ethics in clinical research or the ethical use of vertebrate animals is commendable and recommended, **these topics are not sufficient to cover all aspects of responsible research conduct.**

Bibliography
No page limit.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

Provide a list of complete literature citations, including titles, all authors and the DOI (when available). You may use the citation style of your choice but use the same style throughout the bibliography.

Budget
Using our online budget table (example is below), you must show how the research allowance will be spent. The stipend figure is prepopulated and cannot be changed. You will be asked to submit a "Budget Justification" to explain your allocations.

The option to export the worksheet to Excel is available to allow you to work on the budget offline.

> Save Changes   > Save Changes (and return to App)   > Return to App (without saving)   > Export to Excel

Predoctoral Fellowship		
Proposal ID: - Principal Investigator:		
Primary Mentor:		
	YEAR 1	**YEAR 2**
Stipend	$26,000	$26,000
Research Allowance	$11,000	$11,000
EXPENSES		
Tuition Reimbursement	$	$
Fringe benefits	$	$
Travel	$	$
Research Supplies	$	$
Publication and Data Analysis Costs	$	$
Animal/Human Subjects Costs	$	$
Mentor Support	$	$
Other	$	$
Subtotal	$0	$0
Application Totals	$26,000	$26,000
GRAND TOTAL	**$52,000**	
Comments/Notes		

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You must allocate the $11,000 research allowance in one or more of the categories included below. Indirect costs, including administrative costs and building overhead, are not allowed. Stipends cannot be reallocated to other parts of the budget, nor can other parts of the budget be reallocated to the stipend.

The allowable categories include:

- Tuition reimbursement
- Fringe benefits – can include the cost of health insurance
- Research supplies – lab equipment, needed software or technology, clinical supplies, lab notebooks, data collection materials, etc.
- Travel – Conference or research-related travel
- Animal/human subject costs
- Mentor Support – Up to $500 of the research allowance can be allocated for primary mentor's salary support or travel. The explanation should be included in the budget justification
- Other – must be explained in the budget justification

Budget Justification

No page limit.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

Provide a detailed justification for each item in the research allowance. The stipend does not need to be included. Include the calculation(s) used to approximate costs.

Human and/or Animal Participants Statement

Limit: Up to 5,000 characters.

If the research project doesn't use human and/or animal participants, please state this in the text box. If the research project doesn't involve human participants but uses existing human data from a past study, existing data sets, data collected through big data analytic methods or existing biological specimens, justify the claim of non-involvement of human participants.

IRB, IACUC or equivalent ethical certification is not required to submit an application, but will be required if an award is made. IRB, IACUC or equivalent ethical certification doesn't replace the need to provide the information requested in this section.

If humans and/or animal participants are included in this research, address the following issues:

Human Subjects (defined as living individuals)

- Scientifically justify the involvement of human participants in the proposed research.
- Describe in detail the plan for involvement of human participants in the proposed research.
- Describe in detail the potential risks to the participants and measures to be taken to protect human participants from those research risks.
- For clinical trials, describe plans for data and safety monitoring, including the description of a data and safety monitoring board if necessary.

Projects using postmortem tissue

- Provide documentation that the necessary tissue is or will be available at the research site at the time of the award.

- Applications without proper documentation will be returned without review.

- Upload the documentation to the "Supplemental Exhibits" portion of the application and mention it in the research plan.

- Mention in your research plan that you are using postmortem tissue.

Animals (vertebrate or invertebrate, where applicable)

- Describe in detail the proposed use of the animals, including species, strains, ages, sex and number to be used.

- Justify the use of animals, choice of species and numbers to be used.

- Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals.

- Describe procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain and injury is minimized. Please include the method of euthanasia and the reasons for its selection.

Consent Forms

No page limit.

Upload as a PDF. *Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.

If this project will be working with human participants, upload the consent forms that will be used. These consent forms do not have to be approved by an institutional review or ethics board at the time of submission. If the forms are not approved, please indicate this on the submission.

Letters of Collaboration *(optional)*

Limit: 2 single-page letters combined into one document for upload.

Two single-page letters describing a collaborative arrangement may be submitted. If submitting more than one letter, combine the two into one document for upload.

NIH Biographical Sketches

Limit: 5 pages per individual.

The applicant and key personnel are required to submit their NIH biosketches. **Do not use the NIH Fellowship Biosketch.**

For assistance, contact: ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***

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Applicant and Primary Mentor Biosketch

In the personal statement section, include all active and recently completed public and private funding, including:

- Source of funding

- Project title

- Total award amount

- Award duration (inclusive dates)

- The extent to which currently funded research projects will overlap, complement and/or contribute to the proposed research

Other Key Personnel

Other biosketches, organized in alphabetical order by last name, must be combined into one document for upload. Consultant biosketches are not required, but encouraged. Non-mentor referee biosketches should not be included.

Supporting Quantitative and/or Qualitative Research *(optional)*

Upload up to two research studies that support this project and/or provide justification for the specific procedures proposed in the application.

These studies DO NOT have to be conducted by you or the mentor. The files MUST NOT be locked or secured in any way.

Supplemental Exhibits *(optional)*

Supplemental information that supports the Research Plan can be submitted here. Multiple items should be combined into one file. Items in this section will be reviewed at the discretion of the reviewer.

SUBMITTING YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION

Applications received after the deadline **will not be accepted** unless permission has been previously granted. To inquire about permission to submit a late application, contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***.

1. Once a fellow has completed their portion of the application, they mark it "Ready for RO". The system will send a notification email to the Responsible Official, copying the fellow.

2. It is the responsibility of the applicant to communicate with their RO who must complete the submission.

3. An application can be submitted for review to your RO before all the recommendations have been completed.

4. The RO has the option to return the application to draft if they see something that needs changing. The system will send a notification email to the applicant. The applicant must contact the RO to find out their concern.

5. The RO will not be able to submit the application to Autism Speaks until all the recommendations have been completed.

The submission must be completed by the RO by January 31, 2023, 8:00 pm (ET)

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by independent peer review panels that will include active and experienced investigators in the research areas of the applications, as well as our lay partners in the broader autistic and autism communities. Lay partners include self-advocates, parents or caregivers.

Fellowship applications will be reviewed based on:

1. Merit of the training plan

2. Proposed research

3. Strength of the candidate and mentor

4. Potential impact to improve the well-being of autistic people

Notification and Announcements

All applicants will be notified by email after the funding decision process is complete. Access to reviewer critiques will be provided.

All grant awards will be announced on the ***Autism Speaks website*** and be included in the ***Grants Search***.

For assistance, contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***.

INFORMATION FOR MENTORS:

Autism Speaks believes that a critical first step to increasing autistic research career success is offering financial support. We therefore developed a new predoctoral fellowship that will support a promising cadre of autistic early career scientists who will choose and remain with autism research. As a mentor to an autistic predoctoral student, we ask that you help guide your student through this grant process. This may be your student's first fellowship application.

As a mentor, you are required to provide information in support of your mentee's application. Along with the general guidance and support you provide to your student, we require the following:

Register with the Autism Speaks Science Grants System and link your profile to your ORCID ID. To log into our system, you must use Google Authenticator. Instructions for Google Authenticator can be found in the ***Authentication Guide***.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

Key personnel
The applicant should list you as the primary mentor.

NIH Biosketch
The applicant will need a copy of your NIH biosketch to upload to our system. In the personal statement section, include all active and recently completed public and private funding, including:

- Source of funding

- Project title

- Total award amount

- Award duration (inclusive dates)

- The extent to which currently funded research projects will overlap, complement and/or contribute to the proposed research.

Statement of Commitment from the Primary Mentor
You will need to write this and provide the applicant with a PDF version for uploading. (*Format:* 11-point Arial font with 1-inch margins all around, single spacing is acceptable. Do not include headers or footers, including page numbers.)

This statement describes the availability of resources essential to achieve the specific aims and career goals of the fellow. Explain how the mentor's training experience will benefit the potential fellow. **This is not a letter of recommendation for the fellow.**

Fellowship Application

Letter of Recommendation

As the primary mentor, you are required to provide a letter of recommendation. If you have any questions regarding the submission of recommendations, please contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at *__jnew@autismspeaks.org__* or 609-228-7313.

These submissions must be received before January 24, 2023, 8:00 pm (ET)

All mentors and non-mentor referees named in the application must complete a recommendation. Once the LOI is accepted, the named mentors will receive email notifications with instructions for submitting recommendations. As referees or mentors are added to the application, they will receive the instructional email.

Applicants will not have access to view the recommendations. The typical applicant has recommendations from a primary mentor and two referees.

Even though instructions will be emailed to mentors and referees, it is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure each mentor and referee, along with the RO, have the correct instructions. Instructions for mentors and referees can be downloaded _HERE_.

The following information about the candidate will be requested (a text box for each, no character limits):

- Commitment to a career focusing on autism-oriented research
- Potential for conducting research
- Adequacy of scientific and academic background with specific reference to the candidate's academic and research endeavors, including any publications, to date
- Evidence of originality
- Specific areas of further research training that would benefit the candidate
- Any additional related comments that the referee may wish to provide

Individualized Development Plan (IDP)

Both the mentor and the fellow are required to sign this document before uploading.

NIH Biosketch

If your NIH biosketch has been updated since the LOI was submitted, notify your applicant and provide them your most up-to-date biosketch.

INFORMATION FOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

Autism Speaks believes that a critical first step to increasing autistic research career success is offering financial support. We therefore developed a new predoctoral fellowship that will support a promising cadre of autistic early career scientists who will choose and remain with autism research.

This fellowship application might be the first time the autistic researcher has needed to coordinate with your office. Many applicants might not be familiar with the institutional approval process used when submitting a grant. In this RFA, we have provided detailed information about the application and review process.

For the LOI, the applicant only needs to include your name and institutional email.

For the fellowship application, the applicant is informed that only an RO can submit the completed fellowship application to Autism Speaks. The applicant can submit the application for your approval before all the letters of recommendation are finalized. Instructions for applicants and ROs can be downloaded ***HERE***.

Post award

- The recipient of any grant from Autism Speaks must use the awarded funds as specified in the approved budget. Any funds not used in the above specified manner must be returned to Autism Speaks.

- Payment of the award is contingent on receiving any institutional approvals (IRB or IACUC) that may be required for the research.

- Funding will be provided for **half of the first year** of the project up front. Further payments will be contingent upon completion and submission of the appropriate documents, as explained in the grant agreement.

- A fellowship award cannot be transferred to another mentor, laboratory or sponsoring institution without prior written approval from Autism Speaks.

- Fellowships cannot be transferred to another fellow.

Human Subjects and Vertebrate Animal Ethical Certifications
A copy of an official letter of IRB, IACUC or equivalent ethical certification or approval (or equivalent for non-U.S. applicants) that identifies the Principal Investigator, project title and date of approval, and is signed by the Review Committee Chair or equivalent responsible institutional/government official, is required for payment of an award.

Prior certification for another project cannot be substituted but can be officially amended to include the proposed project (identified by project title). Ethical certification must be submitted as soon as possible following official notification of an award. Autism Speaks will NOT issue any funding until appropriate certifications are received.

Questions? Contact Joan New, Grants Manager, at 609-228-7313 or ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***.

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS

☐ Identify your mentor for this research

☐ Determine your research scope

☐ Talk to the mentor about this research. Many mentors have very busy schedules. Don't assume that a researcher can serve as a mentor without talking to them about your research project.

☐ Identify who will serve as consultants

☐ Download ***Google Authenticator*** to use the Autism Speaks Science Grants System

☐ Register in the Autism Speaks Science Grants System

☐ Link your ORCID ID to your profile in the ***Autism Speaks Science Grants System***

☐ Understand how to get institutional approval for this project, including how long approval takes after you submit the final application

Submitting your LOI:

☐ Complete Basic Information Form

☐ Complete the Expected Graduation, Priority, Impact, and Training Plan Summary portions of the LOI application

☐ Identify your institution's RO and email

☐ Complete and upload your NIH Non-fellowship Biosketch

☐ Obtain and upload your mentor's NIH Biosketch

☐ Obtain and upload your mentor's Statement of Commitment from the Primary Mentor

☐ **Submit the LOI by December 6, 2022, 8:00 pm (ET)**

Submitting your fellowship application:

☐ Confirm that your LOI has been approved

☐ Verify with the RO the length of time to approve a fellowship application

☐ Complete the Basic Information of the Fellowship Application

☐ Complete the Priority section

☐ Complete the Impact section

☐ Notify those who are providing letters of recommendation about the process

☐ Complete and upload the Research Plan

☐ Complete and upload the Timeline

☐ Complete and upload the Data Analysis Plan

☐ Complete the Individualized Development Plan (IDP) with both the mentor and your signature

☐ Upload the IDP

☐ Complete and upload the Responsible Conduct of Research Plan

☐ Complete and upload the Bibliography

☐ Complete the Budget section

☐ Complete and upload the Budget Justification

☐ Complete the Human and/or Animal Participants Statement (Text Box)

☐ Upload Consent Form

☐ *(Optional)* Upload any Letters of Collaboration

☐ Upload mentors, consultants and your NIH Non-fellowship Biosketches

☐ *(Optional)* Upload Supporting Quantitative and/or Qualitative Research

☐ *(Optional)* Upload any Supplemental Exhibits

☐ Submit application for RO to complete

☐ Notify RO that you have completed the application and it is ready for their approval

☐ Notify your mentor that you have completed the application and sent for RO approval

For assistance, contact: ***jnew@autismspeaks.org***