2022 NIH Boot Camp
Frequently Asked Questions: Mentees

Who is eligible and how does the selection process work?

Participation is limited to faculty members who have not yet served as Principal Investigators on NIH R01 grants. Participants should be ready to submit an application to NIH **within one year**, i.e., should already have a well-conceptualized research plan, preliminary data, foundational funding.

Mentee applications will be vetted by UCI leadership and selections will be made in collaboration with Department chairs and others as appropriate. While we expect most applicants will be early career faculty members (i.e. Assistant or Associate Professors), this is not a requirement.

Why enlist?

By signing up for the UCI NIH Boot Camp as a mentee, you will receive:

- *Specialized Training*: Enhance your ability to prepare a more impactful and competitive NIH proposal
- *Guidance:* Assess your strengths and build a research plan to become recognized in your field
- *Camaraderie*: Connect with interdisciplinary peers and experts; jumpstart your research funding

What is involved in being a mentee, including the time commitment?

You will be expected to attend several **large group events/workshops** (e.g., grant writing seminar, biostatistics and budget workshops, rigor and reproducibility panel) and **monthly small-group team meetings** (you and your coaches and peers will decide the times) and **meet with your own internal subject matter expert (ISME)** who will have specialized insight into your scientific field of study. You will also be required to conduct a **Chalk Talk**, an exercise designed to help you present and refine your specific aims. A basic timeline is below:

Events and Activities	Apr-22	May	June	July	August	Sept/Oct	Nov/Dec	Jan-23	Feb
Large Group	Opening Event & Grant Writing Sessions	Introduction to Pivot and Biostatistics Support at UCI	1) Budgeting for Federal Grants 2) Data Management Plans	The NIH Review Process-Rigor & Reproducibility	Strategies to Increase Team Diversity	Team Science			Closing
	April 14 3:00-5:00pm			Dr. Todd Holmes, TBD					
Team & ISME Meetings	Chalk Talks planned & presented Finalizing Specific Aims			Significance/Innovation writing, reviewing		Focus on writing, presenting proposal sections for feedback		Get proposals out to ESMEs	Proposals due

Between large group events, and as part of your monthly team meetings, you will:

- be led through exercises to identify the skills and resources you need to be competitive,
- devise a plan to obtain those skills and resources,
- write and refine the sections of a NIH research grant proposal, and
- provide and receive feedback throughout the development process.

Before submitting to NIH, you have the option to obtain a review from an external subject matter expert (ESME).
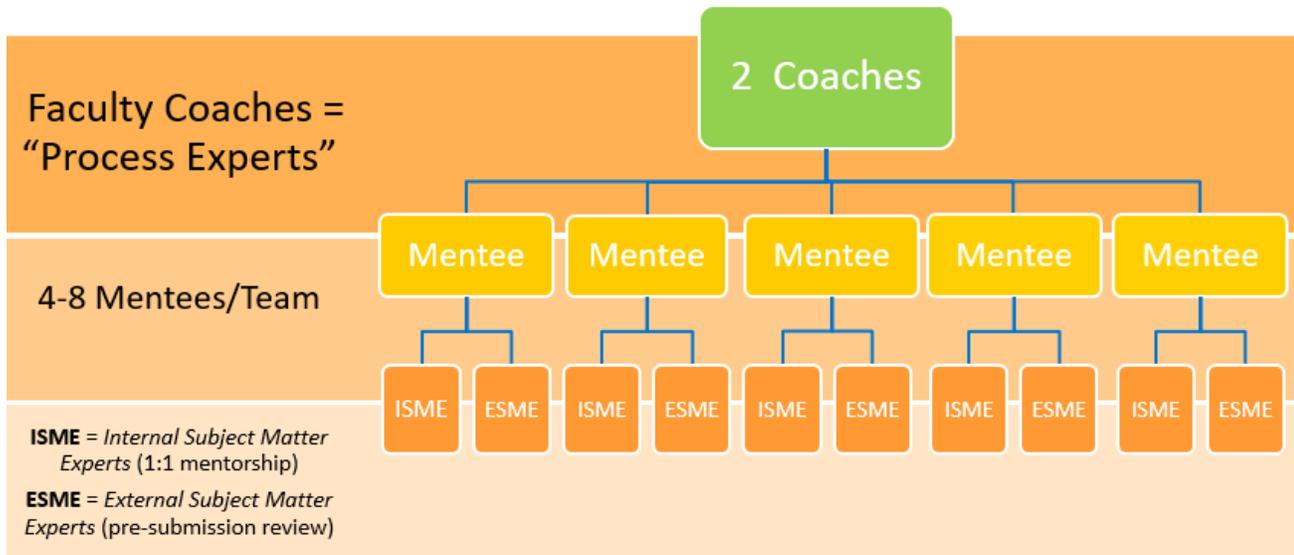
What is the structure of the teams? How do the mentors (coaches, ISMEs, ESMEs) fit in?

Two coaches lead a team of 4-8 mentees; the mentees and coaches often share a general common research interest (i.e. cancer, infectious disease). The number of teams is determined by total mentees accepted to the NIH Boot Camp. Each mentee works with an internal subject matter expert (ISME, a UCI faculty member); each mentee has the option of obtaining additional proposal feedback from an external subject matter expert (ESME, faculty member at another institution).

What will you achieve after going through the program?

At the completion of the program, you will have:

- A plan to fortify your research skills and resources
- A competitive, well-reviewed NIH grant application. Together with your coaches and subject matter experts, you will determine a realistic deadline for your proposal submission, and will agree to submit by that deadline
- Working in small interdisciplinary groups of faculty members will offer additional benefits of learning about other scientific fields and technologies, developing new perspectives, possibly enriching your own study, and providing potential research collaborators

When does the mentee have to submit his or her NIH grant application?

The deadline for proposal submissions will be **between February and June 2023** as determined by the mentee, coach, and subject matter experts, in partnership with additional leadership as appropriate.

Earlier deadlines will vary from mentee to mentee depending on the status of the research program, preliminary data, and the proposal draft. Submission is a requirement of the program and will be verified by the Boot Camp Manager.

Why work in small groups?

Small group peer mentoring fosters camaraderie, support, and cooperation. Several articles have described the success of peer mentoring (e.g., Johnson KS, Hastings SN, Purser JL, Whitson, HE. 2011. The Junior Faculty Laboratory: An innovative model of peer mentoring; *Academic Medicine, Vol. 86*, No. 12).

An additional benefit is stimulation of interdisciplinary and translational research. We will assign 4-8 faculty members who share some scientific commonality with the coaches (e.g., clinical research, chronic health conditions, etc.), but who come from different departments and represent different scientific perspectives, disciplines, or methodologies.

While coaches are only committed to attending one small group meeting per month, the members of the small group may decide to meet more often on their own.

How will my Chair know I have participated in the Boot Camp activities?

Prior to the start of the program, mentees will sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to confirm their commitment to the Boot Camp. Department chairs will also sign the MOU as acknowledgement and support of mentees' participation in and completion of the program. Additionally, in the middle and at the end of the program, the Boot Camp Manager will develop an activity report for each mentee and send a copy to both Chair and co-coaches.

How do I apply?

Check the [UCI NIH Boot Camp website](www.som.uci.edu/research/nih-boot-camp.asp) (www.som.uci.edu/research/nih-boot-camp.asp) for details.