

**THOMAS E. STARZL POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP  
IN TRANSPLANTATION BIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

***INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS (2024)***

**Submission Deadline: 11:59 p.m. on January 15, 2024**

The purpose of the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology at the University of Pittsburgh is (1) to foster the training of research fellows with the potential to develop into successful independent investigators and (2) to foster, through training research fellows, transplant-related research that is of high merit.

**A. RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP ELIGIBILITY:**

**1. Field of Interest**

The candidate's career goals should include a clear commitment to transplantation research.

**2. Doctoral Degree**

MD, PhD, or equivalent (e.g. PharmD)

**3. Maximum Years of Postdoctoral Training**

The fellowship award is activated on July 1 of the year of application submission. At the time of activation of this award, the candidate may have completed not more than 3 years of postdoctoral research. Clinical training beyond a doctoral degree (M.D. and/or Ph.D.) will not count toward the three-year maximum. Exceptions to this criterion will be made on a case-by-case basis for extenuating circumstances such as family/medical leaves or significant change in field of study. To request an exception, please submit a brief (1 paragraph) letter as early as possible prior to the application deadline. Submission information is included in Section G of these instructions.

For international applicants who received their degree, training and appointments outside of the United States, it is the responsibility of the applicant and mentor to specify the equivalency of the degrees, training and appointments in terms of U.S. terminology. Copies of the applicant's diplomas should be included with the application.

The candidate may not have or have had at any time a faculty position at any level at any academic institution.

#### **4. Other Support**

The candidate may not simultaneously hold a full fellowship award that supports his/her salary such as an NIH post-doctoral research fellowship. The Fellow's institution, however, may supplement the support provided by the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship.

#### **5. Citizenship**

The Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology is designed to train outstanding citizens from any country who exhibit potential to develop into highly successful independent investigators and likely to remain in transplantation research. Therefore, U.S. citizenship is not required.

#### **6. Number of Applications and Fellowship Awards**

The Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute will fund no more than one fellowship per funding cycle.

#### **7. Percent of Effort**

The fellow will commit at least 85% percent time in research during the two years of the fellowship support.

### **B. APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Please access application forms at <http://stiresearch.health.pitt.edu/>

The applicant, prior to preparing the application, should identify for the fellowship training an area of research and a faculty mentor at the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute (<http://stiresearch.health.pitt.edu/>). Once a faculty mentor has been identified, the applicant should prepare the application with the assistance of the mentor.

#### **1. Mentor's Letter of Support**

The process of applying for training support is a part of the career development experience. Therefore, the mentor should

- a) specifically comment on the role of the candidate in preparing the proposal for the fellowship application;
- b) describe the plans for the fellow during and after fellowship years;
- c) specify how the proposed research program will provide the applicant with the necessary skills and training to pursue an independent investigative career in transplantation upon completion of the training period;

- d) carefully detail previous training of the applicant in order to allow assessment of applicant eligibility; and
- e) provide guarantee of funds to support the applicants work (supplies, animals, etc.).

## **2. Biographical Sketch of Applicant and Mentor**

A biographical sketch of the applicant and mentor (**maximum 5 pages each**) should be attached, including a list of relevant publications of each. (NIH biosketch would be considered appropriate). **No reprints are permitted.** The mentor should be the direct supervisor of the research project in which the fellow will participate. The biosketch of other faculty members if any, involved in direct supervision of the research should be included.

## **3. Other Support of Applicant and Mentor**

Prior, concurrent, and pending research support should be specified and budgetary and/or scientific overlap explained.

## **4. Summaries of Research Project**

- a) Scientific Summary: A brief (150 words) description of the research that the fellow proposes to undertake should be provided. The scientific summary should include a brief discussion of the proposed research and an indication of the potential benefits to patients undergoing transplantation.
- b) Lay Summary: A brief lay summary of the research project should also be included that explains the research in a way that non-scientists can understand.

## **5. Research Proposal**

A precise description of the proposed research to be undertaken during the tenure of the fellowship should include statements about the SPECIFIC AIMS, BACKGROUND and SIGNIFICANCE of the project, PRELIMINARY STUDIES of the applicant or mentor's laboratory, and RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS to be used. The research proposal should not exceed three single-spaced pages, **excluding** references, in standard typewriter size letter (11-point proportional font is the smallest print permitted), with margins greater than or equal to 0.5 inches. **Appendices, addenda and attachments are not permitted. Applications not adhering to these specifications will be administratively disqualified and not considered further. The application should be written by the fellowship applicant, with the assistance of the mentor.**

**6. Reference Letters**

In addition to the letter of support from the mentor attached to the application, two additional reference letters (preferably from previous mentors) must be submitted directly to the Office of the Director for Research Administration and Academic Affairs, Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute. Provide the name and contact information for these individuals on the form that is included in the application file.

**7. Personal Statement of Applicant**

The applicant must include a brief statement, not over 250 words, of his or her career plans after completing fellowship training. The applicant should describe the postdoctoral training that he or she will have had, if any, prior to commencing the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology. This description is to include dates detailing the length of training. The candidate must carefully and unequivocally detail previous training in order to allow assessment of eligibility.

**8. Training Record of Mentor**

The training record of the mentor should be supplied. The information provided should include pre- and postdoctoral individuals trained in the last five (5) years. List the names of the trainees, positions at the time of training, current positions, organizations and funding, if any.

**9. Progress Report**

A progress report must be provided by the applicants at the end of year one and year two of fellowship funding.

**C. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:**

All applications will be evaluated by a peer-review body at the University of Pittsburgh. Applications will not be considered unless they contain all of the information requested in item B. Careful adherence to limitations of length in all sections is necessary to ensure fair review of the application. The most effective application is one in which the mentor and applicant have collaborated to organize the specific aims, background and research plans within the three-page limitation. The criteria for review include an evaluation of the applicant, the mentor, the training program/environment, and the project proposed and its relationship to the research missions of the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in by May 15, 2024. The Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute will provide a limited written critique of applications.

#### **D. TERM AND AMOUNT OF AWARDS:**

1. Stipend will be commensurate with NIH-recommended stipends based on the fellow's years of postdoctoral experience plus fringe benefits. Additional funds in the amount of \$1,250 per year will be allocated for travel to a scientific meeting.
2. The award will commence on July 1, 2024.
3. The Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute will fund a maximum of two consecutive years (24 months) of fellowship training. However, the second year of funding will be dependent upon the review of the first-year progress report by the Fellowship Review Committee. Failure to comply with the requirements of the fellowship at any time may lead to discontinuation of support.
4. The award will NOT be renewed for a third year of support.

#### **E. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

By accepting the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology at the University of Pittsburgh, the fellow and the mentor agree to the following reporting requirements:

1. Fellows and mentors agree to provide the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute with a Progress Report at the end of each fellowship year that includes links to or reprints of every publication (including abstracts) resulting from research in which the Thomas E. Starzl Fellow in Transplantation Biology participated during their fellowship year.
2. All publications, abstracts and presentations will bear the statement:  
  
**“(Fellow’s Name) was supported by the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology at the University of Pittsburgh.”**
3. Fellows are to present their work at an STI seminar each year that they receive funding.
4. Fellows and mentors may be contacted after the completion of this award for periodic updates on various aspects of the Fellow's employment history, publications, support from research grants or contracts, honors and awards, professional activities and other information that is necessary for the continued evaluation of the impact of the Thomas E. Starzl Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transplantation Biology at the University of Pittsburgh.

**F. APPLICATION DUE DATE:**

Applications must be received at the Office of the Director for Research Administration and Academic Affairs, Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute no later than **11:59 p.m. on January 15, 2024.**

**G. HOW TO SUBMIT APPLICATION:**

Candidates must save their application forms as PDF files. Submit all applications electronically to [stiresearch@pitt.edu](mailto:stiresearch@pitt.edu).

**H. QUESTIONS?**

All inquiries should be made to [stiresearch@pitt.edu](mailto:stiresearch@pitt.edu).