The R03 and K99 Grant Mechanisms

Alan C. Spector
Department of Psychology and
Program in Neuroscience
Florida State University
NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00)
(Funding Opportunity Number (FOA): PA-16-077)

Purpose: transition from mentored postdoctoral research to independent research as a tenure-track faculty member.

K99: 1-2 years. Provides mentored postdoctoral research training toward a specific project designed to lead to independence for the candidate. Salary support = $75,000 (+fringe). Research support = $25,000.

R00: 3 years. Provides research and salary support up to $249,000.
REQUIREMENTS

• No more than 4 years postdoc experience at time of submission (or resubmission).

• Need to have rationale for requiring 1-2 years additional postdoctoral training.

• Need to be in a mentored postdoctoral position.

• Must not be in independent research position when the award is made.

• **Must have a tenure-track faculty position by the end of the 2-year K99 phase for the R00 award to be made.**

• Must devote at least 75% effort to career development and research during K99 phase and at least 75% effort to research during R00 phase.
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CANDIDATE

Candidate Background
• Commitment to biomedical research
• Potential for independence

Career Goals and Objectives
• Short and long term research/career goals
• Research training history
• Plans to separate from mentor

Candidate’s Plan for Career Development/Training Activities During Award Period
• Describe plan and activities to promote research and career development
• Describe how the research and training proposed will lead to a new avenue of research that is independent of the mentor.
• Describe transition plan.

Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research
STATEMENTS AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Plans and Statements of Mentor and Co-mentor(s)
• Prior experience mentoring
• Supervision plan
• Description of training elements of research
• Plans to facilitate transition to independence

Letters of Support

ENVIRONMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE CANDIDATE

Description of Institutional Environment
• Facilities and resources available for the candidate
• Intellectual environment

Institutional Commitment to the Candidate’s Research Career Development
• Commitment of resources
• Assurance of minimum effort
**RESEARCH PLAN**

**Research Strategy**
• Divide into sections: Significance, Innovation, and Approach
• Include discussion of training elements.

*(NOTE: Specific aims comes right before this section in the application and should cover both training and research elements of the proposal.)*

**LETTERS OF REFERENCE**
OTHER SECTIONS

- Project Description (abstract)
- Project Narrative (2-3 sentence description for public and Congress)
- References Cited
- Current and Pending Support
- Facilities and Resources
- Equipment
- Vertebrate Animals
- Human Subjects
- Resource Sharing Plan
SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

• Candidate

• Career Development Plan/Career Goals and Objectives

• Research Plan

• Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)

• Environment & Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
NIH Small Research Grant Program (Parent R03) 
(Funding Opportunity Number (FOA): PA-13-304)

Purpose: The NIH R03 funding opportunity announcement (FOA) supports discrete, well-defined projects that realistically can be completed in two years and that require limited levels of funding, such as:

- Pilot or feasibility studies
- Secondary analysis of existing data
- Small, self-contained research projects
- Development of research methodology
- Development of new research technology

The combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period may not exceed $100,000. No more than $50,000 in direct costs may be requested in any single year.

Tend to be institute specific in terms of targeted areas. Not all institutes have general R03 mechanisms.
### RESEARCH PLAN

**Specific Aims (1 pg)**

**Research Strategy (6 pg)**
- Significance (1.5 - 2 pg)
- Innovation (0.5 pg)
- Approach (3.5 – 4 pg)
OTHER SECTIONS

• Project Description (abstract)
• Project Narrative (2-3 sentence description for public and Congress)
• Facilities and Resources
• Equipment
• Biosketches
• Vertebrate Animals
• Human Subjects
• Resource Sharing
• Letters of Support
SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

• Significance
• Investigator
• Innovation
• Approach
• Environment
KISS OF DEATH

• Poor writing
• Mediocre idea
• Lack of feasibility
• Poor research design
• Flawed or missing interpretation of potential outcomes
• Poor funding for mentor (K99)
• Lack of institutional commitment
• Poor or modest productivity
• Insufficient rationale for need for training (K99)
• Concern about independence from mentor (K99)
TIPS

• Start writing at least 2 MONTHS before deadline

• FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS.

• If you are struggling to write research strategy, it probably means that you do not have a well developed idea.

• Work closely with your mentor.

• Talk to your program officer (get on their radar screen).

• BE PRODUCTIVE.

• Write using the style of the magazine *Scientific American*.

• Graphs and tables are excellent.

• Have others with experience read your grant. However, give them a finished draft and do so with ample time to modify your grant to address their criticisms.