

# PREPARING A BWF CAREER AWARD AT THE SCIENTIFIC INTERFACE PRE-PROPOSAL

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund Career Award at the Scientific Interface (CASI) is intended to foster the early career development of researchers who are dedicated to pursuing a career in academic research. The specific target group are researchers who have transitioned from graduate work in the physical/mathematical/ computational sciences or engineering into postdoctoral work in the biological sciences. The CASI grant provides \$500,000 over five years to bridge advanced postdoctoral training and the first three years of faculty. Review the CASI Request for Proposals for additional details on the grant program, the eligibility requirements, and the terms of the award. The following instructions will provide additional guidance on the requirements for the BWF CASI pre-proposals and how to submit the application through the BWF Grant Tracker system.

## Application Process

Applying for this award is a two-stage process:

- 1. Pre-proposals.** Interested candidates who meet the eligibility criteria will need to submit one online pre-proposal through BWF's Grant Application System by **September 1, 2020, 4:00 pm EDT**. The grant application portal will be available by July 15, 2020. In brief, the pre-proposal includes applicant information (to be completed within the grant portal), a pre-proposal form with a lay abstract, and a confidential primary postdoctoral mentor letter of recommendation.
- 2. Full proposals.** Submission of full proposals will be *by invitation only* after review of pre-proposals. By November 20, 2020, a selected group of applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Instructions on how to prepare a full research proposal (elements listed below) will be provided by email with the invitation to participate. Full proposals will be due **January 8, 2021 by 4:00 pm EST**.

All communications, including the invitation to submit a full proposal and declinations, will be made through the BWF Grant Tracker system and/or email.

BWF does not provide critiques or written comments of unfunded proposals.

## How to Submit an Online Pre-proposal Application

To begin a pre-proposal submission on or after July 15th use the following link:

<https://bwfund.ccgrantracker.com>

Applicants will be required to establish an account to access the BWF Grant Tracker system and accept the terms of the condition of the site. A valid email address that is unique to the applicant will be required. Remember the login and password to access the application at a later time.

Once access is gained to the system, the applicant will need to do the following to start the application:

- Complete a basic details page, requesting standard contact information, and click save. The applicant will then be directed to the BWF Grant Tracker homepage.
- Scroll to the bottom of the homepage and click the new application link
- Click the apply link to access the eligibility quiz for the Career Award at the Scientific Interface Program.

## Eligibility Quiz

The applicant will be required to complete the eligibility quiz to determine if they are eligible. Once the quiz is complete, click the next button to determine eligibility. If all eligibility criteria are met, access will be granted to the application form.

If the applicant does not complete the eligibility quiz correctly, the applicant will be given the opportunity to request an exception by completing an on-line form that will be reviewed by BWF staff. Note that exceptions are rare.

Once access is gained to the application, the applicant may choose to continue their work or save the application and return at a later time.

## Online pre-proposal form – available through BWF Grant Tracker (see links above)

All proposals must be submitted through the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Grant Tracker system including a confidential recommendation letter to be uploaded by applicant's primary postdoctoral mentor.

**Note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the confidential letter is submitted by the deadline due date.** Each element of the proposal must be completed before the application can be submitted, and an application will not be considered complete without this confidential recommendation letter.

**The applicant will be required to provide information on the following:**

- Primary Applicant Information
- Institutional Information (degree-granting only)
- Mentor Information
- Proposal Information
- Essay (4,000 character maximum)
- List of Publications
- Declaration of Eligibility by Applicant

Information on the institution where the work will be performed is requested on the application. The primary postdoc mentor is required to have an appointment at a degree granting institution. This institution should be listed.

An essay of no more than 4,000 characters should be provided. The essay should be addressed to a group of well-educated scientists, who are not necessarily experts in the field: State the larger objective of the proposal and provide specific aims that will achieve this; Provide a brief description of your ability to carry out the project, including available resources; Address interdisciplinary and innovation aspects; State how this project will transition to the postdoc's independent career period; Place your project in a larger context on its impact on other areas, emphasizing its significance.

Up to five of the applicant's top publications should be listed in the publications section.

## Confidential Recommendation Letter from Primary Postdoctoral Mentor and Mentor Certification (required)

The primary postdoc mentor is required to complete the following information for the pre-proposal:

- Mentor's Basic Contact Information
- Certification of the postdoc's eligibility
- Confidential Letter of Recommendation

The applicant is required to request a confidential letter of recommendation and certification of eligibility from the primary postdoc mentor through the BWF Grant Tracker system. The recommendation letter is **REQUIRED** to submit the application. No late applications will be accepted due to letters not being uploaded by the mentor. It is recommended that the letters be uploaded and the certification complete by **August 25th** to allow ample time for the letter completion.

In the letter, the primary postdoctoral mentor should describe the applicant's qualifications and potential for contributing to biomedical science, highlighting specific skills or expertise in a scientific discipline other than biology. The letter should also describe the research environment in which the applicant will work, the mentoring plan for the applicant, the number of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the lab, and the supporting services to be provided by the institution. The letter should be on letterhead and include a signature block. Letters will be accepted in both Word format and PDF.

It is recommended applicant's contact their mentor prior to requesting the recommendation letter through the system.

A secondary mentor can be provided on the pre-proposal application, but the secondary mentor will not provide a letter.

**Primary Mentor Appointment** (to be completed by applicant)

The applicant will also need to provide details regarding the mentor's appointment at a degree granting institution and any other appointments.

## Requesting the Mentor Letter and Certification of Eligibility

The applicant must request the mentor letter through the BWF Grant Tracker system. Only one letter is allowed per pre-proposal. Once the applicant adds the primary postdoc mentor to the pre-proposal application, the mentor will be required to establish a BWF Grant Tracker account and upload the letter.

### Applicant instructions to obtain confidential postdoc mentor letter:

From within the online pre-proposal application, access the Mentor Information Section to send an email to the postdoc mentor requesting a letter. Detailed instructions on generating the email will be provided on the page.

The email will contain a link that the mentor must use to log into the system and upload their letter to the pre-proposal, as well as complete the certification questionnaire. *Note: The applicant may view this page in their application as read only, but will not be able to view the letter.*

The mentor will be required to create an account on the system as well. They will receive a separate email from the system to establish this account. Instructions on establishing a mentor account are provided on the BWF website.

Letters are confidential and cannot be viewed by the applicant.

Once the letter has been uploaded by the recommender, the status of the letter will be noted as complete in the application.

*Note: Recommendation letters sent separately or after the application due date will not be accepted.*

### Mentor Certification

When uploading the letter, the mentor should also complete the certification section to confirm that they will serve as the primary postdoc mentor and certify that the applicant is eligible to apply.

## Submission Process

Once the application is complete, do the following:

- Click the “Validation Status” on the sidebar to see if any errors are identified. All information must be provided **prior to application submission**.
- Once all sections have been completed, click the Save and Close button. This will return you to the home page for the application. Your application is **NOT SUBMITTED** yet. On the right side bar, you may print or save a PDF of your application.
- **SUBMIT** your application. On the right side bar, there will be a button to submit the application. Your application is not submitted until you complete this step.

You should receive a confirmation email once your application is submitted. If you do not receive this email, please reach out to BWF.

### Note:

Pre-proposals will not be accepted after 4:00 pm EDT on September 1, 2020. The online application system shuts down automatically at the deadline. Plan to submit the application well in advance of the grant deadline to allow adequate time to troubleshoot any issues. **NO EXCEPTIONS OR EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED.**

After the deadline, applicants with incomplete pre-proposals and those not adhering to instructions will be disqualified without prior notice. Do not include a cover letter or supplemental materials. If extra materials are included, the pre-proposal application will be rejected out of fairness to all applicants.

Only pre-proposals submitted through BWF Grant Tracker will be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the confidential recommendation letter has been uploaded to their application and submitted by the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

## Other Information

### Accessing a saved application:

Login to the BWF Grant Tracker site and scroll to the bottom of the homepage. The system will indicate if you have unsubmitted grant proposals. Click on the appropriate link to access a list of proposals on the My applications page. A Status of your application will also be provided.

### Questions?

**System help** – BWF Grant Tracker provides a system help guide on the left hand side bar.

The following are available on the BWF website:

- Career Award at the Scientific Interface Requests for Proposals (including eligibility requirements and terms of the award)
- Mentor/Recommender Instructions for uploading the completed recommendation form
- FAQs

Please review our online [Frequently Asked Questions](#) first. Eligibility inquiries should be directed in advance to BWF program staff by contacting:

Melanie Scott, Senior Program Associate  
[mscott@bwfund.org](mailto:mscott@bwfund.org), 919-991-5107