ASH Minority Medical Student Award Program Application

General Principles for the Prospective Mentor

A. Program overview
The American Society of Hematology (ASH) created the Minority Recruitment Initiative in 2003 to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in hematology. MMSAP is a part of this initiative, and is designed to introduce minority medical students to both hematology and hematology research. The centerpiece of the program is a summer research experience of eight-to-12 weeks with a hematology investigator (laboratory or clinically-based) during the summer break between their first and second years of medical school. In 2016, a MMSAP flexible option was introduced for medical students in their second, third, or fourth year of medical school which allows awardees to complete the eight-to-12 week research project (approximately 320-480 hour commitment) over the course of a year.

The MMSAP requires that the applicant develop a research proposal with their proposed mentor. The application process is competitive and applications are reviewed by members of ASH’s Committee on Promoting Diversity. Awards are given to the highest scoring applicants. MMSAP awardees present the results of their projects in person at the ASH annual meeting in December. Attendance at the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition provides students with outstanding opportunities for networking with national and international leaders in the field of hematology.

B. Connecting with potential mentees
As a potential mentor in the MMSAP, it is important in this competitive application process that reviewers get a strong sense that you and your prospective mentee have directly connected with each other, either in person or by phone, and that you have had follow-up discussions of the proposed research project. Your involvement is critical in both helping the student develop and conduct a hypothesis-based research project and in providing them with an intellectually stimulating hematology research experience. Students are expected to develop self-contained research projects that can be completed within eight-to-12 weeks. Research proposals should be written in the student’s own words. It is important that the applicant understand the project to a sufficient degree that they are able to write up the project in their own words in a way that is convincing, and have an understanding of the hypothesis as well as the methods proposed to test it. If the project involves a clinical trial, biospecimens, or other activities that require IRB approval or approval by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee or similar regulatory body, it is important that the approvals be obtained in advance of the start date of the project. The date of approval needs to be clearly indicated in the application. In addition to helping the student develop their research project and supervising them in the lab, you will be expected to guide them in preparing their oral presentation to be delivered at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting in the December that follows the completion of their research project.
C. **Assisting the applicant in development of their proposal** – what criteria do the reviewers use to score applications?

1. **Student Applicant’s Research Proposal**
   a. Is this a well written proposal with a clearly defined role for the student?
   b. Will the student be able to obtain preliminary results within eight-to-12 weeks for summer applicants or in an eight-to-12 week time frame (approximately 320-480 hours) over the course of one year for flexible option applicants? If not, will there be preliminary results available for the student to present at the Promoting Minorities in Hematology event during the ASH annual meeting?
   c. Is this a significant problem in hematology and will the student’s participation in this project potentially lead to further interest in hematology for the student?

2. **Mentor’s NIH Biosketch**
   a. Does the mentor have a sustained record of NIH grant support or support from relevant scientific grant awarding agencies?
   b. Does the mentor have relevant publications in competitive journals?
   c. Students working with both a junior and senior research mentor must submit NIH biosketchs for both mentors with their completed application.

3. **Research Mentor’s Letter of Support** (refer to D below)
   a. Is there a mentoring plan in place? How frequently will the mentor meet with the student? If the prospective mentor is a junior faculty, is there a more senior co-mentor or a mentoring team assembled?
   b. Is there a strong research environment? Will the student have the opportunity to attend clinical discussions and journal clubs?
   c. Does the mentor or mentoring team have a track record in mentoring other trainees? If so, how many, and what is their current status?
   d. Is there evidence of interaction between the student applicant and mentor in the design of the research proposal? Is there evidence the mentor has reviewed the student’s research proposal and provided feedback on content as well as spelling and grammatical errors?
D. Your (Mentor’s) Letter of Support
This is a very important component of the MMSAP application. It is important that your letter detail your record of mentoring students, medical students, residents, fellows, and post-docs. If there is more than one mentor involved, it is important that they each provide a separate letter of support detailing their specific role. You should include specific comments about your interactions with the student as well as your assessment of the student’s academic and leadership qualities. Comments regarding the perceived interest of the student in a potential career in hematology can also be included.

***For MMSAP Flexible Option Applicants Only
If the MMSAP applicant is applying for the MMSAP flexible option, research mentors must include a statement in their Letter of Support that they have discussed and agreed to the student’s ASH presentation date. MMSAP flexible applicants can select their award year or the subsequent year for their presentation date.

E. The Review Process
The review process is competitive. All applications are reviewed by members of ASH’s Committee on Promoting Diversity using an NIH Study Section format and the NIH scoring system. Applications are scored as described above, using the following criteria: strength of the applicant, evidence of the applicant’s engagement in leadership positions and community service, strength and feasibility of the research proposal, role of the mentor on the research project and in cultivating the student’s interest in hematology, mentor’s track record of mentoring, and commitment to the successful completion of the student’s project.

F. Helping Your Mentee Make the Most of Their MMSAP Experience
Given the limited 8-12 week time frame, it is important that you connect with your mentee as soon as possible after they receive word of their award. This will give the student adequate time to plan and initiate the steps required for the project to be successful. During the interval they are waiting to start their project, you are encouraged to meet one-on-one with your mentee to discuss their project and to connect them with your laboratory personnel. Although MMSAP awardees will also be assigned a career mentor who will meet with the student separately, you are still encouraged to provide advice to the student.

For students taking part in the MMSAP flexible experience, it is important for you to connect with your mentee to review their start date, their research schedule, and approximate weekly lab hours. Similar to students in the MMSAP summer program, MMSAP flexible students may not start in the lab right away. Having the opportunity to meet in person to further discuss their project and be connected with your laboratory personnel will be helpful to them.
G. Preparation for the ASH Annual Meeting
   If results from the student’s project are available by the general ASH abstract
deadline in August, the student should be encouraged to submit a formal abstract for
presentation at the annual meeting. All MMSAP awardees will present their results at
the Promoting Minorities in Hematology Presentations and Reception irrespective of
the status of any formal abstracts they also submit for presentation at the ASH
Annual Meeting & Exposition. If they have an abstract that is also accepted for
presentation outside this venue, then they would present at both venues.

H. Options for Continued Mentoring
   Based on the interest of the MMSAP participant as well as the mentor, there is the
opportunity to extend the research experience to a second summer experience or a
full year experience. This would require submission of another application. ASH is
very supportive of second applications, and encourages all students with an interest in
hematology to do this.