

Minority Resident Hematology Award Program Application Guidance

The following guidance is provided to assist individuals who are considering submitting an application for the Minority Resident Hematology Award Program (MRHAP).

General Principles for the MRHAP Applicant

It is important to understand the various components of the application process so that you can build a strong application. Your application should address your specific interest in hematology in your personal statement, and reflect a good understanding of your proposed project in your project description. Reviewers will consider these and the other items listed below when scoring your application.

A. Program Overview

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) created the Minority Recruitment Initiative (MRI) in 2003 to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in hematology. The Minority Resident Hematology Award Program (MRHAP) was introduced in 2016 by the Committee on Promoting Diversity to serve as a new program component of the MRI. The MRHAP was designed to provide support for underrepresented minority residents in medicine who are currently in an internal medicine, pathology, or pediatric residency program to conduct hematology focused research. This program was crafted with the alumni of the Minority Medical Student Award Program (MMSAP) in mind as a ‘next-step’ in the MRI’s longitudinal pathway. Applicants who did not participate in the MMSAP program but are in an ACGME or RCPSC-approved residency program in the United States or Canada are eligible as well as residents in an ACGME or RCPSC-approved residency program in the United States or Canada who have already matched into a hematology-oncology fellowship program will be considered for this award program. The intended outcome is to increase interest in hematology research and choice of fellowship. Award recipients will present the results of their research project in person at the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition in December, following completion of their project.

Connecting with a Potential Mentor

The first step in the application process is to identify a research mentor. You can do this on your own, as long as the individual you identify is an ASH member, or you can request assistance from ASH staff. ASH staff maintains a list of mentors associated with ASH MRI award programs. You can choose a research mentor at your own medical school or request a mentor at a different institution in the same area that you are based. If you have a particular area of interest in hematology such as sickle cell disease or leukemia, ASH staff can also help connect you with a mentor who is an expert in that area.

Developing your Proposal

The proposal is an important component of the application, and requires meeting your mentor in person if they are at your institution or over the phone if they are at an outside institution. Your mentor will help you identify a specific project. It is critical that you have a good understanding of your proposed project, and that the project can be completed within a 12 month time frame. The research proposal should be hypothesis-based, and MUST be written in your own words.

B. Review Process – Criteria Reviewers use to Score Applications

1. Research (Academic Potential)

- a. Does the applicant have a track record of performing well academically as evidenced by their GPA, publications, and/or presentation experience?
- b. Does the applicant have a history of previous research experience, notably with a hematology related focus?

2. Leadership/Service

- a. Does the applicant have evidence of leadership or service experience as evidenced by leadership roles in organizations or volunteering?

3. Research Mentor/Proposed Project

- a. Is the project clearly described, including the hypothesis to be tested, the experiments to be performed if laboratory-based, the expected outcomes, and the methods of data analysis?
- b. Does the applicant have a clear role on the proposed project?
- c. Can the project be completed within a year with a minimum commitment of 320-480 hours (total of 8-12 forty-hour weeks over a year)?
- d. Is IRB approval (approval to conduct research on human subjects) required, and, if so, has this been obtained yet? It is important to indicate the date of IRB approval.
- e. Is there clear evidence the applicant will be meeting regularly with the research mentor (i.e., weekly meetings etc.)?
- f. Is the proposal well-written and edited for typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors?

4. Commitment to Hematology/Career Goals

- a. Does the applicant have an interest in hematology clearly articulated in their personal statement?
- b. Does the applicant indicate an interest in a potential career as a hematologist or in a hematology-related field?

5. Timeline/Research Schedule

- a. How does the applicant plan to integrate their research project with their clinical rotations over the course of the year?

6. Strong Letters of Recommendation

- a. Choose letter writers who know you and who can speak to your strengths as an applicant

C. Making the Most of Your MRHAP Experience

As with any successful research project, planning is essential to optimize the time you will spend working with your mentor during your MRHAP experience. We highly encourage MRHAP applicants to have active discussions in advance with their research mentors regarding the sequence and timing of their planned research activities, suggested reading relevant to their research project, and any required training. If your research project requires IRB approval, it is essential that this be obtained before the project start date.

D. Role of Career Development Mentor

In addition to a research mentor, MRHAP awardees will also be paired by ASH staff with a Career Development Mentor. This will be done after award recipients are selected. The Career Development Mentor is intended to support award recipients as they progress through residency, into a fellowship program, and beyond. The mentor will help guide you and provide you with advice on pursuing additional hematology-related experiences. This individual will also serve as a great sounding board and a conduit to other initiatives and programs supported by ASH that will strengthen the applicant's career.

E. Preparing for the ASH Annual Meeting

During the ASH annual meeting that is held during the first week of December, MRHAP awardees will give a short scientific presentation of the results obtained from their research projects. A travel stipend related to the meeting will be provided by ASH to help offset the cost of travel and housing. Attending and presenting at the ASH meeting provides awardees with a rich and unique educational experience, and is a key requirement of the program. You will gain valuable skills in delivering a scientific/medical presentation in a national forum, and have the opportunity to meet prominent leaders in the field of hematology. This is an opportunity to showcase yourself. Since your project will conclude prior to the deadline of the general ASH abstract deadline in August, you are strongly encouraged to submit a formal abstract for consideration.

F. ASH Annual Meeting

In addition to your brief oral presentations at the Promoting Minorities in Hematology Dinner, MRHAP awardees will be invited to a special luncheon attended by past MRI program participants, committee members, and other interested ASH members. The highlight of the luncheon is the address by the keynote speaker, a prominent underrepresented minority hematologist, who typically provides their perspective on succeeding in a career in hematology. MRHAP awardees will also have the opportunity to hear the latest breaking news in hematology and interact with the more than 25,000 individuals from all over the world who attend the ASH annual meeting. It is an outstanding educational experience.