**Overview**

NIH[i](http://f2.washington.edu/fm/maa/glossary/term/102) Career Development Awards, commonly called K-awards, are intended to provide support and protected time for faculty to develop research skills and to ultimately ensure a pool of highly trained research scientists. There are three main types of awards:

* *Mentored Awards to Individuals* are primarily for researchers at the beginning of their careers and provide a transition to full independent research awards.
* *Independent or Non-Mentored K-Awards* are designed to provide protected research time for mid career or even senior faculty to enhance their research potential.
* *Institutional Awards* provide mentored experiences for multiple individuals.

The specific terms of each K-award vary among Institutes and careful attention should be given to the requirements of each award (see [K Kiosk – Information about NIH Career Development Awards](http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm) for specific information).

**Effort on K Awards**

K Awards require the candidate to maintain a minimum level of effort. The PI, administrator and chair must discuss and agree to the level of committed effort required by the K-award. Once an award is accepted, a commitment has been made to the sponsor and the faculty member must be able to follow through on that commitment.

* Mentored K-awards require a high level of commitment, normally 75% of the researcher’s total effort. Salary support funding is limited to $75,000 but may be funded at a higher level depending on the NIH Institute. This level of funding should be confirmed with the Institute.
* Because salary funding is limited, cost share may be necessary to complete the effort requirement.
* The effort commitment on a K-award may not be reduced *by any amount* without sponsor approval.
* A K-award recipient’s remaining effort (typically 25%) may be devoted to other University activities; however, most K-award programs require that all supplemental pursuits (clinical, teaching or other research pursuits beyond the required percentage of effort) be consistent with the K-award objectives – development into an independent researcher.
* For mentored awards, salary supplementation cannot be from federal funds unless specifically authorized by the awarding Institute.
* Normally K-awards are granted for three, four or five years. There may be no-cost time extensions, however unless negotiated with the sponsor at the time of the request, all terms and conditions of the original award apply – i.e. the negotiated level of effort is required.

**Appointment**

The faculty member must have a fulltime appointment at the University. In addition, the minimum percentage of the applicant’s commitment required for the proposed K-award experience must be covered by that appointment.

Responsibilities outside of the UW appointment are unrestricted, however, cannot be used to meet any minimum effort requirement.

**Proposal Preparation**

The goal of K Awards is to encourage development of the applicant into an independent researcher and it is expected that recipients apply for additional sponsored projects. It is therefore allowable to use K Award funds to support effort in preparing proposals.

**Proposal**

The proposal must include specific reference to any closely related research and clinical activity to be used to satisfy a portion of the K-award effort. All research and clinical activity must be consistent with the objectives of the K-award.

Clinical effort to be used to satisfy a part of the K-award required effort should be identified in the grant proposal.

Non-federal awards may be used to satisfy effort requirements on the K-award if both the NIH and the non-federal sponsor approve.

In order for another grant to satisfy the effort, when appropriate or known, this should be included in both the K-award proposal and the non-federal award proposal, (or approved in writing by both.) In addition, the award objectives must be consistent with the K-award objectives.

**Complementary Effort on Other Research Grants**

In certain circumstances, the recipient may be working on another grant while the K-award supports the employee’s salary. In this case, it is expected that the goals of the second grant support the goals of the K-award. In cases where there is scientific overlap, the effort on the second grant is included in the K Award effort.

**Salary Cap**

When the faculty member’s paid salary exceeds the mandated NIH salary cap, "cap" cost sharing is required. Cap cost sharing is documented separately from any K-Award cost sharing required and clearly marked as (C), cap cost sharing, on the FEC. This salary cap cost share is, however, included in the 75% effort required by the K-award.

**Clinical Effort**

If clinical activity is related to the goals of the K-award, the faculty member may include that portion of his effort toward the fulfillment of the required 75% effort. The intention to use clinical activity as part of the K-award effort should be noted in the proposal.

**Reduction of Effort – Mentored Awards**

In support of providing a transition to full independent research, mentored K-Awards encourage faculty members to apply for other grants and allow the PI to reduce effort on the K-Award during the last two years of the grant under the following circumstances:

* When named Principal Investigator on a competing NIH research project grant (R01, R03, R15, R21, R34, etc.)
* When the recipient becomes the sub-project director on a competing multi-component research or center grant, or a cooperative agreement.
* Recipients are allowed to reduce their effort on the K Award to no less than 6 person months or 50% and must remain in a mentored relationship.
* Total research effort must remain at 75%.
* Written approval is required for reduction of effort. Do not
  + Include the reduction in the progress report only.
  + Reduce effort independently.
  + Contact NIH directly.
  + The request must include a concurrence signature by the UW Office of Sponsored Programs.

**Concurrent effort**

The goal of mentored K Awards is to provide a transition to full independent research awards. Therefore, during the final two years of the grant, recipients are allowed to reduce their effort on the K Award to no less than 6 person months or 50% when named principle investigator or project director on a competing federally funded research grant or a project leader on a competing multi-project award. During this time, the recipient must remain in a mentored relationship.

**Proposal Writing**

Limited charging of bid and proposal preparation, as a direct charge to the K-award, is allowable since it is the goal of these awards to train young investigators in all phases of research.

**VA**

Candidates for K Awards may hold dual appointments with the University and the VA. It is essential that they discuss their eligibility with their Chair to ensure sufficient time is available in the UW appointment.

* The minimum percentage of the K-award (typically 75%) must be covered by the appointment at the University. This appointment is assumed to be, at a minimum, no less than 35 hours.
* Faculty may not use any of their VA time to satisfy the requirements of the K-award, even with VA approval.
* The VA appointment should be no more, or be reduced to, no more than 2/8ths upon receipt of the K-award.
* Up to 5/8ths VA appointment may be permitted with Chair and Dean’s Office approval

When a faculty member has an appointment at the VA and is included on a UW proposal, he/she must disclose the VA appointment and salary in the narrative of the proposal's budget justification.