

Quantitative Methodologies Pilot Program (QuMP)

The Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design Core sponsors QuMP to encourage the development of new data analytic methodologies.

At a Glance

Status: Closed
Deadline: November 2019
Funding Level: \$10,000

Overview

The Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design (BERD) Core of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) is now accepting applications for the Quantitative Methodologies Pilot Program (QuMP). This funding opportunity is designed to support research that involves interdisciplinary and translational use of quantitative methodologies, such as statistics, biostatistics, and epidemiology.

Key Dates

Friday, November 9, 2018	Submissions Due at 11:59 p.m.
Monday, December 10, 2018	Notification of Award
Friday, February 1, 2019	Funding Begins*

*Exact date may vary. These pilot funds are made possible through an institutional award made by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS); as a result, projects that are selected by CTSI must be submitted to NCATS for administrative approval. The review cannot be completed until all required regulatory approvals are submitted, and the review process itself lasts at least four weeks. To ensure a prompt start of funding, CTSI staff will work with accepted teams to prepare and submit the necessary materials.

Funding Information

Applicants can request up to \$10,000 in direct costs, with a maximum funding period of one year. The funding cycle will run from February 1, 2019 through January 31, 2020; no extensions of this award period will be made. Funding cannot start until all necessary regulatory approvals have been received (IRB, hSCRO, IBC, CORID, IACUC).

What Types of Projects will be Considered?

Funding through QuMP is available to masters or doctoral students who are working under the supervision of a faculty mentor in order to foster innovative research. Eligible projects must involve either:

- A novel use of an already-existing quantitative methodology; or
- The development of a new quantitative methodology

This pilot program is also designed to support the career development of investigators in the fields of statistics, biostatistics, and epidemiology: Applications should include a discussion of the ways the proposed pilot study will lead to larger research efforts in the future.

Who Can Apply?

The 2018 funding cycle for QuMP is focused on supporting the work of graduate student researchers (masters or doctoral) at Pitt working with a formal mentor. As such, each project should have at least two investigators:

- Principal Investigator (PI): the PI must be a faculty member at the Pitt
- Co-Principal Investigator: the Co-PI must be a graduate student currently enrolled in either a master's or doctoral degree program at Pitt
- Other Co-Investigators (Co-Is) may be included but are not required.

The PI should serve as a mentor to the Co-PI, as either the academic mentor or academic advisor to the Co-PI. Submissions should describe clearly the role of each investigator, with sufficient detail for reviewers to identify that all listed team members will have an active role in the research.

How to Submit

Please combine the following documents into a single PDF file and upload to the Powered by Pinch website before the application deadline. Supplemental materials will not be accepted after the deadline. Documents should not use a font smaller than Arial 11; margins must be no smaller than 0.5 inches.

Applications must include the following sections. Please start each new section on a new page.

- A. **Cover Sheet** (1 page): Include the following details:
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Study Team: Please include the name and preferred contact email for the:
 - i. Principal Investigator (faculty member)
 - ii. Co-Principal Investigator (mentored graduate student)
 - c. Scientific Abstract (max. 250 words): Summarize your proposal

- B. **Research Plan** (max. 5 pages including tables/figures): Please follow the traditional NIH proposal format to allow reviewers to address the following:
 - a. Specific Aims
 - b. Significance
 - c. Innovation
 - d. Approach
 - e. Future Impact: A well-defined path from the pilot to future larger research efforts (max. 250 words)

- C. **References** (no page limit): Literature cited does not count towards the 5 page limit

- D. **Budget with Justification** (no page limit): Use PHS 398 Forms Pages 4 and 5 (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>; later revisions are also acceptable). The Budget Justification should include sufficient detail for reviewers to assess whether appropriate resources have been requested.

An additional page should be included for the budget justification; all pieces of equipment, including any type of computer or related device, must be explicitly justified as critical to the performance of the proposed research. As indicated above, the intent of this program is to support the development of quantitative methods for biomedical research. Thus funds may not be used to support clinical work, including the recruitment of study subjects. Any salary requested should include federal fringe benefit rates.

Grant funds may not be budgeted for:

- Salary support for the PI or faculty collaborators*
- Effort for the Co-PI (graduate student) is allowed
- Routine office supplies or communication costs, including printing
- Meals or travel, including to conferences, except as required to collect data
- Professional education or training
- Computers or audiovisual equipment (exceptions require clear justification)
- Manuscript preparation and submission
- Indirect costs

*Effort is required of the principal investigator and must be reflected on the budget page. If salary support is not requested for the principal investigator and the co-investigator, effort must be cost-shared by the respective department. This effort should be cost shared by the department or other entity that will support such effort. Reviewers understand that this may be a very small proportion of effort given the size of this award, but will be cautious if investigators do not appear to have sufficient time to complete a project. Please note, an applicant who is currently the recipient of a mentored career development award (e.g., K12, K23, etc.) or a foundation-supported career development award may subsume the effort devoted to his or her QuMP project under the career development award as long as this project proposed is consistent with the career development award. Please contact Dr. Stephen Wisniewski, Director, CTSI BERD Core, wisniew@edc.pitt.edu, for verification of eligibility to subsume effort related to this announcement.

Any salary support requested in a submitted budget should reflect federal fringe benefit rates. If an award is made, a budget meeting will be held between principal investigators, their respective research administrators, and financial administrators from the CTSI. If necessary, minor adjustments to the requested budget will be made at that meeting.

- E. **Proposal Timeline** (1 page): Describe milestones and timeline for completion of the project. These milestones are critical for the pilot program, because all awards must be expended during the one-year award. The CTSI Pilot program does not have mechanisms to allow no-cost extensions. In the event an award is made, investigators should immediately confer with CTSI staff if any delay in initiation or completion of the project is anticipated.

- F. **Human and/or Animal Subjects** (no page limit): NIH supported pilot awards must address Protection of Human Subjects, Adequacy of Protection Against Risks, Data and Safety Monitoring Plans, Inclusion of Women and Minorities, and Inclusion of Children.
- G. **Human Research Protection Office (HRPO)** approval is not required prior to submission. However, HRPO approval is required for all projects involving human subjects before NCATS will approve project funding. Although animal research is expected to be rare in this program, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must approve any projects involving animal subjects prior to final funding approval.

In this section, applicants must describe any human and/or animal subject issues, as well as the sources of materials that will be obtained from human subjects. If human subjects are involved, provide a description of their involvement and characteristics, specific risks to subjects who participate, and protection against those risks. Reviewers may consider whether significant delays in approval are an anticipated barrier for project completion when selecting projects. Evidence of prior or ongoing HRPO / IACUC review is encouraged. Similarly, this section should discuss if other special regulatory approval is required prior to funding: Human Stem Cell Research (hSCRO), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Research Involving the Dead (CORID), Radiation Safety Office (RSO), etc.

- H. **NIH Biosketches** (no page limit): Include biosketches for the Principal Investigator and for any other investigator whose expertise will be critical for successful completion of the project. The personal statement in any biographical sketch should be appropriate for the research proposed in the QuMP application. Use the new NIH Biosketch format as of May 2015.

Review Criteria

It is a requirement that review of CTSI Pilot proposals should address the NIH review criteria. Reviewers will score final applications on an NIH scale (1-9) in the domains of Significance, Investigators, Innovation, Approach and Environment. Special emphasis will be given to a rating of the Overall Impact of the proposed project.

NIH Review Criteria:

1. Overall Impact of the proposed project (The likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field).
2. Significance (Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field?)
3. Investigators (Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited, sufficient, and able to conduct the project?)
4. Innovation (Does the project shift current research or clinical practice paradigms use novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?)
5. Approach (Are the strategies, methods, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?)
6. Environment (Are the personnel, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators to perform the proposed research within the time frame allotted?)