

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award**

*For Nominators/Applicants*

The Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program funds basic biomedical research in the fields of cancer, immunology, and neuroscience. The Foundation also supports an award for scholars in pain research through the separate Rita Allen Foundation Award in Pain. Since 1976, more than 225 scientists have received awards for innovative research with above-average risk and groundbreaking possibilities. Scholars have gone on to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, the National Medal of Science, the Wolf Prize in Medicine, and the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences. Scholars can receive up to \$110,000 per year for a maximum of five years. Only invited institutions are eligible to submit a nomination.

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **How many candidates can an institution nominate per year?**

Only one nominated candidate per eligible institution is accepted per year.

### **Who is eligible to become a Rita Allen Foundation Scholar?**

To be eligible for a Rita Allen Foundation Scholar Award, candidates must be nominated by an invited institution and have completed their training and provided persuasive evidence of distinguished achievement or extraordinary promise in research in one of the relevant fields (cancer, immunology, or neuroscience).

### **Is U.S. citizenship a requirement?**

United States citizenship is not a requirement; however, awardees must be legally employed at the time of application at a U.S. degree-granting or research institution that is an invited participant in the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program. Awards are made to the 501(c)(3)

organization; awards are not made to an individual. Scholars must perform research at a non-profit institution in the United States during the entire period of Rita Allen Foundation support.

**May candidates not chosen in previous years be re-nominated?**

The Foundation discourages repeat nominations.

**I am pursuing several other awards — will these affect my eligibility?**

Rita Allen Foundation Scholars may not accept an award from the Beckman Young Investigator Program, Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences, Searle Scholars Program, or Vallee Scholars Program that would take effect beginning in year one of the RAF award. Rita Allen Scholars may apply for awards from these organizations that would take effect beginning in year two of the RAF award. Other sources of funding also may influence selection.

## **NOMINATION**

**Who should be nominated for the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program?**

Institutions should consider the following when considering whom to nominate for the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program:

- Candidates should be independent investigators in the early stages of their careers and research.
- The caliber of early-stage investigators suggests nominees would be appointed to tenure-track positions at their respective institutions.
- It is preferable that candidates be in the first three years of their tenure track (the Scientific Advisory Committee takes this into consideration in their rating of applicants).
- Candidates must have received committed startup funds from their respective institutions.
- Candidates must have lab space from their institutions.

Nominating institutions should consider the highly competitive nature of the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program and submit their strongest nominee for consideration. The Rita Allen Foundation requests that eligible institutions share with us a description of the process they follow to nominate candidates.

**Who *should not* be nominated for the program?**

- A senior postdoc should not be a candidate; wait until s/he is in a tenure-track position, as described.
- Associate professors should not be candidates.
- Candidates nominated in previous years should not be re-nominated.

**What is the nomination and application process?**

The application is a two-part process. The first step is the formal nomination of the candidate by the institution, and the second is the proposal and support materials by the candidate. Please see the Grant Guidelines for more specific information.

**What should the letter of nomination include?**

The **letter of nomination** is a statement from a senior official at the nominating institution (i.e., Dean, President, Provost, etc.) that simply identifies the candidate. Here are a few examples from past letters for reference:

“On behalf of the NAME OF INSTITUTION, I am very pleased to nominate NAME OF CANDIDATE, as our candidate for the 202X Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to participate in competition for this important and prestigious award.”

“Please accept this letter of confirmation that NAME OF INSTITUTION, through its institutional nomination and faculty review process, has selected NAME OF CANDIDATE, as its nominee for the 202X Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award.”

“This letter confirms that NAME OF CANDIDATE is NAME OF INSTITUTION's nominee for the 202X Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program. If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact NAME OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT, TITLE, at PHONE NUMBER/E-MAIL.”

**What should the candidate assessment include?**

The **candidate assessment** is an evaluation of the candidate citing his/her achievements from the institution's perspective and describing what makes this person a candidate for the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars award. This may be completed by the same individual who is submitting the letter of nomination or by another individual within the institution (i.e., a person who is supporting the candidate's application) and is typically one to two pages in length. Further, the **candidate assessment** letter may be used as one of the five letters of support required for the candidate's application/full proposal.

**What happens after the institution submits the Nomination (Letter of Inquiry/LOI)?**

The Foundation will review the LOI for completeness. Once approved, an email will be sent to the nominating official and the candidate so that the candidate can begin working on the application.

**What is the difference between the institution where a faculty appointment is held and the grant-receiving organization?**

The degree-granting institution where the candidate holds a faculty-level appointment may differ from the grant-receiving organization. If the candidate is associated with an affiliated research hospital or research institute and his or her grants are administered through the latter organization, then that institution is the grant-receiving organization and, therefore, is the institution that nominates the candidate.

**APPLICATION****What style should be used for the grant application?**

Any style is fine.

**Does the font need to be a particular size and/or type?**

While we do not have formal formatting requirements for the proposal narrative, we recommend using a readable font such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri, in 10 to 12 point size with minimum .5-inch margins.

**May figures and tables be included in the application?**

Yes

**Are references and supporting materials included in the four-page proposal narrative?**

The proposal narrative is limited to four pages including references and supporting materials.

**Is there a template for the letters of support?**

No

**The mentor is the chair of my department and the nominator. Can he or she also write a mentor letter of support?**

Yes, the nominator may also write a letter of recommendation. The candidate should request this letter as other letters of support, and then the mentor may submit it.

**To whom should the letters of support be addressed?**

To the Rita Allen Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee

**Is a budget required to be included in the application?**

No

**The candidate's work includes traditional research and cutting-edge research. In the narrative section, is it best to focus more on one than the other?**

Since the Rita Allen Foundation Award encourages innovative research with above-average risk and groundbreaking possibilities, focus more on the cutting-edge research.

**In the narrative section, would a global or local perspective be preferred?**

A balanced approach would be best.

**If a candidate needs help using the Rita Allen Foundation online grants management system, whom should the candidate contact?**

The candidate should contact Nancy Kovacevich, Grants Administration, at [nk@ritaallen.org](mailto:nk@ritaallen.org).

## **SELECTION**

**Who selects the recipients of the awards, and how many are chosen each year?**

The Scientific Advisory Committee reviews and selects finalists from the eligible institutions for the Scholars program. The Committee interviews the finalists each March and then chooses the recipients. In each of the last several years, five awards have been made (in addition to awards in pain research in a program supported by the Foundation through the separate Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award in Pain).

**When will I be notified if I am/am not selected?**

Candidates who are selected as finalists will be notified in February and invited for an interview with the Scientific Advisory Committee. Those not selected for interviews will be notified shortly thereafter.

**Will Committee scores and comments be made available to applicants?**

No written evaluation or score is provided to applicants.

**DATES & DEADLINES****What are the key dates and deadlines for the program?**

|                                   |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| July 9 – October 14, 2026         | Application period                               |
| September 3, 2026                 | Letter of Inquiry (LOI) deadline (11:59 p.m. ET) |
| October 14, 2026                  | Application deadline (11:59 p.m. ET)             |
| November 2026 – February 2027     | Review period                                    |
| March 2027                        | Finalist interviews                              |
| April 2027                        | Grant awards announced                           |
| May 2027                          | Grant contracts due                              |
| June 2027                         | Press announcement                               |
| September 2027 – August 2032      | Grant period                                     |
| August 31, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031 | Interim reports due                              |
| December 1, 2032                  | Final report due                                 |

**What time of day is the application/proposal due?**

The application/proposal is due at 11:59 p.m. ET on October 14, 2026.

**Why is the deadline that was sent to my recommenders earlier than the proposal submission deadline?**

The recommenders are being asked to upload their letters a week earlier than the proposal is due so that the nominees have time to ensure all materials are gathered well before the deadline. However, the recommenders can submit recommendations up until the proposal deadline of October 14, 2026.

## SPENDING THE GRANT

### **What can the grant funds be used for?**

Rita Allen Foundation Scholar grant funds may only be used for direct project expenses, including up to 50% of the Scholar's compensation. No grant funds may be used to support the grant recipient's overhead or other administrative (indirect) expenses.

### **What reports are required of Rita Allen Foundation Scholars?**

Successful grant recipients are required to provide complete annual narrative and financial reports detailing their expenditure of the grant funds and progress made toward the goal(s) of the grants, as well as a final narrative and financial report. Grant reports also must be submitted online through Fluxx.

## FLUXX (Nomination/Letter of Inquiry)

### **If our institution has nominated a candidate in the past, do we need to register in Fluxx again this year?**

Yes, each institution must complete a new registration in Fluxx every year, regardless of whether it registered in previous years. You may continue to use your previous username and password (or follow the instructions on the login page to reset your password if you have forgotten it).

### **Are there any quick fixes if I am having a problem submitting a nomination/LOI through Fluxx?**

If you are having trouble submitting a nomination/LOI, check the following items:

- Use the Google Chrome browser; while Fluxx supports any browser, Chrome is recommended for the most optimal experience
- Enter "0" in the "Amount Requested" field
- Complete the Nomination Procedure and Tenure Track sections
- Upload the Letter of Nomination and Candidate Assessment and ensure each is tagged in Fluxx using the dropdown label

### **How do I add a new contact?**

Click on "Add New" next to the dropdown list.

### **How do I edit a contact that I previously added or that is already listed in the dropdown list?**

Currently it is not possible to edit a contact already in Fluxx. Please send an email to Nancy Kovacevich, Grants Administration, at [nk@ritaallen.org](mailto:nk@ritaallen.org) with the revised contact details.

### **Will I receive a confirmation for my submitted LOI?**

Once the LOI is approved by the Foundation, an email will be sent to the nominating official and the candidate so that the candidate can begin working on the application.

**I am not the official nominator but am entering information on behalf of the nominator. How should I handle this?**

If you are filling out the nomination/LOI on behalf of a senior official at your institution, you should select that person's name as "nominator." Please be certain to select your own name as "registrant" so that you are able to log in and complete the LOI in the future.

**Who do I contact if I need help with Fluxx?**

Contact Nancy Kovacevich, Grants Administration, at [nk@ritaallen.org](mailto:nk@ritaallen.org).

**FLUXX (Proposal and Support Materials)**

**My recommenders did not receive the email request from Fluxx. How do I resend?**

Add the recommender again; it is not a problem if s/he is listed twice.

**If I listed six recommenders, but only five have submitted letters of support, can I still submit my proposal?**

Yes. The minimum required is five, at least two of which should come from individuals outside of the candidate's institution.

**Who do I contact if I need help with Fluxx?**

Contact Nancy Kovacevich, Grants Administration, at [nk@ritaallen.org](mailto:nk@ritaallen.org).