SOAP-FAER Mentored Research Training Grant (MRTG)

OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

UPCOMING APPLICATION CYCLE:

2025
Application Deadline: February 15, 2025
Earliest possible funding date: July 1, 2025

Contents   Page

SOAP-FAER Mentored Research Training Grant

OVERVIEW
The Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP) and the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER) are offering this solicitation of applications for training grants to develop the next generation of obstetric anesthesiology and perinatology physician-investigators. One SOAP-FAER Mentored Research Training Grant of a highly promising new obstetric anesthesiology and perinatology investigator will be funded to the sponsoring institution. This grant aims to help anesthesiologists develop the skills and preliminary data they need to become independent investigators in the area of obstetric anesthesiology and perinatology. SOAP-FAER Mentored Research Training Grant applications will be accepted every other year during bi-annual award cycles.

The primary purpose of this Mentored Research Training Grant mechanism is to train the next generation of physician-investigators who can then compete successfully for federal grants as the principal investigator. Applicants must be within 10 years of their first faculty appointment at the time of funding. Those who have already received a federal training (i.e., a K) or an independent scientist (R01, R21, or equivalent) grant are not eligible for this grant mechanism. At least one senior, experienced mentor and a rigorous career development plan will be essential to a successful application.

AREAS OF RESEARCH
All areas of research that contribute to knowledge about and advance and advocate for the health of pregnant women and their babies through research, education, and best practices in obstetric anesthesia care.

ELIGIBILITY
At the time of the award, applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen, permanent U.S. resident, or holder of H-1 visa with minimum of three years remaining.
- Be within 10 years of first faculty appointment.*
- Be a physician with an unexpired, permanent, unconditional and unrestricted license to practice medicine or osteopathy in at least one state or jurisdiction of the U.S.
- Be a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) and Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP) upon application and throughout the duration of the award.
- Be able to attend the SOAP Annual Meeting and present on the completed research funded by the SOAP-FAER MRTG.
- Have not previously received a federal or non-profit foundation career development award (equivalent or greater value than this grant) or a major investigator-initiated research grant (R21, R01, or equivalent). Recipients of this grant may not simultaneously be receiving support from a federal source for similar research. Should the investigator receive such an award during the course of this grant's funding, the remainder of this grant's funding would be cancelled, and unused funds returned.

__FAER and SOAP will consider exceptions for interruptions of experience due to extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis__ (e.g., family leave, major illness). To request an exception, please reach out to the FAER office at FAER@FAER.org. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to FAER for consideration by both organizations no later than two months prior to the grant deadline.

DEPARTMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Commitment to provide the applicant with at least 75% unencumbered research and non-clinical career development time during the duration of the award.
- Commitment to provide the Mentor with at least 5% unencumbered time to mentor the applicant.
- Unencumbered provision of the facilities and resources required for successful completion of the applicant's proposed Career Development Plan and Research Project, as specified in the Application and Budget.

Recipients of this award agree to submit their completed work for presentation at the SOAP Annual Meeting. The applicant's Department Chair must commit to provide recipients with the time to present their research, if accepted for this presentation.

RESEARCH TIME

- The grant proposal must include at least 75% non-clinical time for the principal investigator, and this support must be documented by the institution.
- The percent effort on the SOAP-FAER funded research and the percent of time on career development activities should be described in the budget justification.
- The remaining 25% effort can be divided among clinical and teaching activities only if these activities are consistent with the recipient's development into an independent anesthesiologist clinician-scientist or health services researcher.

FUNDING

- The grant will provide up to $250,000 in funding over a two-year period. These funds will be split equally between the two years. Annual grant payments will be made to the institution.
- The grant proposal must include at least 75% non-clinical time for the principal investigator, and this support must be documented by the institution.
- Award renewal for the second year will be contingent on SOAP and FAER Leadership's favorable review of a formal scientific interim report.
- Grant funding will be awarded to a single sponsoring institution, not to the individual awardee or to a Department. However, should the awardee leave the funded institution, the award may be moved to the awardee's new institution contingent upon the identification of appropriate mentorship, infrastructure and upon appropriate commitments from the new institution, provided in writing.
- Funding may be requested for specific course work or training experiences (e.g., short courses) that will facilitate the applicant's career development, but not tuition for degree granting programs.

FAER MRTG AND SOAP ANNUAL MEETINGS

Grant awardees may also be invited by SOAP or FAER to present their work at other forums. Recipients of a SOAP-FAER MRTG award will be invited to participate in the FAER MRTG Annual Meeting, which may involve poster presentations and sessions on career development. Attendance at this meeting is required as it aims
to create a community of early-stage investigators and provides career development support. **$2,000 per year** of the application budget must be designated for this purpose. Funds in this category must be spent on meeting related expenses. Guidelines on funds and any restrictions will be provided within the meeting invitation from FAER staff. Meeting specifics (dates, location, sessions etc.) will be shared with grant awardees as they become available. Please note, MRTG awarded funds may not be reallocated from the MRTG Annual Meeting category. Any and all remaining funds from the MRTG Annual Meeting category must be returned to FAER at the completion of the project.

Grant awardees are also required to submit work resulting from the grant for presentation at the SOAP Annual Meeting during the second year of their award. The application budget should include **$2,000 for Year 2** of the application budget for expenses to participate in the SOAP Annual Meeting (travel, registration, abstract fees, etc.).

Preparing a Grant Application

The information in this section applies to the SOAP-FAER MRTG. Please also see the formatting instructions and guidelines.

ABSTRACT

The abstract should state the broad, long-term objectives and specific aims of the project, its relationship to anesthesiology, as well as the research design and methods. The abstract should be a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work that can be understood when read apart from the application.

RESUBMISSION STATEMENT

If you have previously submitted any research proposal for the SOAP-FAER MRTG, you must include a resubmission statement within your application.

If you are submitting a revised application, the resubmission statement (1 page maximum) should provide a summary of the differences between this and the previous application. It should address the critiques of the original application point by point. Applicants may submit up to two resubmissions of a revised research grant proposal.

If you are reapplying with a completely different research protocol, the resubmission statement should indicate how and why this project differs from the previous application.

RESEARCH PLAN, RIGOR & TRANSPARENCY

The research plan is the core of the application. Particularly, because of page limitations, the research plan should be developed in conjunction with the applicant's mentor(s). It must include the following sections.

- **Specific Aims:** State the long-term objectives of the research and describe what the research is intended to accomplish. State the hypotheses to be tested.
- **Background and Significance:** Briefly sketch the background of the research proposal, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and identify the gaps that this project is intended to fill.
- **Preliminary Studies:** Use this section to provide an account of the applicant's preliminary studies pertinent to the research proposal. Also include any other information that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Although it is understood that many applicants will not have personally developed preliminary data, it is important to discuss the relevant preliminary studies done in the mentor's or other laboratories that lend credence to the proposed research.
- **Experimental Design and Methods:** Describe the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include the means by which data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over older methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and provide alternative approaches to achieve the aims.
- **References:** Cite only the most important, relevant literature.
- **Rigor & Transparency:** In response to growing concern regarding failure to replicate major findings in preclinical research, NIH has added a new section on "Rigor and Transparency of Reporting" to their grant applications. FAER aims to support new investigators in part by preparing them to construct applications similar to those they will use at the NIH. The applicant should include a paragraph in the **research plan** in **which they address the four factors required by the NIH**. For more information on the NIH guidelines, visit grants.nih.gov. *(Click the link for more information).* Please note, the mentor should also include an outline on how the mentor will educate the applicant on Rigor and Transparency in the **mentor plan**.

MENTORING PLAN, RIGOR, & TRANSPARENCY

The mentorship and career development sections are major elements of the SOAP-FAER MRTG application and are weighted heavily in the scoring.

Mentor Selection & Requirements
Identifying a research mentor or mentorship team is an important step in the application process and is a key element in the review committee's assessment of an application.

The applicant is responsible for selecting a senior mentor to serve as a primary research mentor.

Senior Mentor Requirements
- Commitment to mentor the applicant with a minimum of 5% dedicated effort.
- Prior evidence of successful mentorship of doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, or junior faculty.
- Tangible evidence of substantial experience as an obstetric and perinatology (or related field) scientist, including peer-reviewed extramural funding and peer-reviewed publications.
- Hold an accredited doctoral level degree.
- Hold a full-time faculty appointment (preferably tenure track) in an accredited academic institution. If the mentor is not an anesthesiologist, a secondary mentor at the applicant's institution who is an anesthesiologist should be named and should provide a letter of support and indication of their involvement in the project.

Mentoring Plan

The mentoring plan should be written by the primary mentor — in the mentor's voice — with input from a secondary mentor, if present. The mentoring plan should clearly describe the roles of the mentor in the proposed research. If there are multiple research mentors, the roles of all collaborators should also be clearly described in this mentoring plan. There is no need for mentoring plans from each additional mentor(s) or collaborators.

The mentoring plan should outline the course of action for developing the applicant's research career. This should include details on how the award and the research mentor's teaching will prepare the applicant for a research career and will guide the applicant's development as an independent obstetric anesthesiology and perinatology physician investigator. These elements of the mentoring plan should be coordinated with the applicant's research strategy and career development plan. The mentoring plan should include an outline on how the mentor will educate the applicant in terms of Rigor and Transparency. This provides another opportunity to further develop and demonstrate the quality of the mentoring relationship, a key determinant of SOAP-FAER grant funding decisions.

The mentoring plan should also provide a generalized understanding of the primary (and secondary) mentor's experience in training and mentoring, if not fully described in the mentor's biosketch personal statement. Full training tables are not needed or desired, but the mentoring plan should provide a general description of any roles on training grants, as well as previous protégés and their career trajectories, current positions, and success in becoming independent investigators.

Finally, the mentoring plan should indicate how much of the research mentor's professional time is available for research and how much of that time is specifically available for mentoring the proposed project (minimum 5% dedicated effort).

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The career development plan should be written by the applicant — in the applicant's voice — with input from the primary research mentor or mentorship team.

Within the career development plan, the applicant should describe their motivation and commitment to a research career and should outline short-term and long-term career objectives. The career development plan should show clearly how the proposed research will prepare the applicant for an independent career as a physician-investigator. The plan should describe those specific elements planned for the training period, including formal or didactic training through courses, classwork, and participation in institutional research training (*e.g.* CTSA research training programs). Funding may be requested for specific course work or training experiences (e.g., short courses) that will facilitate the applicant's career development, but not tuition for degree granting programs.

To prepare to write the career development plan, the applicant should conduct a realistic self-assessment to identify research abilities and skills, as well as strengths and areas that need development. Along with the mentor(s), the applicant should discuss current skills and strengths and compare them with those needed for the research career choice.

The career development plan should outline the outcomes of the self-assessment and should define the approaches that the applicant will use to obtain the specific skills and strengths (*e.g.,* courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision) together with anticipated time frames.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Applicant and Mentor: Use the latest version of the current NIH biosketch template. Submit one biosketch for each mentor.

For the applicant and the mentor(s), the personal statement is an important part of the biosketch. Information provided within the biosketch personal statement is considered during grant review. The personal statement should be tailored to the specific grant application and used to convey information about your relevant qualifications and experience related to your role in the grant. The personal statement is most often written in the first person. For applicants, it should demonstrate your understanding of the project and how it will benefit your career, and for mentors, it should demonstrate your understanding of the project and how it will benefit your mentee's career.

BUDGET

As a part of the grant application, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and justification of expenses. The Budget Form is available within the online application in ProposalCentral.

The budget must outline funding for the entire research proposal and should specify the intended use of the award. The budget should identify any additional sources of funding required to complete the project, and it should identify all extramural funds requested or currently available to the applicant — for this project or others. If there is overlap between funds requested from SOAP and FAER and such extramural funds, please detail the overlap on the budget form.

Additional Budget Guidelines

CATEGORY	REQUIREMENTS
Salary	- The award may be used for applicant's salary (no cap). - The total salary for the applicant and all salary sources must be specified in the budget. - Salary support for the mentor(s) is not allowed. - Salary support for post-doctoral research staff is not allowed. - Research technician salary support is allowed with appropriate justification.
Equipment	- Support is to be used primarily for ongoing research expenses. Major equipment purchases are considered to be the responsibility of the applicant's Department. The award may be used for minor equipment expenses related to the research project, with sufficient justification, at the discretion of SOAP and FAER. (Major equipment is defined as an article of tangible nonexpendable property that has a useful life of more than 1 year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds $20,000.) - Expenses for computers not directly justified by the research are not allowed.
Supplies	The award may be used for supply expenses related to the research project.
Travel	$2,000 per year of the application budget must be designated for participation in the in the FAER MRTG Annual Meeting. $2,000 in Year 2 of the application budget must be designated for participation in the SOAP Annual Meeting. - Year 1 will be $2,000; Year 2 will be $4,000. - No other travel is allowed in the budget.
Tuition	Funding may be requested for specific course work or training experiences (e.g., short courses) that will facilitate the applicant's career development, but not tuition for degree granting programs
Other Expenses	- Incremental patient costs directly related to the study are allowed for clinical research. - Indirect costs are not allowed. - Secretarial or administrative costs are not allowed. - Alterations and renovations are not allowed.

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

A PDF of each letter of recommendation should be provided to the applicant for uploading with the application.

Department Chair
The letter of recommendation from the department chair should:
- Evaluate the applicant's commitment to academic anesthesiology and his or her potential for success in an academic career.
- Demonstrate commitment to support the applicant's development during the duration of the grant.
- Confirm the commitment to provide the applicant with at least 75% unencumbered research and non-clinical career development time during the duration of the award.

Research Mentor(s)
The primary research mentor must provide a letter of commitment, not just a letter of recommendation that describes the mentor's involvement with the applicant and the preparation of the application to date, and dedication to continuous, direct supervision of the applicant in developing research expertise and achieving the goals of the research proposal. If there is a secondary mentor, this individual must also provide a letter of involvement and commitment which describes their role and demonstrates their dedication. Do not include letters from each member of a mentoring team, if one exists.

Senior Faculty Members
In addition to the department chair letter and the mentor(s) letter(s), the applicant must provide two additional letters of recommendation and evaluation from senior faculty members, other than the research mentor(s), who work within or outside of the applicant's department. No more than two letters of recommendation and evaluation will be accepted. Others will be rejected.

HUMAN OR ANIMAL USE REVIEW

Provide a letter of approval from the appropriate institutional human or animal use review committee.

If this study does not require this approval, or if the application is submitted before approval is obtained, provide a letter of explanation. Notification of institutional approval must be received in the FAER office prior to any award payment being made.

HUMAN STUDIES SECTION

SOAP and FAER aim to support new investigators in part by preparing them to construct applications similar to those they will use at the NIH. Applicants with studies involving human studies must complete the Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information – Form. This form was modeled off of the NIH's "PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information" form. For more information and instructions for completing this form, please refer to the NIH's guide here: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/general/g.500-phs-human-subjects-and-clinical-trials-information.htm

VERTEBRATE ANIMALS SECTION

Additionally, applicants with studies that involve the use of live vertebrate animals must complete the Vertebrate Animals Section – Form. Please refer to the NIH "Preparing the Vertebrate Animals Section" document and "Worksheet for Applications Involving Animals" document for additional information.

Submission of SOAP-FAER MRTG Application

DATES & DEADLINES
2025 CYCLE:

SPRING 202 CYCLE
Online application opens December 1, 2024
Applications due February 15, 2025
Review Meeting TBD
Award notifications made in May 2025
Project start date July 1, 2025

ONLINE GRANT PORTAL
The SOAP-FAER MRTG LOI and application can be submitted through the FAER portal at https://proposalcentral.com/GrantOpportunities.asp?GMID=240

FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS

The candidate background, research plan, cited references, and career development plan, as well as any supporting documents, should meet the following formatting specifications:

- Single-spaced (6 lines per inch)
- Arial or Helvetica font, size 11 pt.
  - 9 pt. font is acceptable for figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, figure legends and footnotes
- Margins of 0.5" right and left, and 1.0" top and bottom
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

	INSTRUCTIONS	FORMAT OF SUBMISSION	Character Count, Page Limit, File Size Limit
Applicant eligibility	Identify grant type and respond to all eligibility questions. See page 3.	Online text fields	Various text limits and 2 MB
Abstract	See page 4 for instructions and tips on what should be included in the abstract.	Online text field	2,000 characters maximum
Resubmission statement	If you have previously submitted an application, a resubmission statement is required. See page 4 for instructions and tips on what should be included in the resubmission statement.	Online text field	1 page maximum
Contact information	Provide contact information for: • Department chair • Primary mentor • Secondary and tertiary mentors (if applicable) • Financial officer	Online text fields	N/A
Research plan	See page 5 for instructions on what should be included in the research plan.	File upload	6 pages for research strategy & 1 page for references, single-spaced, Arial or Helvetica, 11 pt or larger 6 MBs
Appendix	You may provide an appendix to your research plan. The appendix must not be used to circumvent the page limitations of the research plan or used for submitting preliminary data or resubmission statements. Materials allowed in an appendix include relevant manuscripts and/or abstract that are accepted for publication but not yet published (or published but an online journal link is not available). Surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments, clinical protocols, and informed consent documents may be submitted in the Appendix as necessary.	File upload	1 MB
Mentoring plan	Written by the mentor. See page 5 for instructions and tips on what should be included in the mentoring plan.	File upload	2 pages, single-spaced, Arial or Helvetica, 11 pt 1 MB
Career development plan	Written by the applicant. See page 6 for instructions and tips on what should be included in the career development plan.	File upload	2 pages, single-spaced, Arial or Helvetica, 11 pt 1 MB
Biographical sketch	Applicants and mentors should use the current NIH biosketch template. Forms are available within the grant application on ProposalCentral.	File uploads	2 MBs per file
Budget	Use the budget form provided within the online grant application, following the budget requirements.	Online text fields	N/A
Letters of commitment and recommendation	• Letter from the department chair • Letter(s) of commitment from the mentor(s)	File uploads	No page limit

			1 MB per file
	• Letters of recommendation and evaluation for the applicant from two senior faculty members		
Acceptance of conditions	Applicant, research mentors and department chair must sign the acceptance form provided on the online grant application as a template.	File upload	1 page 1 MB
Human use or animal review	Provide a letter of approval from the appropriate institutional human or animal use review committee. OR provide a letter of explanation of the status of IRB /IACUC approval.	File upload	No page limit 1 MB
Human studies section	Complete the "Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information – Form". See page 8.	File upload	No page limit 1 MB
Vertebrate animals section	Complete the "Vertebrate Animals Section – Form". See page 8.	File upload	No page limit 1 MB

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS AND AWARD SELECTION

Members of the SOAP-FAER MRTG Grant Review Committee will evaluate the complete grant applications for scientific merit using National Institutes of Health (NIH) criteria and methods. Written critiques will be shared with all applicants.

Post Submission Publications
SOAP and FAER will accept submissions of new publications by the applicant that are relevant to the grant application, accompanied by the citation, up to 30 days prior to the SOAP-FAER review meeting.

Applicants of the SOAP-FAER MRTG will be notified of the review date when it becomes available.

REPORTING AND POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Interim Report
In order to receive the second year of grant funding, all recipients must submit an interim report to SOAP and FAER. This report is due 45 days prior to the completion of year one of the grant (e.g. May 15 for a June 30 completion date)

The report should be no longer than four pages and should:
- Provide an explanation for any deviation from the original specific aims.
- Summarize studies performed, the outcomes of the studies and their relationship to the specific aims.
- Summarize accomplishments to date, providing a concise account of the course of the study and other relevant information that illustrates the status of the grant.
- List *all* publications or manuscripts that have been published or are in preparation (SOAP-FAER-related and others)
- List all presentations at scientific meetings relevant to the grant.
- Provide a complete list of active and pending research support for the years the SOAP-FAER MRTG is in effect.
- Provide a financial report that summarizes year-one expenditures and the amount of funding requested to be carried over to year two. Also report any changes in the recipient's extramural funding.
- Reaffirm commitments by the recipient, research mentor(s), and department chair.

Final Report
All recipients must submit a final report to SOAP Grants Subcommittee Chair who will review and advise on the report in conjunction with FAER Leadership.

The final report is due 30 days after the completion of the grant.

The final report should include:
- A report, written by the recipient with the mentor's guidance, that describes accomplishments to date and the final status of the project.

- The report should outline outcomes of the specific aims and goals of the research project.
- The report should include a list of publication(s) resulting from the funded research project, as well as a list of subsequent research grant applications that are either in the review process or have been funded.
- The report should also summarize the progress made by the recipient in terms of career development and research accomplishments.
- A detailed financial report that summarizes all expenditures and notes any unused funds that should be returned.