

Request for Applications (RFA)

O'Neal NextGen Predoctoral Scholar Awards

RFA Announced: November 14, 2025

Letter of Intent: December 19, 2025 (5:00pm CT)

Application due date: February 2, 2026 (5:00pm CT)

Peer-review: March 2026

Award start date: September 1, 2026

Purpose: To enable promising predoctoral students to obtain mentored cancer research training from O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center faculty advisors. The proposed mentored research training must reflect the applicant's dissertation research project and is expected to enhance the individual's potential to develop into a productive, independent cancer researcher.

Letter of Intent: A letter of Intent must be sent to Patrick Bolack (crtec@uabmc.edu) no later than 5:00 pm December 19, 2025. The letter of intent should include the title of the predoctoral dissertation research project as well as the names of the predoctoral student, dissertation advisor and dissertation committee roster. It must also include a statement attesting that the applicant has no other source of funding.

Eligibility: Current PhD-seeking students enrolled at UAB (Ph.D. program or MSTP) who have successfully qualified to candidacy and are engaged predominantly in cancer research are eligible. Further, to be eligible on February 2, 2026, students must be within 18 months after having successfully completed their Qualifying Exam (QE). Previous applicants may apply again as long as they still meet current eligibility criteria. Prior critiques should be addressed within the current page limitations. Additional pages are not permitted.

If the predoctoral student has been funded by a T32 or has received an F30 or an F31 or any other predoctoral award from another funding agency, they are NOT eligible. **Only one Predoctoral application will be accepted per lab.**

Award details: \$15,000 per year for two years.

- From these funds, \$14,000 will be provided to the advisor to offset the student's stipend, and \$1,000 will be available to the student as an academic enrichment fund that can be used for domestic scientific meetings or workshops.
- We anticipate funding lasting for a period of two years. All funds remaining at the end of Year 2 will not carry over to a third year.

Application:

- A title page should include the applicant's name, application title, mentor's name and committee roster.
- Abstract (half- page), Specific Aims (1 page), Research Strategy (2 pages), References (no page limit), a Research Training Plan (one half to one page), and goals to be accomplished in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Use same font and margin limits as for NIH grants (Arial 11 and 0.5 margins).
- The student's current NIH Biosketch.
- The advisor's current NIH Biosketch that includes a list of predoctoral students advised over the last 5 years, their publications and current position.
- Unofficial UAB transcript.
- A letter of recommendation from the student's Ph.D. advisor that also describes the roles and responsibilities that both he/she and the student are undertaking, including contributions to the research plan and commitment to mentoring the student.
- Files should be compiled into one PDF in the order above and sent to Patrick Bolack, MS Ed, at crtec@uabmc.edu prior to the deadline.

Obligations of predoctoral awardee and the associated advisor:

- The awardee shall list in their UAB email signature that they are an O'Neal NextGen Predoctoral Scholar.

- The advisor and the PI awardee shall ensure that the trainee is stated as an O'Neal NextGen Predoctoral Scholar in the Acknowledgements section of any manuscript or published article that is co-authored by the student trainee.
- An annual report will be due to Mr. Bolack on or by August 1, 2027. Award for Year 2 will be contingent upon demonstration of satisfactory progress that is endorsed by the advisor.
- The student awardee will present their research at the O'Neal Young Investigator Symposium in 2026 and 2027.

Additional considerations:

- Should the trainee receive an award equivalent to or greater than the O'Neal award amount, it is the advisor's responsibility to inform the O'Neal and relinquish the O'Neal funds.
- This RFA does not allow for investigation of any aspects related to clinical trials.

Peer-Review: Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of O'Neal Cancer Center faculty. Reviewers will score the application for scientific merit, research training plan, and the applicant's academic record and productivity.