AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship Guidelines

The AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship provides financial support for PAs with a strong interest in research about PA education and the profession. A grant covering 20 percent of the recipient's base salary **up to $25,000** will be allocated to the fellow's institution to permit a 20 percent time release from teaching and other activities to allow them to focus on scholarly activities of interest to the PA profession and PA education. There is no allowance for institutional indirect costs.

Fellows are expected to use the release time to complete their research project, develop their skills under the guidance of a mentor, engage in educational activities, and broaden their knowledge of PA education and the PA profession. By the conclusion of the fellowship, fellows should be finished or near completion of their project and preparing the findings for publication and presentation. It is the funders' expectation that by one year after the end of the fellowship, a research manuscript describing and analyzing the results will be submitted to a peer-reviewed publication.

The fellowship will include a two-to-four day winter meeting at the PAEA offices in Washington, DC, and a two-to-four-day summer meeting at the AAPA offices in Alexandria, VA. Travel expenses will be covered by the funders. Fellows will interact with PA leaders in education and workforce research and the research teams from AAPA and PAEA. The fellowship provides opportunities to meet with researchers from other organizations such as the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Academy of Medicine, the Robert Graham Center, the National Association of Community Health Centers, and the National Center for Education Statistics. Fellows will be eligible to earn AAPA Category 1 CME for their participation in many of the educational opportunities offered by the fellowship. Individuals selected for the fellowship will be conferred the title of AAPA-PAEA Research Fellow.

Goal of the Fellowship Program

The AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship seeks to build the research capacity of PAs and PA faculty and develop leaders to represent, advance, and elevate PAs in health professions research.

The objectives of the fellowship are to:
- **Develop a cadre of PA leaders** who are skilled in PA education and workforce research
- **Encourage utilization of PAEA and AAPA data** to generate research of interest to the PA profession and community of PA scholars
- **Provide future research mentors** for early career PA researchers in order to sustain the PA workforce and education research pipeline

Recommended Research Topics

Applicants are highly encouraged to submit a proposed research plan that addresses one of the following topics:
- **Workforce readiness** of PA program graduates
- Advancing the **PA identity**
- Challenges and solutions to **clinical education site** availability
- Equipping PAs and faculty for **expanded leadership roles** in health care
- **Diversity** and the PA student pipeline
- Barriers to the creation of **progressive work environments** for PAs

Applicants are also encouraged to thoughtfully consider the feasibility of their proposed research, which will factor heavily into the selection process. The scope of proposals must fit within the maximum two-year time frame for completion and manuscript publication or submission. Fellows who do not meet this requirement may be ineligible to receive PAEA and AAPA research funding for five subsequent years.

If used within the proposed project, AAPA and PAEA deidentified data will be provided to the fellows at no cost. Depending on the research area addressed in the proposal, and in compliance with each organization's research policies, PAEA and AAPA research staff will provide deidentified data files to fellows along with technical guidance. Additionally, PAEA and AAPA staff may provide consultation and suggestions for working with proprietary data files but data cleaning, merging, and analysis are the responsibility of the fellows.

Applicant Eligibility

An applicant must be a PA who is a current AAPA member and is employed full-time (i.e., at least .5 FTE), at an accredited PAEA member program that is in good standing for at least one year. On a case-by-case basis, PA researchers who are not full-time faculty will also be considered.

Preference will be given to candidates who have been in PA education for less than 10 years and who have received their doctorate within the past five years. Only one candidate per institution will be accepted each year. While fellows are expected to be at an early stage of their research careers, there should be evidence of scholarly work accomplishments. Candidates should possess faculty rank; however, non-faculty PAs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. PAEA and AAPA strongly encourage applications from all qualified candidates, particularly those with minority and/or diverse backgrounds.

Evaluation Criteria

PAEA recommends reviewing the evaluation criteria to assist with preparation of successful application materials. It is critical that the feasibility and scope of the project be addressed by applicants.

Work Requirements for Fellows

The fellowship will run from November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020.
- Commitment to scholarly activity for the equivalent of one day per week (.2 FTE)
- Completion of a research project, preferably using PAEA or AAPA dataset(s), including publication in or submission to a peer-reviewed journal or other project approved by PAEA and AAPA within one year of fellowship completion (i.e., October 2021)
- Interim reports providing updates on project progress and obstacles due to the funder at six and 12 months of the fellowship
- Attendance at the 2019 PAEA Education Forum and AAPA 2020 Conference
- Attendance and presentation of research progress at the 2020 PAEA Education Forum
- Attendance at webinar seminars
- Attendance at monthly check-in meetings with the funder regarding project progress
- Two in-person meetings in the Washington, DC, area (winter and summer seminar series)

Required Application Components

Your personal statement and proposed research question and plan should be in 12-point Times New Roman font with page-numbers, one-inch margins, and single-spaced or greater line spacing. Citations or footnotes should be in 10-point Times New Roman font. Tables and figures will count towards the page limits and are permitted only if they do not impinge on the margins.

Your AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship application submission should consist of five parts:
- Cover sheet (submitted online)
- Personal statement (blinded; two-page limit)
- Proposed research plan including timeline (blinded; three-page limit)
- Letters of commitment and support (not blinded; three required)
- CV (not blinded)

Cover sheet

Your cover letter is submitted online, and includes:
- Name and credentials
- Email address
- Phone number
- Title
- Institution
- Academic rank
- Number of years as a PA educator
- Description of doctorate focus and dissertation topic
- Number of years as a PA
- Number of years engaged in PA research
- Demographics

Personal Statement (two-page limit and blinded)

Please provide a narrative that includes the following elements:
- Education and practice/faculty background
- Area(s) of research interest
- Personal goals to be accomplished as part of the fellowship
- Brief information about the qualifications of the mentor and prior collaborations (research or otherwise)
- Reasons you should be selected

Proposed Research Plan (three-page limit and [blinded](#))

Detail a research project that you would like to undertake as part of your fellowship. Preference is given to research questions that fall within at least one of the following topic areas:

- Workforce readiness of PA program graduates
- Advancing the PA identity
- Challenges and solutions to clinical education site availability
- Equipping PAs and faculty for expanded leadership roles in health care
- Diversity and the PA student pipeline
- Barriers to the creation of progressive work environments for PAs

The proposed research plan should contain the following elements and applicants should carefully review [the proposal evaluation criteria](#):

- Problem statement and research question(s)
- Background and citations for your research question
- Methodology and analytic plan
- Statement of how your specific project will advance knowledge in the topic area(s)

If you plan to use PAEA and/or AAPA data, please detail which datasets and variables you will use. PAEA and AAPA staff are available for consultation prior to submission if you wish to check data availability. If you plan to collect your own data or need specialized resources and/or training, describe what you will require to accomplish your research goal. Accepted fellows will work with PAEA, AAPA, and their mentor to further refine their research question, methodology, and plans. PAEA and AAPA will have final approval of all fellows' research projects supported by the fellowship funding.

The feasibility of the proposed research will factor heavily into the selection process. PAEA and AAPA staff may provide consultation and suggestions for working with proprietary data files but data cleaning, merging, and analysis are the responsibility of the fellows. Fellows may be asked to consider changes and adjustments to the proposed methodology to accommodate limitations of existing data or feasibility of completing the planned research project within the maximum two-year project period. The scope of proposals must fit within the maximum two-year time frame for completion and manuscript publication or submission. Fellows who do not meet this requirement may be ineligible to receive PAEA and AAPA research funding for five subsequent years.

Letters of Commitment and Support (not blinded)

Three letters of support are required. They must be from the following sources:

- One letter of commitment from an experienced research mentor either internal or external to your home department who is familiar with the applicant's abilities and prior work and who agrees to provide mentorship over the course of the fellowship. This person does not have to be a PA. The letter should include a statement of the mentor's qualifications to support your proposed research, a description of any prior or current projects done in collaboration with you, and a commitment to providing adequate time for consultation.
- One letter of support from a professional colleague that specifically addresses your research interests and activities. This person does not have to be a PA. If applicable, this letter should describe any prior or current projects done in collaboration with you.
- One institutional commitment letter signed by your program director and the program director's immediate supervisor or other work supervisor in a position to confirm .2 FTE release time. This letter should include an explicit statement of support for .2 FTE release time (i.e., 8 hours per week).

Blinding requirements

Both the personal statement and research proposal must be fully blinded (i.e., no identifying information may be included). Identifying information includes names of collaborators and mentions of participating institutions.

Unblinded applications will not be reviewed.

Overlaying a shape and/or changing the font or background of identifying text within a word processor application is not enough. This guide contains useful information on how to appropriately blind your application materials. Alternatively, you may manually black out all identifying information with a heavy black marker and then scan the paper document into a digital format if the underlying, blinded text is not searchable, readable, or identifiable. Please email any questions regarding your application or submission guidelines to research@PAEAonline.org with 'Research Fellowship' in the subject-line.

Application Review and Selection Process

Phase 1: Blinded Review

All eligible applications will be judged on whether they meet the basic submission criteria. Reviewers will award up to 20 points each for the Personal Statement, and Letters of Support, and 20 points for each section of the Proposed Research Plan. All applications will be blind reviewed by a peer review panel according to the following evaluation criteria:

- Does the personal statement provide education and work-related skills, experience, and persuasive reasons as to why they should be selected?
- Does the project address a novel and concise research question(s) or problem statement that is of critical importance to PA education or the PA profession?
- Does the background or literature review section identify the search terms and summarize the findings of the existing literature and (A) adequately make a case for the importance of the proposed research, (B) demonstrate a gap that the proposed research will help fill, and (C) clearly identify how the proposed research will advance the knowledge in the topic area?
- Can the proposed methods adequately address the research question(s)? Do the proposed analyses appropriately and rigorously address the research question(s) and account for confounding variables and bias? Preference is given to studies that propose detailed and sophisticated analyses that move beyond descriptive statistics.
- Is the proposed research likely to be successfully completed within the two-year timeframe?
- Does the research plan detail a timeline for completing the project from obtaining data through presenting the findings?
- Does the designated mentor express enthusiasm for the candidate, a history of collaboration (research or other work), first-hand knowledge of candidate's skills, and commitment to provide adequate time for consultation?
- Is the mentor qualified to support the proposed research?
- Does the professional colleague express enthusiasm for the candidate and illustrate first-hand knowledge of candidate's skills and experience?
- Does the program director and other supervisor show enthusiasm for the candidate, first-hand knowledge of their skills, and unambiguous commitment to release the candidate for .2 FTE/week?
- Does the applicant's CV demonstrate early career research productivity and a background in PA practice and education?
- Reviewers are asked to provide meaningful feedback to the applicants regarding study design and methodology to ensure that use of PAEA/AAPA data sources will address

the questions posed is feasible. Note: non-blinded applicant CVs and letters of support are reviewed after all blinded materials have been scored.

Phase 2: Interview

Candidates who pass Phase 1 of the review will be interviewed either in person or via video conferencing software. All application materials will be shared, unblinded, with the review panel at this phase of the review process. During the interview, candidates' willingness to take on the responsibilities of the fellowship and openness to recommendations provided in Phase 1 will be assessed (if applicable).

Selection

The final selected fellows will meet the basic requirements of the AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship. Additional criteria including the mentor's research experience and expertise as well as fellow's potential contribution to the cohort of fellows will be considered in the selection process. Fellows will propose work that is aligned with the supporting organizations' goals and can be accomplished (with milestones) within the two-year time frame for submission of a publishable manuscript.

Submission of Application

Applications must be submitted online through the PAEA Research application platform **no later than 12:00 p.m. ET on Wednesday, July 10, 2019.**

You may download a user guide for the application platform here. For all questions or concerns regarding your submission email: research@PAEAonline.org. Please include "Research Fellowship" in the subject line of your email.

All decisions of the selection committee are final. If confirmation of receipt of submission is not received within two business days, please call 703-651-8540.