

McDonnell Center for Systems Neuroscience Small Grant Program – Postdoc FAQ

Postdoc title clarification:

-Applicants must hold the title of postdoc at WU at the beginning of the award. Applicant must also hold the postdoc title for the duration of the award unless they move to a faculty or research scientist appointment at WU during the award period. Applicants not holding the title of postdoc at time of submission, but who will at time of award, must submit a letter from their PI confirming postdoc status effective date.

Q: Do applicants need to be on a trajectory to stay at WU or have a faculty appointment commitment from WU?

A: No, we are not requiring they be on a trajectory to stay at WU nor have a faculty appointment commitment.

Q: Please clarify mentor letter of support requirement that “the project is driven by the postdoc and clarifying how the mentor will support this effort.”

A: The guideline is mostly to make it clear the postdoc’s proposal should be a unique or semi-independent line of research, not something that is entirely within the PI’s purview/existing research activities. The mentor’s letter can help explain the postdoc’s potential for independence.

Q: Can the budget start date be delayed (ex: postdoc has other funding through Dec)?

A: No, the project start date is firm.

Q: Should proposal be limited to what can be funded with \$50k/yr or can it be funding for part of a larger project?

A: The proposal scope needs to fit the level of funding.

Q: Is it problematic for multiple postdocs from one lab to submit proposals?

A: There is no rule about 1 postdoc per lab. If the projects are independent, then they might want to both apply.

Q: If multiple postdocs in one lab are interested in applying, should they collaborate as co-PIs and submit one proposal? Would such a proposal be seen as more or less competitive?

A: Collaboration should not be forced/recommended unless the science is better that way.

Q: If a postdoc was a co-PI on one proposal, would it make them ineligible to submit a second in which they were the sole PI?

A: It’s doubtful 2 grants from the same person as PI/co-PI would be funded, however, they could be a consultant on one and the sole PI on another. *This keeps in the spirit of the McDonnell philosophy of spreading the wealth and opportunities around.*

Q: I am a postdoc, should my current PI be included as PI or Co-I?

A: This is at the postdoc’s discretion. Projects primarily driven by the postdoc should have them as PI and any close collaborators (e.g. their mentor) could be Co-I.

Q: The project being proposed will include collaboration with another WU lab in that the postdoc will be using an animal line that’s generated by the other lab. The people that contributed from the other lab will be listed as co-authors on publications that are coming out of this project. However, postdoc has already obtained the animal line and might not need further assistance during the project. If that’s the case, should the other lab’s PI and the postdoc who generated the line be listed as Co-I?

A: This is between the postdoc and their collaborators. If they aren’t named as Co-Is, perhaps the postdoc could include a letter of support stating that they have access to the animal line and their consultation as necessary.