

# EDUC5: Creating Opportunities through Mentorship and Partnership Across Stem Cell Science (COMPASS)

## Guide for Program Directors

### Resources

- [The Program Announcement “Funding Opportunity for "COMPASS" Awards](#)
- [COMPASS Frequently Addressed Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects](#)

### Award Administration

#### Funding

Each COMPASS Award has a project period of 5 years and supports comprehensive training and mentorship activities for undergraduate students seeking bachelor’s degrees. Each trainee may be supported for a 2-3 year period (i.e. 2-3 annual appointment cycles), as specified in the awarded grant. To reiterate from the Request for Applications, programs must follow these limitations on each budget category:

- **Stipends**  
Stipends levels are annual amounts and fall into two categories:
  - i. Academic Year Support (financial support while taking courses and/or participating in mentoring activities) - Up to \$9,000, not to exceed \$1000/month
  - ii. Research Internship - Up to \$9,000 to compensate for hands-on research training in a laboratory, under the supervision of a laboratory mentor (research advisor). Research Internship stipends should not exceed \$3000/month.

Foreign trainees can be paid an equivalent salary rather than a stipend if that payment mechanism is required due to their status. However, awardees may not seek funds or charge training grant Awards for costs that normally would be associated with employee benefits (e.g., FICA, workman’s compensation, and unemployment insurance). Visa expenses are an unallowable cost on any CIRM award. All trainees are to be 100% devoted to their CIRM training activities and are not required to provide any other service as a condition of this payment. CIRM will only support trainee health insurance that is provided to those in a similar capacity and up to the amounts provided by the award. All other fringe benefits expenses must be supported by other, non-CIRM funding sources.

A trainee may not be concurrently supported with another fellowship or similar Award that provides an overlapping stipend or otherwise duplicates provisions of the training grant Award; however, CIRM trainees may accept supplemental funding from other sources to increase funds available to the individual trainee. CIRM encourages the Grantee to supplement trainee stipends when necessary to meet institutional requirements and maintain equity among trainees, provided that the supplementation is without obligation to the trainee.

COMPASS trainees must devote full-time to training activities, which, may include relevant coursework, research internships, mentored activities, patient engagement and community outreach, workshops, and participation in scientific conferences.

- **Tuition and Fees**

COMPASS Awards provide up to 100% of the first \$3,000 incurred for Core Program Requirement courses, and 60% thereafter up to a maximum of \$9,600 (to the institution) per year, per trainee.

- **Research-related funds**

COMPASS Awards provide up to \$2,200/trainee/year for costs to the internship-host laboratory. For internships taking place outside of the grantee organization, it is expected that the partnering (host) laboratory institution will recover overhead on these costs at a rate of 10%. Textbooks required for coursework, specialty volumes that will enhance training, laboratory and technical manuals are appropriate for purchase. NOTE: Professional journal subscriptions are unallowable costs.

- **Program-related travel expenses**

Travel funds up to \$1000/trainee/year for attendance at a CIRM sponsored conference. Travel Funds may not be expended to cover the costs of travel between the trainee's place of residence and the grantee institution or to the grantee institution for the purpose of recruitment.

- **Program Administration**

Applicants may request up to \$200,000 per year to develop and administer the Adaptive Outreach and Recruitment Plan, the Mentoring Program, and other required training activities. Funds may be used for administrative support salaries, planning, and implementing activities focused on Patient Engagement, Community Outreach, administrative support salaries, course operations and delivery, or seminars. Funds may be used to develop a general education course or workshop on Diversity in Science.

Generally, not more than 40% of the Program Administration Funds should be used for salary support of the Program Leadership Team (Program Director, Diversity and Outreach Coordinator, and Mentorship Facilitator roles) and administrative personnel. Other program administration costs should benefit all trainees in the cohort and not be used for individual trainee experiences. The cost of food and meals served at a seminar or meeting is not an allowable cost.

- **Overhead**

CIRM will fund 10% Indirect Costs on eligible costs (excludes tuition and fees) and will not fund any Facilities Costs.

- **Accessibility Fund**

The Accessibility Fund is a special discretionary line item of up to \$30,000 per year within the overall Award budget that can be utilized to address a unique or unexpected hardship that would limit or prevent an individual student from joining or remaining in the COMPASS program. Disbursement of the Accessibility Fund will be considered prior to incurring the expenditure for the activity and will be approved by CIRM on a case-by-case basis through the Prior Approval mechanism (see below) for the duration of the support required. Accessibility Funds do not carry forward. CIRM may periodically issue revised guidance on use of Accessibility Fund based on experience across programs.

## Program Leadership

The COMPASS Leadership team includes three major roles, each with a defined minimum effort requirement. While each role has individual responsibilities, it may be possible for a single individual to assume one or more of these roles if appropriately qualified and if the cumulative effort requirement is met.

- Program Director (PD): at least 5% effort. The PD must be a full-time faculty member at the awardee institution or be accountable for the conduct of the proposed project to the applicant organization through a formal contract.
- Mentorship Facilitator (MENFAC): at least 10% effort. The MENFAC must have experience in developing and executing mentorship programs, and knowledge and skill in working with people from targeted underrepresented populations.
- Diversity and Outreach Coordinator (DIVOC): at least 10% effort. The DIVOC must be knowledgeable about issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in an academic environment and have appropriate qualifications to design and execute effective outreach to persons from targeted, underrepresented populations.

## Trainees

From the EDUC5 Program Announcement: COMPASS trainees should be enrolled full-time in good standing at a California public university or college or private, nonprofit academic institution with an accredited bachelor's degree program in biology, bioengineering, biomedical sciences, or other STEM disciplines relevant to regenerative medicine. Trainees should be pursuing a bachelor's degree in a STEM discipline with relevance to regenerative medicine.

## Trainee Appointments/Slots

COMPASS Trainees should be supported for the duration specified in the grant. Any change to an individual trainee's appointment duration that differs from that specified in the grant, such as leave of absence, requires prior approval and should be adequately justified.

### Carry-forward

Awardees will be responsible for tracking all program funding and will report on expenditures and obligations annually.

- CIRM allows carry-forward of any *obligated* trainee funds from one grant year to the next without prior approval. This occurs when a trainee's annual appointment is offset from the budget year funding the appointment.
- CIRM allows carry-forward of unobligated program administration funds from one grant year to the next without prior approval to use those funds in a way that best serves the trainees.
- All unobligated trainee funds at the end of each year must be returned to CIRM and cannot be used to fund additional trainee appointments unless specifically approved in advance by CIRM.
- Any unused funds from the annual Accessibility Fund must be returned to CIRM.

### No-cost Extensions

No-cost extensions (NCEs) are only permitted where an extension would facilitate the completion of a trainee's normal training term. NCEs require Prior Approval from CIRM.

### Rebudgeting

Prior Approval may be needed to rebudget funds from one budget category to another. Please see page 43-44 of the [CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects](#) for more information. But in general,

- Rebudgeting into or within Trainee-related funds is allowable without Prior Approval, provided any per-trainee budget category maximums that were described in the relevant program announcement/RFA are not exceeded. Examples include rebudgeting from Health Insurance to Stipends, Tuition, and Fees, and/or Research and Travel
- Rebudgeting from Trainee-related funds into program administration or indirect costs is unallowable.
- Rebudgeting of the Accessibility Funds for any reason is unallowable.

### Research Internships and Host Laboratories

Each COMPASS trainee must complete at least one research internship under the direction of a Laboratory Mentor (Research Advisor) within the grantee institution if appropriate, or at a partnering, host institution. Internship projects must comprise hands-on, regenerative medicine-

related research involving stem cells, gene therapy and/or other critical research relevant to understanding or treating a human condition or disease.

Before adding new internship host sites or laboratories to a program, the Program Director must verify that the research, mentorship and financial resources are adequate to support interns for the duration of their training.

## Assurances

CIRM will require self-certification that applicable protocol approvals (SCRO, IRB, IACUC) were in place when reporting on individual trainee progress for the research internship.

## Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit Annual Progress and Financial Reports. Progress Reports will be due on the anniversary of each budget period and Financial Reports will be due 60 days after each budget period.

In addition, Trainee Appointment forms will be required annually which describe the planned coursework and training activities for that period, laboratory placement, and description/update of trainee's internship research project. Appointment forms should be submitted to CIRM within 30 days of the appointment start date. Continuation/Completion forms will also be required and due within 60 days of the end of each subsequent appointment period which will describe progress made during the training period. CIRM will withhold subsequent payments until Appointment and Continuation/Completion forms are submitted.

All reporting is submitted through CIRM's online Grants Management System (GMS). To access the reporting requirements, the PD or their delegate first logs into GMS at <https://grants.cirm.ca.gov>. In the "Action Items Needing Your Attention" section (found on both the home screen and the "Your Awards" screen), current or overdue reporting requirements are shown. The requirement can be accessed with the "edit" action to the right of the report listing.

To view more information about the award, including upcoming reporting requirements, Trainee Appointment forms, a link to the executed Notice of Award and contact information for the CIRM Science Officer and Grants Manager, use the "Your Awards" link near the top of the webpage and scroll down to the current award.

Submission of the Annual Progress Reports and Prior Approval Requests requires a secondary submission by the Authorized Organizational Official (AOO) assigned to the award. An email is automatically generated to the AOO after submission by the PD. Financial reports are submitted solely by the Financial Authorized Organizational Official (FAOO) assigned to the award. More information on the AOO and FAOO roles can be found at <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/managing-your-grant#Guides>. Appointment forms are completed solely by the PD. Once a full cohort is appointed, the submitted appointment forms are locked. Please contact CIRM if any corrections or additions need to be made.

## Prior Approval Requests

To submit a Prior Approval Request (PAR), the PD or their delegate logs into CIRM's Grants Management System (<https://grants.cirm.ca.gov>), navigates to "Your Awards", and then starts a Prior Approval Request under the unscheduled reports section of the appropriate grant listing. After completing the PAR according to the instructions and submitting, the AOO will be asked to provide a secondary submission for institutional concurrence. If approved, an amendment to the Notice of Award will be generated and sent for execution via DocuSign.

As elaborated above and to summarize: the following post-award changes require the Awardee to submit a Prior Approval Request to CIRM for review and approval before any changes or actions are taken by the Awardee:

- Training period or duration for individual trainee (special circumstances differing from grant description)
- Project period extensions
- Change in Program Director, Mentorship Facilitator or Diversity and Outreach Coordinator
- Award Relinquishment
- Carry-forward of unobligated trainee funds from one Budget Period to the next for the purpose of increasing the number of approved trainee positions/slots
- Creation of additional trainee positions/slots through rebudgeting or carry-forward
- Major change to program scope (e.g. converting in person to online class)
- Rebudgeting between training-related categories and program administration
- Appointing a trainee to a laboratory mentor that already hosts two or more CIRM trainees from other EDUC programs (Bridges, SPARK, Research Training) - see Policy for Internship Laboratory mentors below
- Use of the Accessibility Fund

## Other Reports

Grantees are also required to report to CIRM publications, inventions, patent applications, licensing and invention utilization activities that result from CIRM-funded Activities. Specific reporting requirements may be found in regulations adopted by the ICOC governing intellectual property.

## Policy for Internship Laboratory Mentors (Research Advisors)

COMPASS trainees engaged in their laboratory-based research internship must be supervised by a qualified and suitable laboratory mentor, ideally a doctoral or faculty level scientist but potentially, an experienced senior graduate student or other highly qualified lab personnel may be appropriate. Any prospective laboratory mentor that is not the Principal Investigator (PI) of the host laboratory must have the support and permission of the PI or equivalent faculty level scientist who is accountable for the conduct of the research and operations of the laboratory or facility where the trainee research is performed, in order to serve in this role. It is the

responsibility of the Program Director to ensure that all laboratory mentors for COMPASS trainees are appropriately vetted and have secured any necessary permissions, where necessary.

To ensure appropriate supervision and commitment to each trainee, a given internship mentor may not be appointed to supervise more than two concurrent trainees from any CIRM training program at any one time without Prior Approval from CIRM, unless the period of overlap is less than 6 months. Prior to making a trainee appointment, PDs should consider the availability of the mentor to supervise a new trainee, including any possible overlaps with existing trainees that might result in exceeding this mentorship limit. The goal is to have greater engagement by mentors with each trainee and encourage a broader participation of mentors in the COMPASS Training program.