

**University of Pittsburgh**  
**School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences**  
**PhD Student Award: Fall 2024**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this SHRS PhD Student Award is to provide funding to PhD students in SHRS to support their research projects that are related to their dissertation research. Proposals should in some way be related to the student's dissertation, but the work does not need to be a part of the formal dissertation. For example – preliminary research on scale development for a scale to be used in the dissertation could be funded by this award.

**Eligibility:**

PhD students in SHRS who are in good academic standing (i.e. have a GPA $\geq$ 3.0 and are not on academic probation) and who have passed their written comprehensive examination are eligible to apply for this award. Students may apply multiple times but they can only receive this award once.

**Award Amount:**

Applicants may request up to \$7,500. Money can be spent over a two-year period. If the work is not completed in two years, the student may apply for a one-year extension. The one-year extension is not guaranteed and will be awarded based on the student making steady and adequate progress towards completion of the project. Please note, funds may not be used for any activities that occur after graduation from the program. The funds must be used while the student is still registered in the SHRS PhD programs. Any funds not spent within the award period will be relinquished. Funds cannot be used for faculty or staff salaries.

**Due date:**

The applications will be due: Friday, October 18, 2024, 5:00pm  
EST

**Notice of Award:**

We anticipate notice of award by: Mid-December.

**Application Process:**

1. Applications should be single spaced, ½ inch margins, 11-point Calibri font.
2. All proposals should include a cover letter, structured abstract, specific aims, research plan, biosketch of the student, budget and budget justification.
3. Cover letter – the cover letter should indicate that the student's advisor has reviewed the application and is in full support of the work (including the advisor's signature).
4. Structured abstract – all proposals must include a structured abstract, not to exceed ½ page (single spaced), with the following information: brief background, specific aims, summary of methods, and future use of data.
5. Specific Aims – should be no longer than 1 page

6. Research plan - no longer than 5 pages and should include significance, innovation, approach, and timeline. In the significance section, address how the proposed work is related to the student's dissertation.
7. Proposal should be referenced but the references are NOT included in the page count.
8. Biosketch – A biosketch for the student, following the NIH format should be included. The personal statement of the biosketch should be no more than a half of a page and should include the following items: 1) a summary of the student's background and training, 2) how they became interested in this work, 3) how their work is different from their mentor's work, and 4) their future directions.
9. Budget – Include a budget request and a brief budget justification (see budget considerations below)
10. Submit the entire application in one pdf file, please name the file: "last name\_first name"

**If the above application procedure and format is not followed, then the application will be returned without review.**

#### **Budget Considerations:**

Proposed budgets must include all items necessary to conduct the research. If certain items are pertinent to the research but will be covered by sources other than the SHRS PhD award than this must be indicated in the budget and the budget justification.

Allowable budget items include: recruitment expenses, travel expenses related to data collection, equipment, participant compensation, money to support hourly student employees or a % effort of GSR, travel to scientific meetings or to other labs to learn techniques, and computers directly related to the research such as computers needed to run equipment. Budget can also include services offered by the University for a fee – such as statistical support from the CTSI. Items not allowed in the budget include faculty or staff salary support, salary support for the student (i.e. PI on project), and personal computers or laptops.

#### **Review Considerations:**

1. Standard NIH criteria: significance, approach, and innovation
2. Candidate – can they complete the work, if the work is related to the advisor's work – is there a portion that the student is taking the lead on, potential of future independence
3. Feasibility within cost and time constraints
4. Timeline with deliverable milestones
5. Relation of work to the student's dissertation

#### **Review Process:**

Final applications will be reviewed by the SHRS Scientific Review Committee (SRC). The SHRS SRC will contain at least 1 representative from each of the departments. Members of the SHRS SRC will be appointed by the Department Chairs.

**Submission:**

Submit electronically as one complete file in PDF format to:

Courtney Fleck, [Courtney.Fleck@pitt.edu](mailto:Courtney.Fleck@pitt.edu)

If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Brach, PhD, PT, FAPTA, [jbrach@pitt.edu](mailto:jbrach@pitt.edu)

Funding cannot be released until relevant IRB/IACUC research certifications are completed.

**Obligations of awardees:**

Upon notice of award, successful applicants will be asked to sign a short written agreement promising to comply with all applicable SHRS policies. All awardees will provide progress reports yearly during the period of the award. These annual progress reports are similar in format to an NIH progress report, listing specific aims and any deviations from them, with justification, recruitment progress, whether or not the study is meeting the timeline and if not why, results, and any publications, scientific presentations or grant applications evolving from this pilot award. Any requests for revision of aims or budget during the course of the project should be sent in writing to the SHRS PHD award Scientific Review Committee. All awardees must cite the SHRS PhD award in subsequent related publications.