

CATALyST[®]

LHS K12 Scholar Program



Scholar Program Handbook

-- September 2020 --

Note to readers: This handbook provides guidance and outlines expectations for CATALyST LHS K12 Scholars and mentors. It is a living document and will be periodically reissued with updates. Please contact the program administrator, Susan Brandzel (susan.x.brandzel@kp.org) to request additional information for future versions.

COVID-19 Notice: *References to in-person meetings in this handbook are only intended for the time when it is considered safe to meet in person again. As of the time this version of the handbook is being issued (September 2020), all group activities are still taking place on an exclusively virtual basis.*

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PROGRAM GOALS

The [CATALyST K12 Scholar Program](#) is a scientific training endeavor funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). It is administered by Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI). CATALyST is a collaborative program that includes faculty and learning opportunities based at KPWHRI, the University of Washington, Washington State University Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine and the VA Puget Sound Health Care System as well as other partner organizations. CATALyST is one of 11 Learning Health System [K12 Centers of Excellence \(COEs\)](#).

CATALyST is aimed at instilling methodologic and practical knowledge about learning health system (LHS) research in early-career scientists. This goal is accomplished through didactic, interactive, observational and experiential opportunities for scholars.

CATALyST Scholars are selected based on their professional training, experience, goals and their fit with a learning health system training program. They are also chosen based on the promise they show during the admissions process to be an active learner, leader and collaborator. In the spirit of continuous learning, scholars and their mentors are encouraged to make suggestions to the program's leadership team to maximize the relevance and impact of this concentrated time of professional development. CATALyST is intended to provide a meaningful, nourishing and ambitious learning community to scholars and other scientists interested in expanding their understanding and practice of learning health system research.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

The CATALyST scholar program is co-directed by Drs. Diana Buist and Paula Lozano and administered by Susan Brandzel. They comprise the CATALyST leadership team and are dedicated to providing scholars with a high-quality, meaningful experience while in the program. Questions about the program should be directed to the leadership team.

PROGRAM COMMUNICATION

The success of the CATALyST Program depends on reliable communication. Scholars and their mentors are asked to respond to program queries in a timely manner unless they are on leave. Scholars are also asked to proactively relay anticipated absences to program leadership team and mentors in advance of departure (bar unforeseen circumstances), and to arrange for coverage for program-related responsibilities during longer outages.

PROGRAM MATERIALS

The [CATALyST website](#) contains various program materials, including templates form scholar documentation, such as the Individual Development Plan (IDP), Activity Tracker, and Request for Use of Research Funds. *Scholars should use program templates directly from the site rather than previously stored versions to avoid using an outdated version.* The program website also contains articles of interest and links to other program and LHS materials. Scholars and program faculty are invited to request additions to the program website via the program administrator.

SCHOLAR FTE

At the time of their application submission, CATALyST Scholars commit to AHRQ's requirements regarding the use of their time while in the program. These requirements include that all scholars must have a 1.0 FTE position at their institution, and they must dedicate a minimum of 0.75 FTE to the CATALyST Program. Scholars may commit more time to the program, but there are no additional funds available for additional effort. Each Scholar should work with their mentors to develop a curriculum and timeline that takes this expectation into consideration. Mentors and program co-directors will regularly check to ensure milestones are being met.

Scholars must also ensure, before the program start date, that their total FTE/support/committed time does not exceed 100% (or no more than 25% beyond CATALyST). This means that, in addition to their 75% protected time, they cannot have more than 25% FTE charged to grants or clinical time at their home institution.

SCHOLAR LEAVES OF ABSENCE

If a scholar needs to take a leave while part of CATALyST, they should work with their home institution and the CATALyST program administrator to determine compensation management and how their timeline may be adjusted. To maximize the scholar's CATALyST experience, they are encouraged to approach their home institution about covering their salary and fringe during their leave, so that dedicated program funds can be saved for when the scholar is actively engaged in the program.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS (WIP) MEETINGS

CATALyST WIPs are the locus of knowledge transfer and collaboration for members of this training program's community. Program leadership aims to create a relevant, innovative, participatory, equitable and welcoming environment in which scholars feel comfortable pitching ideas, asking questions and learning from subject matter experts. Scholar engagement and participation is key. WIPs are designed to enable scholars to practice multidisciplinary skills, share their perspectives and learn from one another and allow them to learn from each other by providing unique perspectives on their own research and that of their peers, and by working

to improve one another's research. This process enables real-world application of research principles that develops proficiency in lead investigator competencies in translational research.

Attendance by both scholars and mentors is essential and directly tied to scholar growth and progress. In addition to contributing their perspectives to the discussion—benefitting all scholars—mentors should reinforce key learnings and ideas from WIPs in subsequent mentoring meetings with their scholar.

WIPs include two main types of presentations: 1) scholar work-in-progress updates; and 2) seminars by various subject matter experts.

- Scholars will present a progress update during an a WIP meeting on a quarterly basis. In preparation for this presentation, scholars should ensure that their *full mentorship team* will be present.
- Seminar programming is designed to expose scholars to the seven core competencies of learning health systems science. Scholar and mentor input are used to prioritize content and identify speakers.

Presentations made in CATALyST WIPs may be considered confidential or proprietary. Thus, none of their content should be shared outside of the WIP without the permission of the presenter and/or program leadership.

WIP COORDINATION

Each quarter, one scholar is assigned to coordinate the WIPs. This responsibility rotates during each scholar's tenure in the program. This responsibility enables scholars to take an active role in their own training and professional development and gives them the opportunity to meet others in our LHS community within our COE and across other COEs. The role of the scholar WIP Coordinator is to:

1. identify priority LHS learning objectives from the scholars;
2. work with the WIP program director lead (Dr. Buist), scholars and other faculty to identify and invite speakers;
3. orient invited speakers to the WIP format and to the scholars' specific learning objectives for the session;
4. provide a title and description to the CATALyST research support specialist one week in advance, to be distributed to the CATALyST community; and
5. thank presenters after the WIP via e-mail.

When possible, the coordinating scholar should schedule one session per quarter at one of the participating institutions outside of KPWHRI (UW, VA, Seattle Children's). The coordinating scholar can work with the CATALyST research support specialist to identify a room and the necessary technology for offsite WIPs.

ANNUAL PROGRAM SYMPOSIUM

The CATALyST Symposium is an annual event hosted or co-hosted by KPWHRI that addresses issues in the conduct of LHS research. Scholars and primary mentors will be polled for schedule availability and are asked to prioritize attendance. The symposium agenda is designed to include opportunities to hear LHS-related presentations from and have interactions with researchers and stakeholders. Scholars will be engaged in symposium planning and presentations.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The CATALyST scholar Individual Development Plan serves as a road map of the scholar's plans for professional development, training and research activities. The scholar is responsible for drafting the IDP, with input from their full mentorship team and CATALyST program directors during their first quarter as a CATALyST Scholar. The IDP includes key goals and milestones. It should demonstrate the link between the seven [LHS core competencies](#) and scholar plans. The IDP is a living document and should be updated at least semi-annually with the mentorship team. New scholars will be asked to draft and submit their initial IDP by January 15th following their program initiation date. All scholars will be asked to submit their updated IDPs to the CATALyST leadership team twice a year, on or about January 15th and July 15th.

RESEARCH FUND MANAGEMENT

CATALyST provides \$25,000 annually (+8% in indirects) to each scholar to support their learning and research. Scholars are strongly encouraged to use these funds strategically to help secure independent funding, build capacity as an LHS scientist, develop professional liaisons and collaborations, and expand leadership skills. Each scholar should work directly with their mentoring team to align the use of these funds with the short- and long-term goals outlined in their IDP. These funds can be used for various opportunities, including, but not limited to:

- Course tuition
- Conference travel & attendance
- Data collection
- Transcription services
- Analytic and design support
- Participant incentives
- Specialized software relevant to research goals

The CATALyST budget year begins September 30th and ends on September 29th. At the onset of each budget year, the CATALyST Program administrator will work with grants and contracts

staff to help each scholar establish a budget containing CATALyST research funds either at their home institution or at the institution where their research will be taking place.

To access CATALyST research funds, scholars must complete and submit the Request for CATALyST Research Funds Application Form (see CATALyST website), to the program administrator. One form needs to be completed for each proposed activity. The primary mentor must review the application and indicate their support by electronically signing the form.

The CATALyST Research Fund Committee will review requests and communicate one of the following outcomes: 1) approved; 2) approved with modifications; 3) denied. In the unusual case that a request is denied, the scholar is welcome to request a meeting with the program directors to discuss an alternative. Requests of \leq \$1000 will be reviewed by a subset of the committee. Requests $>$ \$1,000 will be reviewed by the full committee. Scholars should plan for a minimum of five business days in turnaround time for full committee reviews. *No expenses can be incurred until the scholar has received formal approval for their request.*

At least twice during a given budget year, scholars should arrange to meet with the CATALyST program administrator or their designated budget manager, to review their balance. Scholars are advised that AHRQ does not guarantee carryforward of unused funds to subsequent years.

IRB APPLICATIONS AND OUTCOMES

All CATALyST scholar research activities involving human subjects must be reviewed by an IRB and approved before initiation, and must comply with federal, state and institutional policies. Scholars should work with their mentors to determine which activities require review and which IRBs should be engaged. CATALyST leadership is required to provide documentation to AHRQ regarding Scholar IRB submissions. **Therefore, Scholars must furnish all IRB submissions and approvals, including “not research” designations and exemptions, to the CATALyST program administrator upon receipt from the IRB.**

SCHOLAR ACTIVITY TRACKING

To facilitate tracking and documentation of progress, scholars are asked to record their activities using the Activity Tracking template (see CATALyST website). The Activity Tracker template includes sections for presentations, conference attendance, publications, etc. Scholars are encouraged to track all career development and research activities, even if not directly related to the program, to demonstrate their progress. Scholars should update their Activity Tracker regularly and review it quarterly to ensure that it has captured relevant activities. A new tracker should be started for each year a scholar is in the program and should be aligned with the CATALyST budget year (9/30-9/29).

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORTING

In July of each year, the CATALyST Program is responsible for submitting the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) to the sponsor, to demonstrate that funding was used appropriately and that the intentions of the training program are coming to fruition. The Activity Tracker described above is a key source of information for this reporting. As part of preparing the Research Performance Progress Report (in Q2 of each year), the program administrator will provide scholars a progress update template. Scholars will be asked to submit their completed progress update on or about May 15th for inclusion in the report.

SCHOLAR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Positioning scholars for successful independent grant funding is one of the main goals of CATALyST training. Throughout their time in the CATALyST Program, scholars will be planning and composing grant applications that will work toward independent funding. They are also encouraged to partner with other investigators to secure additional grant funding during the course of the program. The Scholar's grant strategy (i.e. funding mechanism, sponsor and timing of submissions) should be tailored to the Scholar's career stage.

In the event that a scholar is awarded a grant of \geq \$100,000 as principal investigator in *direct annual costs* while in the program, they will no longer be eligible to be an AHRQ LHS K12 scholar and will need to exit the program early. In this case, the CATALyST program administrator will work with the scholar to determine when program withdrawal will happen and to help facilitate the termination of any subcontracts that may be in place.

PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All publications and presentations made possible by the CATALyST program (either partially or entirely), should be cited with the following verbiage: *"This project was supported by grant number K12HS026369 from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality."* This requirement includes publications that are submitted while in the program that used any K12 salary or research funds for support. Scholar should notify the program administrator of any manuscripts accepted for publication and provide the citation on the Activity Tracker.

Once a scholar is notified that an article has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, AHRQ requires the completion of a journal article tracking notification form and that scholars send it to the Journal Publishing Team in AHRQ's Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer at journalpublishing@ahrq.hhs.gov. This fillable PDF is also available on AHRQ's website at

<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/publications/pubcomguide/pcguide3.html#journal> (under “Journal Article Tracking”).

SCHOLAR/MENTOR TEAM MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTATION

Each CATALyST scholar is the leader of their mentorship team, which includes a primary mentor and a small number of secondary mentors. They should schedule mentorship meetings at least monthly (preferably weekly) with their primary mentor and at least quarterly with their full mentorship team. Scholars should keep minutes from their mentoring team meetings to document feedback, as well as decisions and action items, and should be prepared to provide minutes and/or updates to program leadership upon request. Scholars should keep their mentor teams informed about their decision-making, research plan changes, and progress. Mentor feedback should be incorporated into the scholars’ twice yearly IDP updates. Mentors will be asked to participate in annual evaluations of the CATALyST Program and of their individual scholars. Mentor contributions to the scholar’s development will be evaluated annually.

MENTORING PROGRAM SCHOLARS

Primary Mentor Role

CATALyST primary mentors play a critical role in the success of a scholar and the program. As subject matter experts and senior scientists, primary mentors support the scholar in the pursuit of their research, training and career development aims. They are also highly valued resources who help create a rich teaching environment. The following list describes the central responsibilities of primary mentors:

- meet regularly with the scholar (at least monthly);
- ensure that the scholar’s IDP and any requests for research funds are feasible/realistic and consistent with the Scholar’s short- and long-term goals;
- provide feedback on manuscripts and grant applications;
- facilitate professional introductions, with a focus on health system leaders and potential research collaborators);
- identify training opportunities;
- attend and contribute to WIP meetings, including periodic presentations relevant to program goals;
- attend and contribute to the annual CATALyST Symposium;
- assist the scholar in the navigation of barriers or unexpected changes to research;
- model respect, inclusion, scientific integrity and professionalism; and
- provide feedback as part of annual CATALyST Program evaluation, in the spirit of continuous improvement.

While primary mentors are advocates and supporters, scholars are the “owners” of their professional development experience, by taking the lead in communicating with mentors and setting meeting agendas, etc. Mentors and scholars are encouraged to foster open and honest communication that allows for regular feedback and adjustments. Mentors should feel welcome to make requests or suggestions to the program administrator and co-directors about ways to improve the program.

As crucial members of the CATALyST community, primary mentors are asked to adhere to program norms that help maintain clear and timely communication and ensure sufficient scholar support. These norms include:

- responding promptly to emails from scholars and program leadership;
- notifying the scholar or the program administrator of anticipated absences that will result in missing a WIP or other CATALyST event;
- reviewing scholar’s research fund requests and other documents in a timely manner;

If a primary mentor is unable to fulfill their obligations to the scholar, they must arrange for a meeting with the CATALyST co-directors to develop an alternative plan. Any mentorship changes must be reported to the program administrator when they occur. If a new primary mentor is being appointed who is not already part of the CATALyST faculty, the mentor should send their current CV to the program co-directors and the program administrator. They will subsequently seek approval from AHRQ for the new mentor.

Each primary mentor will be offered up to \$5000 total each year to offset the time required for carrying out this role. This amount includes fringe and the 8% indirects. The program administrator and KPWHRI grants team will facilitate the budget set-up and/or sub-contracting necessary for this compensation and work with the mentors to ensure the provision of these funds.

Secondary Mentor Role

Secondary mentors are typically subject matter experts whose research and experience are relevant to a scholar’s CATALyST research and professional goals. The secondary mentor provides scientific guidance, arranges professional introductions, reviews draft of the scholar’s grants, and identifies training opportunities. They are expected to be responsive to scholar requests for meetings and stay abreast of their plans and progress. All the mentor responsibilities listed above for primary mentors also apply to secondary mentors with two exceptions:

- Frequency of meetings with scholar: Secondary mentors are expected to participate in a minimum of quarterly full mentorship team meetings.
- WIP attendance: When possible, secondary mentors should attend CATALyST WIPs. Their attendance is required when the scholar whom they support is presenting their progress update.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

CATALyST Evaluation Philosophy

The CATALyST Program espouses a growth mindset, meaning its leadership will take every opportunity to learn from all aspects of the program in the hopes of providing the optimal experience for scholars and ensuring that they are taking full advantage of the program for their professional development.

Program Evaluation Plan

The CATALyST program uses three evaluation approaches to ensure that program goals and participant expectations are met:

Formal evaluation: Dr. Cara Lewis (KPWHRI) is engaged as an independent evaluator and is responsible for leading a formal annual evaluation. She conducts annual scholar interviews, analyzes the data, and generates a synthesized, anonymized summary for the leadership team. Additionally, an annual, online mentor survey is conducted with both primary and secondary mentors to obtain their feedback on the program and on the scholars.

Feedback sessions: The CATALyST leadership team is responsible for holding informal annual feedback sessions with mentors and scholars, to discuss review general program expectations, plans and timelines. Program leadership will also use these meetings to share findings from the formal program evaluation.

Exit interviews: At the end of their tenure in CATALyST, each scholar will take part in an exit interview to give comprehensive feedback about the program.

Program leadership will work with mentors to develop solutions for any programmatic areas that warrant improvement. If the evaluation reveals unmet mentoring needs, the program directors will work with individual scholars to develop a plan for remediation and, if warranted, replacing a mentor.

PERFORMANCE REMEDIATION

CATALyST scholars enter the program having been selected based on the professional excellence they have demonstrated via a rigorous admissions process. The program is designed to choose candidates based on their potential for success. The CATALyST leadership team also recognizes that this is a demanding program and that professional plans and life circumstances can change unexpectedly. Therefore, if a scholar is having difficulty meeting the program expectations (such as those outlined in this handbook or as identified by themselves or their mentorship team), the scholar and mentors should proactively engage the program leaders in constructive conversation to help navigate the situation. Program leadership is committed to helping scholars overcome obstacles and supporting them on the path most useful to them. In

the rare case that a scholar is still not able to meet program expectations after extensive intervention or remediation attempts, program leadership will meet with them to determine whether an early exit from the program is warranted.

CONFLICT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a scholar encounters a conflict or has a grievance as part of the CATALyST program, their first step should be to attempt a direct resolution with the person or people with whom the problem occurs. If resolution is not achieved, or the scholar feels uncomfortable acting directly, they should request mediation from the program co-directors and/or program administrator. CATALyST scholars also have access to the [UW ITHS confidential research consultation service](#), to help scholars manage these conflicts. If a solution remains unreachable, the scholar will document in writing the specific problem, supporting facts, and a summary of previous attempts at resolution and submit them to the program administrator or either co-director. Should more formal mediation be required, the UW Office of the Ombudsman will be engaged as needed. The program co-directors will seek advice from the Program Steering Committee, and, if indicated, from Office of the Ombudsman, before making a written decision or forming an adjudicating ad hoc committee.

PROGRAM GRADUATION

It is the hope of program leadership that CATALyST programs scholar graduates will remain connected to the program community after they graduate, either. They may be invited back to the program to share their experience and research developments. They may also be asked to be connected to current or future scholars.