

Program in Comparative Animal Biology (PICAB)

Pilot Grants in Mechanisms of Pathology in Animals Models of Human Diseases

Submission Requirements

Guidelines

- The ITMAT-CTSA Program in Comparative Animal Biology (PICAB), announces a pilot grant program between the School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) and the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) aimed at better understanding of the mechanisms of pathology in animal diseases that are appropriate models for human diseases. The purpose is to facilitate interdisciplinary investigations between comparative and human medical scientists to advance understanding of diseases.
- Two pilot grants of up to \$30,000 each are available this year.
- The project must have one standing faculty co-PI from the SVM and one standing faculty co-PI from the PSOM. Additional faculty or laboratory personnel may be included in the proposal as co-investigators. Projects may be in any area of medicine. A working assumption is that improved understanding of the mechanisms of disease will open up potential new approaches to treatments.
- The candidate disease should involve a model that, if successful, would provide a potential path towards human application, overcome a barrier to translation, or improve the specificity of diagnosis. Many appropriate models of human disease occur in domestic animals thus the primary focus of this pilot program is on non-rodent animal models (e.g. dogs, cats, horses, others). The investigation could involve animal patients at Penn Vet, which can be studied on an outpatient basis. If well-justified, a rodent model of a specific disease that has not been extensively studied may be proposed.
- Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the many advanced tools for investigation available at Penn, such as single cell biology, high-throughput sequencing, advanced imaging methods, quantitative histopathology methods, and others.
- The pilot projects ideally should be completed in 12 months, however, funding may be extended for up to 24 months if needed to accrue a statistically valid cohort of subjects.
- PICAB grants are available to registered members of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (ITMAT). Interested investigators who are not currently members of ITMAT can register to join (www.itmat.upenn.edu/membership). Investigators who would like advice on potential partners in the other school may contact Dr. John H. Wolfe via Emily Benenhaley at 215-590-7030 or ebenen@vet.upenn.edu.
- All proposals are due by **Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 12 pm noon** for a project start date of **February 1, 2026**. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED NOR WILL EXTENSIONS BE GRANTED.

Required Documents.

- The application should adhere to NIH grant application formatting requirements and include:
 - 1) Up to 2 pages for specific aims, description of the model, and experiments to be undertaken.
 - 2) 1/2 page explaining the potential implications for translation and how the proposed studies may support future extramural grant applications.
 - 3) Biosketches in the NIH format for both PIs, including other support.
 - 4) A 1 page budget which may include animal care, laboratory supplies, and salary for technicians, graduate students or post-docs (travel and faculty salaries are not allowed).
- Copies of IRB and IACUC approval letters will be required if an award is funded. Funding will be delayed until these approval documents are received.

Other

- Any publications that are the direct result of this funding must reference: “Supported in part by the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics of the Perelman School of Medicine and the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.”
- A progress report will be requested every year for 4 years so that we can track the success of supporting projects that result in the receipt of a grant, publication, or technology transfer. You will receive a system generated email requesting you to complete a progress report.
- You will be prohibited from applying for ITMAT pilot funding if you do not reference the funding support on publications and if you do not submit progress reports.

Document Submission

All applications should be submitted via ITMAT's Pilot Grant System at www.med.upenn.edu/apps/itmat/pg. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU CHOOSE THE PICAB GRANT PROGRAM WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR GRANT. You will need your PennKey logon and password to access this system. If you do not have a PennKey, obtaining one will take at least 48 hours so do not wait until the last minute. We will not accept applications late because of this. Once you start an application, you can proxy someone (grants manager, post doc, etc.) to finish it for you.

- Both of the Co-Investigators must be ITMAT members.
- Each Co-Investigator must have the approval of their respective Business Administrator.
- Penn Faculty should select the Business Administrator or Grants Manager that normally signs off on all of their research proposals.
- Please ensure that the documents you upload are the final documents. ITMAT will not update or replace files. This means that prior to hitting the submit button, all documents must be final.
- When contacting the ITMAT business office, please use the same discretion you would employ if contacting an external sponsor.
- Please ensure that you have liaised with all of the Co-Investigators on your application. This will avoid proposals being rejected by their Business Administrator.
- All documents must be uploaded **by noon** on the due date of the proposal to ensure time for all approvals. All approvals must be completed by 5 pm on the due date. We suggest you do not wait until noon to start uploading documents.
- Once all approvals are completed, the grant will be reviewed by ITMAT.

Application or Funding Questions

Investigators who would like advice on potential partners in the other school may contact Dr. John H. Wolfe via Emily Benenhaley at 215-590-7030. If you do plan to submit a proposal, it would be very helpful for organizing the review process if you would let us know in advance the title or subject area and the names of the co-PI's.

Please direct any system-related questions to Andrea Albelda, aalbelda@pennmedicine.upenn.edu; and Dylan Brown, dylan.brown@pennmedicine.upenn.edu