

Frequently Asked Questions About the Beckman Scholars Program Application Process

What are the goals of the Beckman Scholar Program?

The Beckman Scholar Program provides awardee institutions with the resources to support six (6) exemplary Beckman Scholars over a 15-month (summer – academic year – summer) mentored research experience with an approved Faculty Mentor. Awardee institutions are encouraged to identify potential Scholars who have:

- taken a variety of pathways to higher education studies in STEM;
- lacked access to early education in STEM;
- faced financial obstacles in their pursuit of higher education in STEM; and/or
- who may not have had STEM role models that reflect their own experiences.

How do we create a distinctive and competitive application?

The Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation does not provide specific guidance on how to create a distinctive Beckman Scholars Program, however, we do recommend addressing the following in your application:

- What impact will the Beckman Scholars Program have on the institution, Mentors, and individual Scholars, if awarded?
- In what ways will the Beckman Scholars Program (and its participants) stand out from other honors and programs on your campus?
- What qualities or characteristics of the program will enable it to be recognized as different and special?

Try not to worry about what other institutions are doing or proposing. Rather, focus on what makes your institution and its students unique and a particularly good fit for the goals of the Beckman Scholars Program. Proposing a program that you are excited to implement will generally lead to a proposal that the reviewers can get excited about it as well.

It is also worth noting that 140+ different institutions have won Beckman Scholar Program awards since the program's start. Feel free to reach out to former awardees for help and guidance as you think about your Beckman Scholars Program application. A full list of former awardees can be found on the Beckman Foundation website at <https://www.beckman-foundation.org/awarded-scientists/>

How likely are we to be successful, if we are trying to renew a previous Beckman Scholars Program award?

During the application review process, your institution will be grouped with other institutions who have won previous awards. Each year, our final awardee cohort is comprised of both new applicant institutions and past awardee institutions (renewals). If you have had a Beckman Scholars Program in the past decade, you will be asked to submit an Institutional Progress Report that provides reviewers with a holistic view of your institution's previous program and the outcomes of your Scholars.

What can I expect of the application?

All applications will be submitted through an online portal, which can be accessed directly at https://beckman-foundation.smapply.io/prog/beckman_scholars_program/. In preparation for submitting your application, you will need to put together the documents listed below. Each document will be uploaded to the portal and should be in PDF format, utilize 11 pt Arial font and have 1-inch margins. Page limits are listed in the program announcement for each section. Applications that contain documents that do not conform to these requirements, or exceed the page limits for a section, will be deemed ineligible. You may not include hyperlinks to additional material in any of the documents.

Cover Page: Why is your institution a particularly good fit for the Beckman Scholars Program? What do you want reviewers to know about your institution that might not appear elsewhere in your application? This is a place to highlight institutional strengths that are particularly well aligned with the goals of the Beckman Scholar Program.

Proposal: You have 8-pages to help the reviewers see why a Beckman Scholars Program at your institution would be particularly valuable and uniquely “you”. While the following sections must be included, you are welcome to provide additional context, so long as you can do so without going over the 8-page limit.

- ***Scholar Recruitment, Selection, and Enrichment:*** When answering each of the prompts from the program announcement, you will want to make sure to pay attention to any efforts that your institution has made or is making that will enable you to select potential Scholars who have taken a variety of pathways to STEM higher education, who might have lacked access to early education in STEM, and/or who may not have had STEM role models who reflected their own experiences.
- ***Mentor Recruitment, Selection, and Training:*** How will you ensure that you recruit the broadest possible mentor pool for inclusion in your application? Once selected, how will these faculty be supported and trained so that students from all walks of life and pathways to STEM can be encouraged and aided in their STEM educational goals?
- ***Institutional Support:*** Be sure to include details regarding the institution’s past and current commitments to promote a thriving undergraduate research environment (e.g., level of undergraduate research activity, availability of required instrumentation and infrastructure, etc.).

BSP Institutional Endorsements: Before you will be able to submit your application, you will need to get institutional endorsements from the Chief Academic Officer for your institution (or similarly authorized signatory) as well as the Dean of the College/School/Division for each department or major that is included in your application, which we refer to as Participating Academic Units. These signatures will be requested and received through the application portal; it is always good to notify these signatories that they should expect an email from noreply@mail.smapply.net with “Beckman Foundation” in the subject line before you initiate the requests. If the same Dean oversees multiple Participating Academic Units, you will need to collect a signature for each Participating Academic Unit that they oversee.

As the institutional contact, **you** will also need to accept these endorsements in the portal. If you forget this step, the application system won’t allow you to submit your application.

Institutional Data Sheet (IDS) (template provided): There are lots of details that need to be collected to complete the IDS. Be sure to read the instructions carefully and look at the template (found within the application portal) to see examples. In general, you will likely need help from department offices, grants/contract offices, and others around campus to collect the required information. These types of interactions often take a while so be sure to start early.

Faculty Mentor Summary Data Sheet (FMSDS) (template provided): Similarly to the IDS, the FMSDS will require you to collect information from a number of different stake holders, including each included faculty mentor and the grants/contracts office. Reading the instructions carefully and reviewing the FMSDS template early (found within the application portal) will help you to allot enough time to assemble this table. The table should include the potential mentors in alphabetical order by last name.

Mentor CVs (template provided): While you are asking for information for the FMSDS, it is also a great time to collect the CVs of faculty who are going to be included on the FMSDS. These CVs need to use the provided template (found within the application portal). At the time of submission, you will need to create a single PDF file that includes all of the mentor’s CVs. Within this file, the CVs should be in alphabetical order by mentor’s last name. This ordering should match the order in your FMSDS.

Mentor Statements (template provided): Similarly to mentor CVs, each mentor will also need to provide a mentor statement using the template (found within the application portal). These statements should be prepared individually by each included mentor and reflect their unique mentoring style and plans. Mentoring statements that appear to be “boiler plate” or that all sound the same are likely to garner reduced enthusiasm from the reviewers.

Institutional Progress Report (if required) will only be requested if your institution has received a Beckman Scholar Program award in the past decade.

Award Terms and Conditions (template provide, upload all pages): Before you can submit your application, you will need to get the first page of the Award Terms and Conditions document signed manually by your Chief Academic Officer (or similarly authorized signatory) and then upload the entire document to the portal. Given that administrator’s schedules can be unpredictable, we recommend acquiring this signature early in order to avoid missing the submission deadline, as no late applications will be accepted.

What does the award cover?

The Beckman Scholars Program award provides \$26,000 per Scholar to fund the Scholar’s stipend (\$18,200 over 15-months), Scholar travel and supplies (\$2,800), Mentor research funds (\$4,800), and institutional contact funds (\$200). A full description of how these funds are to be allocated can be found at <https://www.beckman-foundation.org/programs/beckman-scholars/>.

Can I setup a phone call or Zoom to discuss my questions about the application?

Please start by sending your questions to bsp@beckman-foundation.org. Since most questions can be answered by email, we find this to be most efficient.

Can we submit multiple applications from our institution?

No. Each institution may only submit a single Beckman Scholar application per award cycle. If multiple applications are received from a single institution, all received applications will be deemed ineligible.

What if we accidentally create duplicate applications?

Please delete the extra application from the online application portal. This will prevent confusion and avoid duplicate submissions. If multiple different applications are submitted by an institution, all submissions will be deemed ineligible.

Can we submit multiple applications for our institution if they are from different campuses?

No. Only one application will be considered from your institution, regardless of how many campuses make up your institution. In cases where university systems exist (e.g., Rutgers, CUNY, SUNY, California State University, University of California, etc.), each individual campus of the system may submit one application. In the event that an institution/individual campus submits more than one application, knowingly or not, all applications will be deemed ineligible.



Should our application come from our institution or our university's foundation?

Applications can come for either so long as they meet the 501c3 or similar requirement. Most colleges and universities, though not all, are 501c3 or similarly qualifying institutions. Regardless, the foundation or institution's IRS determination letter will indicate its status. Your institution's grants/contracts office will likely be able to assist you in collecting this information or will be able to refer you to the appropriate department.

What is a Primary Academic Unit (PAU) and what PAUs can be included?

You will likely think about PAUs as departments or majors. These are the unique units from which you may select your Beckman Scholars. When listing PAUs, you will want to choose individual departments such as Chemistry or Biology over, for example, the College of Arts and Sciences. While Beckman Scholars can only be drawn from the PAUs that you list on your Institutional Data Sheet (IDS), the potential mentors can come from any home department, regardless of whether that department is listed as a PAU on the IDS. The following is a non-exhaustive list of eligible PAUs. If you would like to include a PAU that is not listed below, please contact bsp@beckman-foundation.org to discuss your individual situation.

Non-exhaustive list of eligible Participating Academic Units:

- Aerospace, aeronautical and astronautical/space engineering
- Biology, Biological Sciences
- Microbiology
- Ecology, Evolutionary Biology
- Geology, Environmental Science, Marine Science
- Molecular and Cellular Biology
- Neuroscience, Behavioral Science, Psychology (B.S)
- Chemistry, Biochemistry
- Chemical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering
- Computational Science
- Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Pharmacy Science
- Integrative Physiology
- Physics, Biophysics

Can Scholars be selected from departments outside of the listed PAUs?

No. Scholars must be seeking a major within one of the PAUs that are listed on the Institutional Data Sheet.

Can Mentors be included from departments outside of the listed PAUs?

Yes. While Beckman Scholars can only be drawn from the PAUs listed on the Institutional Data Sheet (IDS), the potential mentors can come from any home department, regardless of whether that department is included on the IDS. This means that a Scholar could work with a Mentor outside of the PAUs included on the IDS, but that Scholar must still be pursuing a major in one of the included PAUs.

How many Mentors should be included on the Faculty Mentor Summary Data Sheet (FMSDS)?

Institutions must include between 8-15 Mentors on the FMSDS. Applications that include fewer than 8 Mentors or more than 15 Mentors will be deemed ineligible.

Will we be penalized for including junior faculty mentors on our Faculty Mentor Summary Data Sheet?

No. The Beckman Scholars Program encourages the participation of both junior and senior Faculty Mentors. The evaluation of each potential mentor's CV will take into account their junior or senior status. You are welcome to include Mentors who have served as Beckman Scholar Mentors during previous awards.

Can a Scholar have more than one Mentor or have another senior faculty as a resource?

Yes, but all mentors must be approved and therefore should be listed on the Faculty Mentor Summary Data Sheet and wherever else required in the application (CV, Mentor Statement, etc.). If a Scholar has more than one Mentor, one Mentor will need to be identified as the primary Mentor. If dual mentorship is planned for all Scholars, how the primary and secondary mentors will be determined should be articulated in the proposal.

Will mentors be required to attend the symposium?

The Foundation may extend a Symposium invitation to a mentor from newly selected BSP institutions or a mentor whose Scholar has been selected as a speaker. Both of these opportunities are contingent upon space at the event venue. The Institutional Contact will be contacted directly if there is space available for the Foundation to extend an invitation to a mentor.

Will I be able to complete the Faculty Mentor Summary Data Sheet (FMSDS) and Institutional Data Sheet (IDS) on my own?

No. Both the FMSDS and IDS require information from a number of sources, including the faculty members who are included on the FMSDS, the grants/contracts office, as well as the alumni and specific department offices. Because there will be a number of different offices and individuals involved in gathering the required information, it is best to download these templates early and review the instructions carefully.

Can I add collaborators to help me complete the application?

In most cases, it is sufficient for only one person to prepare the application. We do recommend, however, that templates be downloaded for colleagues and then returned after completion to the designated application preparer for upload into the online portal. If after designating one primary institutional contact, the application preparer would still like to add collaborators, the instructions for doing so are provided within the online application portal. If more than one collaborator is working on the application, be particularly careful not to skip around within the application. The first two stages of the application must be completed in order and before addressing any other sections in order for other aspects of the application to be revealed properly (i.e., number of PAU endorsements).

Are there additional resources to help me get started?

“How to” videos have been prepared to assist with [registering an account](#) and [submitting an application](#) for additional assistance.

What are Mentor Statements and what makes a Mentor Statement “good”?

Mentor Statements will be completed using the template found within the application portal and should be no more than 2 pages long per potential Mentor. Within the Mentor Statement, each potential Mentor will want to highlight their approach to mentorship, especially as it applies to undergraduates within their laboratories. These statements should be unique to each Mentor, and it should be clear from the statement that the mentor has thought carefully about how a Beckman Scholar will fit and be supported within their group. As such, it is critical that each Mentor prepares their own Mentor Statement. In general, applications where the individual mentoring philosophies of each mentor are evident tend to review more favorably than those where Mentor Statements use “boiler plate” or common language.

Can we include different or additional information on the templates?

Please provide the data as requested. However, if necessary, you may add a footnote, providing additional explanation or context.

Can we include hyperlinks with additional information?

Hyperlinks to additional information may not be included in any documents. You will want to verify that no links are included prior to submission, especially within the proposal and Mentor CVs.

Can we make edits to the application?

Applicants should be able to edit their application up until submission. After the application has been submitted, no further edits are possible.

Can we use AI tools to prepare our application? The Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation supports the use of AI tools as supplementary resources. However, while their use in your application is at your discretion, we expect that you will use these AI tools in an ethical and responsible manner. As the applicant, you are expected to comply with best practices in research and publishing ethics, take full responsibility for any errors made by an AI tool, and to cooperate by responding to any questions that may arise relating to the accuracy or integrity of any part of your work, including data analyses and representation. *If AI tools are used in producing any parts of your application or in assisting with the writing process, a brief statement describing this use must be included.*

In order to protect your information from AI algorithms during the review process, the Foundation's reviewers are NOT allowed to use or upload your materials into an AI tool. In addition, the Foundation does not use AI tools for screening or evaluating applications.

Who will be reviewing our application? The reviewers for your proposal will be a multidisciplinary group of potential Mentors from Institutions with current Beckman Scholar Program awards. While they will likely be familiar with the program and how it is run at their own institutions, you should strive to introduce them to your institution and convince them that the design of your program is well matched to your setting, research infrastructure, and the characteristics of your student body.

Can our institution fund additional Beckman Scholars during the award term?

No. Institutions may not fund additional or "matching" Scholars during the Beckman Scholars Program award.

Can we continue the Beckman Scholars Program after the award with institutional funding?

Yes. An institution can continue a 'Beckman like' program, but it cannot carry the Beckman name.

Can we submit an application next year, even if we don't submit one this year?

Yes. Beginning with the 2026 application cycle, the Beckman Scholars Program is an open call. Any eligible institution can submit an application during any application cycle, so long as they aren't in the first or second year of an active Beckman Scholar Program award. (Institutions that are in the final year (year 3) of their Beckman Scholar Program award are eligible to apply.)