

Office of Research Education (ORE) February 1, 2024

ORE mechanisms to support student recruitment: A+ and HIRS Offers

The University of Colorado School of Medicine (SOM) and the Office of Research Education (ORE) prioritize recruitment and retention of a talented and robust biomedical workforce. Towards that mission, the ORE PhD programs recruit and train excellent trainees from a broad range of backgrounds. As the ORE PhD programs receive training funds from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), ORE supports the NIH's mission to recruit and retain individuals from

- groups underrepresented in biomedical research,
- individuals with disabilities,
- individuals from socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds,
- being neutral as to the individual's race and sex/gender identity.

ORE has two mechanisms to help PhD programs with their recruitment efforts. The deadlines for submission of A+ and Hirs nominations are the same – both are due no later than March 4, 2024 (end of day).

Achievement Plus (A+) Offers: The A+ mechanism provides a program with the ability to make an additional offer to enhance the talent, robustness and diversity of students entering the PhD programs. If the candidate receiving the A+ offer accepts and the program then has one more acceptance than its funded first year slots, ORE will cover the overage.

The majority of PhD programs administered by the Office of Research Education (ORE) in the School of Medicine (SOM) receive support via NIH training grants. NIH training grants require that the program has recruitment efforts in place to enhance diversity of the student pool (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-20-142.html>). To support the recruitment efforts of the PhD programs, ORE provides additional slots to programs that demonstrate strong and thoughtful efforts to build a student community that has broad representation from a broad range of groups, especially those underrepresented in biomedical research. For the purposes of the A+ mechanism, consideration of an individual's status as underrepresented is based on criteria that are neutral as to the individual's race and sex/gender identity.

To be eligible to apply for an A+ offer, the program will have made a conscientious effort to recruit individuals from a broad range of backgrounds (see above) as evidenced by the program's offer list*. **The offer list consists of the list of applicants who are the first group to receive offers of admission (aka, the 2X offer list).*

A+ nomination process:

- a) Programs nominate candidates from their wait list* for an A+ offer.
- b) Table 1 indicates the number of nominations that each program can submit.
- c) Programs will submit a separate nomination for each candidate via the form available at: https://ucdenver.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9BwvkozlYD9l8jk
- d) Each nomination submission includes the nominee's application.

- e) For programs that submit more than one nomination for an A+ offer, only one of the nominations, usually the first one submitted, need include information about the offer list.
- e) ORE will review completed nominations submitted by the deadline –March 4, 2024 (end of day).

This year, ORE has funds to support eight A+ matriculants. A wait list, with the nominees not (yet) selected, will be maintained. If an applicant who was an A+ offer declines admission, the relevant program will be notified that a nominee on the A+ wait list can be extended an offer of admission.

Hirs Scholarships: Hirs scholarships are “academic enrichment” funds of \$5,000 that can be used over the course of their studies as a PhD student over and above the normal stipend (or outside fellowship). With the Hirs scholarships, ORE seeks to honor Werner Hirs support of the next generation pursuing careers in biomedical research. If an applicant receiving a letter of offer of admissions with a Hirs offer accepts the offer of admission, they would receive the Hirs scholarship funds after they matriculate into the program.

The Hirs scholarships are intended to help the student to pay for items and travel that are scientific in nature. Purchases must follow University policy. The scholarships are competitive, and consideration is given to all aspects of the strengths the student will bring to ORE PhD programs and the SOM, including academics, prior scholarship and diversity as defined by the NIH.

Originally, nominations were submitted from all eligible programs to the Graduate School who then selected those to whom Hirs offers could be made. In 2022, the Graduate School changed the process, and each School is allocated funds for a set number of awards and each school conducts its own selection process.

Hirs scholarship nomination process:

- a) Each program nominates candidates from their offer list for Hirs scholarship. The nominee’s application to the PhD program should be included. (Table 1 indicates the number of nominations that each program can submit.)
- b) To avoid having programs submit the same information more than once, only the first nomination submitted will require information about the offer list.
- c) Programs submit a nomination for each candidate via the form available at: https://ucdenver.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6KeCHRk2Q3oCzR4
- d) ORE will review completed nominations submitted by the deadline – noon March 4, 2024.
- e) As for the A+ nominations, ORE will maintain a list of nominees not (yet) selected as a Hirs offer and contact programs when a Hirs offers has been declined and another Hirs award can be offered.
- f) ORE will review completed nominations submitted by the deadline –March 4, 2024 (end of day).

The Graduate School has allocated funds sufficient to support 7 Hirs scholarship awards to ORE first year students.

Table 1

<u>Program</u>	<u>#apps/ORE slot</u>	<u># A+ nominations</u>	<u># HIRS nominations</u>
BSP	23	4	4
CANB	14	3	3
CPBS	9.8	2	2
CSDV	9.6	2	2
HMGG	8.8	2	2
IMMU	18	3	3
IPHY	9	2	2
MICB	15.4	3	3
MOLB	10.2	2	2
NRSC	21.2	4	4
PHCL	11	2	2
RHSC	2.3	1	1
STBB	4.5	1	1