

2025-26 Health Professions Track Application Guide

Introduction

The Health Professions Track (HPT) of the California Pre-Doctoral Program will award funds to approximately ten juniors, seniors, and master's students in the California State University (CSU). These funds will support students as they explore and prepare to succeed in doctoral programs in the health professions, including public health, social work, human development (with a focus on health), health psychology, kinesiology/physical therapy, nursing, and speech/language/hearing sciences. Awards are based on competitive review of applications from current upper-division or master's students who, in the judgment of the review panel, demonstrate academic excellence while having experienced economic or educational disadvantage, and have a strong interest in pursuing research-oriented careers in the health professions. Professional interests or career goals in health include (but are not limited to):

- Becoming a faculty member at a CSU or other public institution of higher education in California
- Improving health care service delivery or public health systems in a leadership role
- Influencing policies, programs, and practices through evidence-based approaches in an expert capacity

The HPT welcomes applications from matriculated CSU students committed to health equity and creating a health workforce that is reflective of and responsive to California's diverse communities.

Program Overview

The California Pre-Doctoral Program is designed to increase the diversity of the pool from which the California State University draws its faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of CSU students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. The Health Professions Track aims to increase the number of students in the CSU's diverse undergraduate and graduate populations who pursue research-based health professional doctoral degrees in the California State University and University of California systems, including PhDs, DrPHs, DNPs, DSWs and AuDs.

Each applicant selected will be designated a Sally Casanova Health Professions Scholar and will work closely with their CSU faculty mentor to develop a comprehensive Collaborative Mentorship Plan that leads to preparation for, and eventual enrollment in, a research-based health professional doctoral program. These plans should be tailored to the specific goals and career objectives of the student. The \$5,000 scholarship, administered through the Office of Financial Aid of the CSU campus in which the student is enrolled in Fall 2025, can be used to fund:

- **Travel** for the student to visit U.S. health professional doctoral-granting institutions and/or to attend professional meetings appropriate to the student's development.
- **Academic and Professional Development**, such as fees for student membership in professional associations, subscriptions to academic journals, preparatory classes for and fees associated with standardized tests (e.g., GRE), and cost of materials to support scholarly projects.

Sally Casanova Health Professions Scholars will be eligible to submit an application for the following:

- A **Summer Research Experience** opportunity at academic institution which confers health professional doctorates, fully funded by the California Pre-Doctoral Program, so that the Scholar can participate in doctoral-level research prior to applying to an appropriate doctoral program in the health professions.

Eligibility

The HPT is designed for students interested in obtaining health professional doctorates with an explicit research component. Students interested in obtaining strictly clinical or practitioner degrees (doctorates in law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, for example) are not eligible. Interested applicants are strongly recommended to contact Prof. Arnab Mukherjea, HPT Faculty Director, with questions or for guidance.

All CSU upper-division undergraduate and master's degree students, with the exception of international students, are eligible to apply. Current or previous Pre-Doctoral Scholars are not eligible to re-apply. Applicants to the HPT must be matriculated upper-division or master's degree students who are currently seeking a degree at a CSU campus, and will be enrolled at the campus for at least the fall term of the 2025-26 academic year. Each applicant must have a faculty mentor from the student's home CSU campus who will be available for the duration of the plan specified in the application.

Selection Criteria

Applicants will be selected on the basis of three major criteria: potential for successful application to and completion of a health professional doctoral program, probable effectiveness of the Collaborative Mentorship Plan, and level of economic and educational disadvantage.

Submission

Applications will be submitted through Smartsheet. The online application can be found at the website for the California Pre-Doctoral Program. An application is considered complete when the online form is submitted with all supporting documents uploaded (see details on following page):

- Three essays
- Collaborative Research Plan
- Budget Plan
- Academic Transcripts
- Letter of recommendation from CSU Faculty Mentor
 - This can be received up to one week after the deadline to be considered, but review of applications will start immediately upon completed status. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that applicants submit the application prior to the deadline so the letter of recommendation can be requested and received in time.

Due Date

Applications are due electronically by 5:00pm on **Friday, February 14, 2025**.

Application Components

Use the following list to prepare for the application in advance of submission, as the online application form must be completed during one submission attempt (i.e., once it is started, it must be completed during that same session).

- Information
 - Contact
 - Demographic (including level of educational preparation and household income)
 - Academic
- Three essays (300-600 words each)
 - What elements of your educational, research, community service and/or personal experience have contributed to your interest in and preparation for pursuing a research-oriented career in the health professions?
 - Describe the discipline in the health professions in which you would consider pursuing a research-based doctoral degree. What area of research or conceptual frameworks interest you in this field? Please be specific.
 - Many areas of the health workforce in California are experiencing a shortage. How do you envision your career in helping address some of these gaps? Describe how your professional interests would help contribute to health equity in the state. Please include any interests in training and developing the next generation of skilled and diverse leaders.
- Transcripts
 - Current unofficial CSU transcripts
 - Unofficial undergraduate degree transcripts, for master's students
 - Community college transcripts, if applicable
- Collaborative Mentorship Plan, describing (at a minimum) activities the student will engage in for the duration of the scholarship, and the frequency of communication between student and faculty mentor
- Proposed Budget for Health Professional Doctoral Preparation, in alignment with activities or efforts described Collaborative Mentorship Plan (not to exceed \$5,000), which may include:
 - Visits to potential doctorate-granting institutions
 - Attendance at professional meetings, conferences, symposia, seminars, colloquia, etc.
 - Fees associated with graduate school examinations (including test preparation)
 - Research-related expenditures (not to exceed \$500)
 - OTHER: Membership in professional association, subscription to journals, software purchases
- Letter of recommendation from a CSU faculty mentor
 - Mentors will receive a link to submit a letter of recommendation after application is submitted.
 - The final deadline for the letter of recommendation submission is **Friday, February 21, 2025**.
 - However, it is strongly recommended that the letter be submitted as close to the application deadline as possible to facilitate timely review.

Students with questions should contact:

Dr. Arnab Mukherjea

Faculty Director for the Health Professions

California Pre-Doctoral Program

Office of the Chancellor; California State University, East Bay

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