# NUCATS Methodology Challenge Scoring Criteria:

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| **Impact** | **Score** | **Descriptor** | **Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses** |
| High | 1 | Exceptional | Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses |
| High | 2 | Outstanding | Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses |
| High | 3 | Excellent | Very strong with only some minor weaknesses |
| Moderate | 4 | Very Good | Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses |
| Moderate | 5 | Good | Strong but with at least one moderate weakness |
| Moderate | 6 | Satisfactory | Some strengths but also some moderate weakness |
| Low | 7 | Fair | Some strengths but with at least one major weakness |
| Low | 8 | Marginal | A few strengths and a few major weaknesses |
| Low | 9 | Poor | Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses |

Minor weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact Moderate weakness: A weakness that lessens impact.

Major weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact.

**K23 Review Considerations**

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| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Candidate** | **Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring** | **Research Plan** | **Mentor(s), Co-mentor(s), Consultants, Collaborators** | **Commitment to Candidate** |
| * Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher? * Are the candidate's prior training and research experience appropriate for this award? * Is the candidate’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality? * Is there evidence of the candidate’s commitment to meeting the program objectives to become an independent investigator in patient- oriented research? | * What is the likelihood that the plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate and lead to scientific independence? * Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career development plan appropriate when considered in the context of prior training/research experience and the stated training and research objectives for achieving research independence? * Are there adequate plans for evaluating the candidate's research and career development progress? | * Are the proposed research question, design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit? * Is the research plan relevant to the candidate’s research career objectives? * Is the research plan appropriate to the candidate's stage of research development and as a vehicle for developing the research skills described in the career development plan? | * Are the mentor's research qualifications in the area of the proposed research appropriate? * Do(es) the mentor(s) adequately address the candidate’s potential and his/her strengths and areas needing improvement? Is there adequate description of the quality and extent of the mentor’s proposed role in providing guidance and advice to the candidate? * Is there adequate description of the quality and extent of the mentor’s proposed role in providing guidance and advice to the candidate? Is the mentor’s description of the elements of the research career development activities, including formal course work adequate? * Is there evidence of the mentor’s, consultant’s and/or collaborator’s previous experience in fostering the development of independent investigators? * Is there evidence of the mentor’s current research productivity and peer-reviewed support? * Is active/pending support for the proposed research project appropriate and adequate? * Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the career development awardee’s progress toward independence? | * Is there clear commitment of the sponsoring institution to ensure that the required minimum of the candidate’s effort will be devoted directly to the research described in the application, with the remaining percent effort being devoted to an appropriate balance of research, teaching, administrative, and clinical responsibilities? * Is the institutional commitment to the career development of the candidate appropriately strong? * Is there assurance that the institution intends the candidate to be an integral part of its research program as an independent investigator? |