J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

African Scholars Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

Eligibility

1. **Who qualifies as an African Scholar?**
   We have two definitions of African Scholar: resident African Scholars and non-resident African Scholars. Resident African Scholars are individuals who have completed a PhD and are based in an African academic institution (see the next question for the definition of 'academic institution'). Non-resident African Scholars include those who completed high school in Africa, have a PhD, and are based at an academic institution outside of Africa.

   Note that eligibility requirements vary by funding initiative, and only select initiatives run the African Scholars program. DigiFI, HPI, and UJALA currently fund both resident and non-resident African Scholars, while JOI, DAISI, and LAI, CVI only fund resident African Scholars based in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. **How is 'academic institution' defined?**
   'Academic institution' refers only to universities. Think tanks and other research bodies which are not affiliated with a university are not included in this definition.

3. **I hold a PhD and work at a university but also have a position in a think tank/non-university affiliated research organization. Do I still qualify as an African Scholar?**
   An African Scholar may hold multiple positions as long as their primary affiliation is at an academic institution. By primary affiliation, we mean your long-term, main form of employment. This condition has been included in order to guarantee that researchers funded by J-PAL have academic freedom to publish their results.

4. **As an African Scholar, may I apply to any of J-PAL's funding initiatives?**
   No. Currently only the Digital Identification and Payments Initiative (DigiFI), the Jobs and Opportunities Initiative (JOI), the Digital Agricultural Innovations and Services Initiative (DAISI), the Learning for All Initiative (LAI), Crime and Violence Initiative (CVI), the Humanitarian Protection Initiative (HPI), and the UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa (UJALA) offer funding to African Scholars. Note that DAISI does not currently have an active RFP.

5. **Is there a limit to the number of members that can comprise an African Scholars team?**
   No.

6. **How many PIs (Principal Investigators) within the research team must meet the definition of African Scholar to be eligible for funding under the African Scholars program?**
   Only the lead PI in the team must meet the definition of African Scholar for the team to qualify for funding under the African Scholars program. This means that the team can include co-PIs working at think tanks, other research bodies and NGOs. Furthermore, it means that resident African Scholar teams can include co-PIs working outside of Africa.

7. **My team's lead PI meets the definition of resident or non-resident African Scholar but one of the co-PIs is a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher. Does my team still qualify as an African Scholars team?**
   No. Any team that includes a researcher already within J-PAL's network will be considered as an affiliate/invited researcher team, even if the lead PI on the proposal meets the definition of resident or non-resident African Scholar.

8. **Which grants may I apply for as an African Scholar?**
   African Scholars are eligible to apply for proposal development/travel grants, pilot grants and monitoring systems grants (DigiFI only). Full RCT funding eligibility is extended to African Scholars who have successfully completed a pilot funded by J-PAL.

9. **Can I apply for funding if my project's implementing partner is an organization that I currently work at or founded?**
   While this is permitted, it is possible the review board might flag conflict of interest issues. However, if you have good reason to believe your NGO is better placed to implement the project than other organizations, you should feel free to include it in your proposal.

10. **Can I apply for funding if I'm just about to graduate from my PhD?**
    No. The lead PI in the African Scholar's team must hold a PhD. However, a PhD student may be a co-PI in the research team.

11. **Can I apply for funding as a Masters student?**
    No. The lead PI in the African Scholar's team must hold a PhD. However, a Master's student may be a co-PI in the research team.

Types of funding available

1. **Proposal development or travel grant**
   These grants cover exploratory work related to preliminary research ideas, such as conducting background research, developing partnerships, visiting field sites, and collecting

preliminary data. Funds can also be used for activities intended to facilitate access to administrative data for designing or conducting an RCT. The expectation is that these funds will be used to support costs related to PI travel to develop a proposal for a pilot or full scale randomized evaluation during a subsequent call for proposals.

The maximum amount awarded for travel/proposal development grants is US$10,000 for JOI, DAISI, LAI, HPI, and US$15,000 for DigiFI. All African Scholars are eligible to apply for this grant. UJALA does not provide proposal development grants and only offers pilot grants capped at US$75,000.

2. **Pilots**
Pilots generally have a very clear research question and lay the groundwork for a full randomized evaluation. A pilot requires a partnership with an implementing partner, but in contrast to full proposals—which require a fully developed method of randomization, clear outcome measures, power calculations, and a scale-up plan—a pilot proposal should be at an earlier stage of project development. Pilots generally are used to test the logistical viability of the program and/or the take-up of the program in order to assess the impacts in a larger study in the future. It does not have to employ a randomization strategy and can be based on administrative or survey data.

Pilot proposals must clearly articulate the conceptual and methodological distinction between the pilot study and future follow-on studies, and what exactly the pilot will enable researchers to learn. It is expected that pilot studies will function to assess the feasibility of a full study by establishing research protocols, informing sample size and detectable effects, and assessing implementation processes. Pilot grants are appropriate for projects requesting funds to conduct pre-randomization activities.

Please note that a J-PAL pilot is a pilot of a full evaluation, meaning that it is expected that a pilot will inform and lead to a full RCT. J-PAL does not fund pilots that are the endpoint of the research, and after which no larger study will follow.

The maximum amount awarded for pilot grants is US$75,000. All African Scholars are eligible to apply for this grant.

3. **Monitoring systems [DigiFI only]**
DigiFI offers funding for teams looking to develop a high-frequency process monitoring system. For example, the system might be designed to help select African governments track progress and challenges among a representative sample of targeted beneficiaries. Monitoring systems allow organizations to track the progress of programs by relying on rapidly

collected data and easily interpretable data visualization/analytics. Although these systems may vary in form, a well-functioning system usually includes basic analysis on dataset(s) and simple dynamic reporting. The goals of the high-frequency monitoring systems would include assessing the efficacy of the status quo and/or changes implemented and systematically collecting ongoing dynamic client feedback. Data from these monitoring systems can then inform the design of the RCTs, while also building credibility and trust with the partner government.

The maximum amount awarded for monitoring systems is US$75,000. All African Scholars are eligible to apply for this grant.

4. **Full randomized evaluations**
These grants are for research projects at a mature level of development. Not only must the research question be clear, but applicants must also demonstrate a commitment from implementing partners, a method of randomization, well-defined instruments, and sample size estimates. Proposals can also be submitted for funding the continuation of research projects that have already started without J-PAL funding (including those for which field data collection has been completed). The expectation is that these projects will result in a publicly available paper that is eventually submitted to a top economics journal.

The total amount awarded to a single project, including any J-PAL funding for proposal development or piloting, will not exceed US$400,000. Proposals with a compelling reason for requesting more than US$400,000 may be considered on a case-by-case basis. African Scholars are eligible to apply for full RCT funding once they have successfully completed a pilot funded by J-PAL.

5. **Lab-in-field and pure lab experiments**
DigiFI and DAISI do not fund pure lab experiments. It is very unlikely that DigiFI and DAISI would fund a lab-in-field experiment, unless it functions as a complement to the larger study and there is an exceptionally strong motivation for the lab-in-field component.

JOI and LAI do not fund pure lab experiments. They will consider funding a lab-in-field experiment if it forms part of a broader, underlying randomized evaluation. For example, it could be one component of an evaluation that is used to test mechanisms in the hypothesized causal relationship.

What can funding be used for and how is it awarded?

1. **What kind of institution(s) qualify as the Institute to Receive Award (ITRA)?**
   J-PAL awards the funding to the Institute to Receive Award (ITRA). The ITRA is usually the university at which the African Scholar is based. When the team is partnering with Innovations for Poverty Action ([IPA](#)) in their evaluation, IPA can be the ITRA. In some cases, the implementing partner can be the ITRA, but it must be approved by the review board of the initiative awarding the funding. Approval is unlikely to be granted unless the implementing partner has a strong track record of conducting research.

   As of July 2023, all initiatives based at MIT (LAI, DAISI, CVI, and JOI) need to comply with a new MIT policy that requires for any new subaward it issues, there be PI on the project who is employed by the organization receiving the funds (also known as the Institute to Receive the Award, or ITRA). This individual is responsible for ensuring that the research project is carried out in alignment with the proposal and in accordance with appropriate research and data protection protocols. The individual need not be a co-author on any papers to come out of the study. The PI at the ITRA must be listed as the main PI on the IRB.

   Furthermore, the study must be reviewed by the IRB at the receiving institution or by a commercial IRB if the host institution does not have an IRB. If your host institution has an IRB that has IORG status you would only need to get one IRB. However, if your host institution's IRB does not have IORG status then you would need to get an IRB from your host institution and a commercial IRB to satisfy the J-PAL IRB IORG status requirement. For more information on what IORG status entails please see point 2 on page 14.

2. **Can funding be used to cover the salary of PIs (Principal Investigators)?**
   Funding cannot be used to cover salaries of PIs based in high income countries which are generally defined as [OECD member countries](#). For PIs based in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), the following applies:
   - Full RCTs: Up to US$20,000 per year for researcher PI/co-PI time, with a limit of US$8,000 per PI per year. However, in exceptional cases one can motivate for a deviation from this threshold.
   - Pilots: Up to US$8,000 per researcher PI/co-PI, but the total budgeted amount for researcher PI time must not exceed 25% of the total budget. However, in exceptional cases, such as where there is no primary data collection, one can motivate for a deviation from these thresholds.
   - Proposal development grants: Up to US$3,750 per grant.

   Please note that if you include PI time in a proposal budget, we will require information about your current compensation as well as a justification for why PI funding is needed.

3. **Can funding be used to cover the implementation costs of the program/intervention being evaluated?**

   In general, we do not fund something related to the regular operations of the program. For example, if the study is on cash grants to female entrepreneurs, we would not fund the cash grants, or if the study was of a teacher training program, we would not fund the training component. Rather, we focus on funding costs related to the evaluation of the program such as data collection, training for surveyors, travel costs for researchers, wages for data collectors and research assistants, etc.

   The above notwithstanding, we may be able to fund certain activities that fall within implementation if those activities are **only** taking place for the sake of the evaluation and are a key component of the evaluation. For example, in a project assessing different forms of training, the cost of adapting existing training materials specifically for the evaluation may be funded. This must be clearly explained and justified in your budget narrative.

4. **Can funding be used to provide an incentive or compensation to participants of my project?**

   Funds can be used to pay a small incentive or token of appreciation to survey participants to the value of US$5-10 per participant.

5. **Can funding be used to cover capacity building costs for PIs (e.g. graduate studies or other courses)?**

   No, the funding can only be used for costs directly related to evaluating the project under consideration.

6. **How much overhead (i.e. indirect costs or administrative fees) am I allowed to include in my budget?**

   Funding may be used to pay overhead fees to the ITRA. The maximum value of this overhead varies by type and location of the ITRA:
   - In the case that the ITRA is a university in a high-income country (generally defined as [OECD member countries](#)), you can charge up to 10% in overheads, applied to total direct costs.
   - Universities from middle to low-income countries as well as non-profit organizations from any location may charge up to 15% in overheads, applied to total direct costs.
   - Please include all non-research team personnel, such as HR, finance and senior management in this overhead.

7. **Can funding be used to pay an overhead to the implementing partner(s)?**
Only the Institute to Receive Award (ITRA) can receive a blanket overhead. This means that if the implementing partner is not the ITRA, it cannot receive a blanket overhead. However, if there are specific costs that the team can prove are only being incurred because of participation in the project, those can be claimed for. This is subject to a maximum of 20% of the total budget.

8. **Can funding be used to cover "incidental," "miscellaneous," or "contingency" costs?**
No, it is not permissible to include costs labeled as "incidental," "miscellaneous," or "contingency" in your project's budget. Furthermore, any costs for rent should be explained in the budget narrative, explaining clearly how they relate to the *evaluation* of the project (**not** its implementation).

9. **Does the budget cap include or exclude overheads that must be paid to my institution?**
The full budget *including all overheads* must not exceed US$10,000 for proposal development grants, US$75,000 for pilots and monitoring systems and US$400,000 for full RCTs. Overhead costs cannot be added on top of these maximum amounts.

10. **Can funding be awarded before costs are incurred?**
Typically J-PAL operates on a cost-reimbursable basis, paying out funds after costs have been incurred. However, teams based in low-to-middle income countries may apply for a standardized advanced/milestones payment award structure approved by MIT. Note that establishing this system is quite time consuming for institutions that have not previously received funding from J-PAL. MIT will require some documentation from your host institution to proceed with the subaward process. As a result of this additional process and communication between institutions, there is likely to be up to a six month gap between proposal acceptance and receipt of funding in these cases.

Proposal submission process

1. **What is the first step in submitting a proposal?**
The first step in the proposal process is the submission of a Letter of Interest (LOI) to the relevant initiative's team.

Within DigiFI, applications are open on a rolling basis, and LOIs can be submitted at any time. For more information, please see the [DigiFI RFP page](#).

JOI, DAISI, LAI, CVI, HPI use defined funding windows, launching two requests for proposals (RFP) each year. There is typically a four to six-week period between RFP launch and LOI submission deadline.

UJALA has an application to the African Scholars Program with a deadline. Once accepted and training is completed, and the LOI is approved, they are invited to submit a full proposal through UJALA's usual RFP process, which operates on a rolling basis with no fixed funding deadlines.

For more information on RFP dates and processes, please see the [JOI RFP page](#), the [DAISI RFP page](#), the [LAI RFP page](#), the [CVI RFP page](#), the [HPI RFP page](#), and the [UJALA RFP page](#).

2. **What is a Letter of Interest (LOI)?**
An LOI is a short description of your proposed project, providing an overview of planned activities and research design. J-PAL staff will use the LOI to assess the eligibility of the team under the African Scholars program and determine whether the proposed research project fits within the scope of the initiative. All teams that submit an LOI will be notified of the outcome of their LOI. Teams that meet the eligibility criteria and have a proposal which fits within the scope of the initiative will be invited to submit a full proposal.

3. **How much time do I have to submit my full proposal after my LOI was accepted?**
For JOI, DAISI, LAI, CVI, HPI, and UJALA you will typically hear the outcome of your LOI within one to three weeks of the LOI submission deadline, leaving four to six weeks before the deadline for full proposal submissions. Please note that these are *average* time estimates and may vary from RFP to RFP.

In the case of DigiFI, you can expect to hear the outcome of your LOI within three weeks of submission. Because DigiFI accepts applications on a rolling basis, there isn't a hard and fast deadline for submission of your full proposal after your LOI has been accepted.

4. **May I contact J-PAL for support while writing either my LOI or full proposal?**
Yes! Please contact joi@povertyactionlab.org, digifi@povertyactionlab.org, daisi@povertyactionlab.org, lai@povertyactionlab.org, cvi@povertyactionlab.org, hpi@povertyactionlab.org, and ujala@povertyactionlab.org if you have questions at any stage. If you are successful at the LOI stage and have been invited to submit a full proposal, we offer a short call with J-PAL initiative staff to provide some feedback from staff and/or the review board that may be useful in writing your full proposal. We also use the call to answer any questions you may have and direct you to resources or literature that may be relevant to your proposal.

We are eager to provide what support we can, so please do not hesitate to reach out. Please note that we receive a large volume of communications, especially around deadlines, so we may take up to five business days to reply during especially busy times. You can also watch [this webinar](#) led by IPA Nigeria that provides advice on how to write a competitive grant proposal.

5. **How many proposals can I submit in a single year?**
   You may submit a maximum of three proposals within a 12-month period, either as a main PI or co-PI in the proposal. This applies to all initiatives, regardless of whether they use defined funding windows or accept proposals on a rolling basis.

6. **Can I resubmit a proposal in the next RFP if it is rejected in this one?**
   Yes. However, please address any issues flagged by the review board in the last round and include a short note on how your proposal has been strengthened otherwise your proposal is highly unlikely to be successful.

7. **Can I apply to multiple J-PAL initiatives for a single project?**
   When applying to an initiative for funding, please indicate if you have already obtained funding from another J-PAL initiative for the same project. Please note, however, that you may not submit the same proposal to more than one J-PAL or IPA initiative at the *same time*.

8. **I've already received funding for my project from another external source. Am I still eligible to receive additional funding from J-PAL?**
   Yes. If you've obtained funding for this project from another external source, please indicate this in your proposal cover sheet and in your total proposal budget.

9. **Do initiatives with defined funding windows such as JOI, DAISI, LAI, CVI, HPI, and UJALA accept off cycle proposals?**
   JOI offers two types of funding outside of the regular RFP cycles, while DAISI and HPI offer one type of off cycle funding. LAI and UJALA do not offer off-cycle funding at this stage but may offer it in the future. Eligibility for these proposals is the same as for the regular funding cycles:
   - Off-Cycle Projects *(JOI, HPI, CVI and DAISI)*: These grants are intended for research projects that face a significant time constraint and need to receive funding before the end or the beginning of a regular funding round to make use of an unanticipated opportunity (e.g. a newly announced policy change that will go into effect soon, creating an opportunity for an evaluation). Proposals must clearly justify the need to receive a decision on an expedited schedule. The maximum amount awarded to an

off-cycle proposal is US$75,000. Research teams interested in submitting an off-cycle proposal should reach out to the relevant initiative team to discuss their proposal and suitable timeline before starting their application.

- Policy Outreach Support *(JOI and CVI)*: These funds are intended to support conferences, workshops, events, or other policy outreach activities to disseminate evidence from funded evaluations, or other randomized evaluations conducted by J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL postdocs, JOI invited researchers or African Scholars that address JOI's research priorities. These funds can be used to cover travel, accommodations, meals, venues, and related costs. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and the suggested budget range for these requests is US$10,000 – US$20,000.

10. **How long will it take between notification that my proposal has been successful and signing the contract?**
It may take up to twelve weeks to finalize a contract, depending on the number of iterations between the two partnering institutions, as well as the processing time of each.

Contents of proposal

1. **Do you have materials to assist me in writing my proposal?**
J-PAL has created a [comprehensive library of research resources](#) intended for researchers and research staff undertaking randomized evaluations, as well as those teaching the technique to others, and anyone interested in how randomized evaluations are conducted. In particular, please refer to the section on [grant proposals](#). It includes detailed guidance on pre-proposal planning, writing the research proposal, how to construct your budget proposal and how to budget for remote surveys.

In 2020, DigiFI hosted a webinar series for African Scholars that covers some of the fundamentals of running randomized evaluations. The last session on how to write a good research funding proposal is of particular relevance.
- [Jessica Goldberg](#) (University of Maryland): *[Introduction to randomised evaluations](#)*
- [Patrizio Piraino](#) (University of Notre Dame): *[Statistical Power and Choosing the Right Sample Size](#)*
- Emily Cupito and Gabe Tourek (J-PAL Africa): *[How to write a good research funding proposal](#)*

For information on the purpose of a pilot and things to keep in mind when designing a pilot, please see [this guide](#) by Evidence in Governance and Politics ([EGAP](#)).

2. **How long must my proposal be?**

   Proposal development and travel grants should be approximately two pages long while pilots, monitoring systems and full RCTs should be five pages long.

3. **Where should I place my focus in the proposal?**

   The full proposal must speak to the policy impact of the proposed research project as well as the study design. Both of these components are important and should receive equal emphasis. In the past, applicants have tended to cover the policy implications of their project well but have not provided sufficient detail on the theory of change, implementation and evaluation of their project. Please make sure to provide clear, detailed information on all aspects of project implementation and the research design. For example, provide details on any relationships with implementing partners that you have or plan to build, and your plans for your randomization strategy, enumerator training, monitoring and evaluation system etc. This also includes laying out the theory of change underlying your project and findings from any needs assessments you may have conducted.

4. **How detailed must my budget be?**

   The more detailed your budget, the better. It is important to break down the costs to a granular level. For example, instead of simply listing "Survey costs", you should break down the costs into sub-categories such as enumerator remuneration, enumerator travel, participant incentive etc. This will save time in the review process as it will remove the need for the initiative team to seek budget clarifications from your team when reviewing your proposal. Each initiative provides budget templates on their respective RFP pages (see here for DigiFI, here for JOI, here for DAISI, here for CVI, here for HPI, and here for LAI). We have also put together a guide on budgeting for data collection and J-PAL's research resources page includes a section on how to construct a proposal budget.

5. **What currency must I use in my budget?**

   All budgets need to be submitted in US dollars. Please ensure that the accurate exchange rate is applied in the project country and exchange rate volatility is considered for each line item. Websites that can provide reliable exchange rates are Google finance and Oanda.

6. **What should I include in the budget narrative?**

   Please make sure you include a detailed breakdown for each cost/line item in the budget narrative before submitting a proposal. This should include:
   - the unit cost of each item
   - the number required of each item
   - justification for the cost

7. **How important is it that I include a letter of support from my implementing partner?**
   It is very important to include a letter of support from your implementing partner for pilots and full RCTs where we expect there to be partner buy-in. These letters should clearly stipulate that the partner supports the research, is aware of the planned activities, and is willing to cover the implementation costs. For proposal development grants, exhibiting partner buy-in upfront (and having a letter of support) is less crucial as we allow for this funding to be used to establish relationships with partners.

Ethics/IRB review for funded projects

1. **What is ethics approval, also referred to as IRB approval, and why do I need it?**
   Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) review research involving human subjects to ensure that they protect human subjects from potentially harmful research. Research involving human subjects obtains information through interventions or generates identifiable private information. Identifiable information means that the identity of the subject may readily be ascertained or associated with an individual. Private information refers to behavior taking place in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect no observation, recording, or information that the individual provided for a specific purpose and can reasonably expect will not be made public (e.g., a medical record).

   The "Common Rule" is the popular term for the [Federal (US) Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects](#), 45 CFR part 46, which outlines the criteria and mechanisms for IRB review of human subjects research. The Common Rule has been revised and the new rule went into effect January 21, 2019. All new protocols submitted after January 21, 2019 are required to comply with the revised requirements. It is up to individual IRBs, however, whether to apply the previous or revised version of the regulations to ongoing studies that were submitted before that transition date (DHHS OHRP 2019a).

2. **Do I need to get IRB approval for a project funded by J-PAL?**
   IRB approval and adherence to all policies and protocols approved by the IRB is required for **any project funded or implemented by J-PAL which involves data collection (including administrative data, qualitative interviews, focus groups, and surveys) and research**, as specified in the [J-PAL Research Protocols](#). Furthermore, the IRB that is used must be registered as an IRB organization (IORG) with the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

   Please check [the HHS database](#) to determine whether your local IRB has IORG status before proceeding. If they do not, some external options to consider are [Heartland](#) or [Solutions](#). If you intend to run your project through [IPA](#), you may make use of their IRB. Additionally, all

research projects that are either funded or implemented by J-PAL must also be approved by MIT's IRB, unless the study receives an exempt determination from another recognized IRB.

3. **Can I start my project activities before receiving IRB approval? How long does it take to receive IRB approval?**
No. J-PAL's primary and most important research minimum 'must do' is that both project activities and payment of funding only take place after IRB approval is obtained.

The timeline involved in acquiring IRB approval can be lengthy depending on the Board you are applying to. Please expect it to take somewhere between 3-6 months. We recommend that you apply as soon as possible and that you ask for the expected timeline upfront.

4. **What are the cost implications of the IRB process and can I include IRB fees in my budget?**
University-based IRBs typically do not charge a fee for reviewing studies of PIs affiliated with that university while commercial IRBs (i.e., those not based as a university) do. Please make sure to find an IRB for your project **before** submitting your proposal. In the case that a fee is charged, this cost can be covered by J-PAL funding as long as it is included in the budget you submit with your full proposal. Depending on the provider, IRB costs can be substantial, ranging between US$2,000-5,000 depending on the complexity and duration of the project, as well as the number of revisions that are necessary. We recommend contacting [Heartland IRB](#) first, should your local IRB not have IORG status, as their fees have typically been more reasonable in the past.

5. **Do I have to complete a CITI/human subjects research certification before running my project?**
[J-PAL Research Protocols](#) require that all key research personnel on a project receive human subjects training through an approved course such as CITI or NIH. This includes all PIs/co-PIs and often includes RAs and other project staff who have access to participants' data. Field surveyors do not generally need specific human subjects training (CITI certificates) but should be given training by the study staff on ethical research procedures before surveying (more information can be found in our [ethics](#), [consent](#), and [surveyor training](#) resources, and Harvard has an [enumerator training guide](#) that may be helpful). In some cases, IRBs require human subjects training for **all** staff working on a project.

There are two options to acquire this certification:
- The CITI training course on "Social and Behavioral Research Investigators" is preferred by MIT (and most US institutions) — you can find the course either via your host institution's IRB or by going to the [MIT COUHES website](#) and following the links for MIT

affiliated or unaffiliated personnel. See also [this guide](#) for instructions on navigating the CITI site. This course **can be taken for free** via the MIT link above.

- NIH training course recognized by MIT and the NBER: [Protecting Human Research Participants](#) (PHRP). This course now charges a fee for learners.

Make sure to also keep your certificate updated; it requires refreshing every three years (if you give CITI a permanent email address they will remind you). One way to complete this renewal requirement more efficiently is to take the [refresher course in social and behavioral research](#); these courses are designed to be shorter and test learners on the most important content. Note that the reviewing agency may need to have the original certification on file for these courses to be acceptable (CITI Program). See also [this guide](#), particularly the highlights on page 3, for instructions on enrolling in CITI courses, including refresher courses.

6. **Where can I access more information on the IRB process and research protocols in general?**
Please see [this page](#) in J-PAL's research resources for detailed information on the IRB process. The [J-PAL Research Protocol Checklist](#) outlines the required and recommended processes and procedures to be completed throughout the lifecycle of all of J-PAL's studies, including data collection, data entry and data management. IPA's website also contains [useful information](#) about the process in general, as well as using their IRB.

Mentorship

1. **What does the mentorship component of the African Scholars model entail?**
Given that many local scholars are well trained but currently may not have an existing track record in randomized evaluations, the African Scholars model includes a mentorship component. African Scholars are paired with a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher who has conducted a number of randomized evaluations and who is interested in acting as an academic sounding board and guide as local researchers build out their projects.

2. **Does my mentor automatically become a co-author on any publications coming out of my project?**
No. The spirit of these relationships is one of mutual respect and guidance, while allowing the local scholars to drive their own research agenda. However, if both you and your mentor would like to enter into a co-authoring relationship, you are very welcome to do so.

3. **Do I need to find my own mentor?**
No. As part of the program, J-PAL staff match you with a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher who has expressed an interest in being a mentor and has experience working on topics and in regions related to your project. That being said, if you have an existing relationship with a

J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and would like to nominate them as your mentor, we would be happy to match them with you if they agree.

4. **When am I matched with my mentor?**
You are matched with your mentor **after** your proposal has been approved for funding for JOI, DAISI , CVI and DigiFI. For LAI you are matched with a mentor **once** your project is either conditionally funded or funded. Unfortunately, mentorship from a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher is not available during the proposal writing and submission process, but J-PAL initiative staff are on hand to answer your questions and provide guidance as required. The **exception** to this is the UJLALA Scholars program, which will match you with a mentor once your letter of interest (LOI) is accepted to help you with the development of your proposal.

5. **What do I do if my mentor isn't responding to my emails or requests for meetings?**
   - DigiFI: [Edger Morekwa]
   - JOI: [Lauren Roode]
   - DAISI: [Raquel Caldeira]
   - LAI: [Raquel Caldeira]
   - HPI: [Aminatou Seydou]
   - CVI: [Ana-Maria Colina]
   - UJALA: [Wissal Kehal]