NIH Funding Opportunities
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NIH Grant mechanisms

Workshop Outline
- Introduction R research grants
- Overview application of R01 and R21
- Submission process
- Peer review
- Re-submission process
Navigating the NIH landscape

My research is not clinical or has no direct disease application: is NIH for me?

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

The goals of the agency are:

- to foster fundamental creative discoveries, innovative research strategies, and their applications as a basis for ultimately protecting and improving health;
- to develop, maintain, and renew scientific human and physical resources that will ensure the Nation's capability to prevent disease;
- to expand the knowledge base in medical and associated sciences in order to enhance the Nation's economic well-being and ensure a continued high return on the public investment in research; and
- to exemplify and promote the highest level of scientific integrity, public accountability, and social responsibility in the conduct of science.

Learn the Basics

Learn how NIH approaches grant funding and how your research fits into our research portfolio. Make sure to explore the different types of grant programs offered at NIH, along with the eligibility requirements.

Plan Your Approach

Find and understand funding opportunities, ensure your research is original, understand your organization's internal procedures, and prepare to write a competitive application.

https://www.nih.gov
NIH Institutes: Find the best match for your research

INSTITUTES, CENTERS, AND OFFICES

List of NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices

NIH Offices

NIH Office of the Director (OD)

The Office of the Director is the central office at NIH for its 27 Institutes and Centers. The OD is responsible for setting policy for NIH and for planning, managing, and coordinating the programs and activities of all the NIH components. OD program offices include the Office of AIDS Research and the Office of Research on Women's Health, among others.
Institute Research Priorities:
Is your research plan in line?

Example: NIMH

- Strategic Objective 1: Define the mechanisms of complex behaviors
- Strategic Objective 2: Chart mental illness trajectories to determine when, where, and how to intervene
- Strategic Objective 3: Strive for prevention and cures
- Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen the public health impact of NIMH-supported research

These Research Priorities are guided by workgroup reports including those from: the National Advisory Mental Health Council, such as the Behavioral Assessment Methods for RDoC Constructs Council Report; Opportunities and Challenges of Developing Information Technologies on Behavioral and Social Science Clinical Research, and the National Advisory Mental Health Council Workgroup on Genomics; the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder Research; the National Research Action Plan; the Prioritized Research Agenda for Suicide Prevention; and, the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative 2025 Report.

Questions? Please contact us.
Plan your application

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm
Types of Grant Programs (activity codes)

- Research Grants (R series)
- Career Development Awards (K series)
- Research Training and Fellowships (T & F series)
- Program Project/Center Grants (P series)

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm
### Research Grants: R01, R21, R15, R03

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Code</th>
<th>Type of Projects</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R01</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Research Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R03</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Small Research Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>R15</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Research Enhancement Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R18</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Research Demonstration and Dissemination Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R21</td>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>Exploratory/Developmental Grants</td>
</tr>
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**R15**
- Supports small research projects conducted by undergraduate and graduate students and faculty at institutions that are not major recipients of NIH research funds
- Limited to 300K over 3 years
- PI cannot hold any other NIH grant as PI
R01 and R21

NIH Research Project Grant Program (R01)

• Used to support a discrete, specified, circumscribed research project
• NIH's most commonly used grant program

• Generally awarded for 3 -5 years
• No specific dollar limit unless specified in FOA (but advance permission required for $500K or more (direct costs) in any year)
• Utilized by all ICs

NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award (R21)

• Encourages new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for the early stages of project development. Sometimes used for pilot and feasibility studies.

• No preliminary data is generally required
• Limited to up to two years of funding
• Combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period usually may not exceed $275,000.

• Most ICs utilize
Prepare to Apply

Apply for Grant Funding

Prepare to Apply
Ensure all registrations are in place, get familiar with requirements, and choose which of the available submission options you will use.

[> 6-8 Weeks Before Submission]

Write Application
Obtain and complete application forms following provided instructions. Find information on developing your budget and formatting attachments.

Submit
Submit your application to NIH. Track and view your application to verify receipt and to confirm that the assembled document correctly reflects your submission.

[Submit early!]

Contact Program Officer:
receive feedback for fit with institute, and receive input for fit with study section (more later)

Contact RASP: Start submission-process early (especially if co-PI or subcontract)

The sooner the better! >2-3 months
Write the application

Apply for Grant Funding

**Prepare to Apply**
Ensure all registrations are in place, get familiar with requirements, and choose which of the available submission options you will use.

[> 6-8 Weeks Before Submission]

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Obtain and complete application forms following provided instructions. Find information on developing your budget and formatting attachments.

**Submit**
Submit your application to NIH. Track and view your application to verify receipt and to confirm that the assembled document correctly reflects your submission.

[Submit early!]

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**New (A0)**

- **R01**: February 5, June 5, October 5
- **R21**: February 16, June 16, October 16

**Fixed Submission Deadlines**

- **March 5**, **July 5**, **November 5**

**Resubmission (A1)**

- **March 16**, **July 16**, **November 16**

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www.kent.edu
Major elements

- Specific Aims Page
- Title
- Research Strategy
- Biographical Sketch
- Facilities & Other Resources
- Budget and budget justification
- Equipment
- Human Subjects /Vertebrate animals
- Select agent research
- Resource sharing plan
- Authentication of key biological/chemical resources
- Summary/abstract
- Project narrative
- Cover letter
- Letters of support
Before you start writing:

• Find the funding opportunity announcement and all relevant forms

• Use writing support tools
  • NIH website (podcasts)
  • KSU CAS and RASP

• Find what peer reviewers are looking for

• Are you a new (never had substantial NIH funding) or early stage (<10 years past terminal degree) investigator
  • Receive special consideration
Write for success: Format and style

• Follow the formatting instructions!
• Reviewers read on screen (and sometimes print)
• Section and subsection headings
• Paragraphing
  • Use bold, underline, italic sparingly
• Spare, simple, clear, direct style to tell your “story”
  • Clear, simple declarative sentences
  • Brevitiy! (R01: 12 pages; R21: 6 pages)
• Do not use clichés and “empty generalities”
  • “state-of-the-art research is expected to advance the field significantly”
• Avoid use of nouns as adjectives
• Avoid use of “weak” qualifying words
  • if, try, hope, should, may,
  • Whether
Write for success: Time management and Feedback

**Time management:**
- Lead time before submission deadline
- Quality time while preparing the proposal
- **Use a writing schedule**
- **Use set-aside time blocks**

**Feedback:**
- **Use a review network (feedback from experts)**
  - At all stages of the preparation (idea, specific aims page, research strategy, full proposal)

**Note:** contact CAS Writing Support

https://www.kent.edu/cas/develop-proposals
Title

• The title should emphasize the product of the research (the pay-off, not the process)
• Maximally informative and convey the novelty of your idea
• Do not rush the title:
  • take time and effort
  • to capture the attention of the reviewers
Specific Aims section (1 page)

- **THE** most important page of your proposal
- Provides the conceptual framework
  - Needs to include everything in your proposal that is important and exciting, but without details
  - Needs to have a flow of logic
  - Needs to convey the significance and innovation
  - Needs to generate enthusiasm from all reviewers
Specific Aims section

**Introductory paragraph**
- Frame the subject of the proposal

**Opening Sentence**

**Current knowledge**

**Gap in knowledge/lack of something**

**Statement of need and consequences of not meeting that need**

**What, why, who paragraph**
- Convince reviewer that results will meet the need

**Long term goal;**

**Overall objective**

**Central hypothesis**

**Specific Aims paragraph**
- How you will test the central hypothesis

**Pay-off paragraph**
- Explain what is the return on investment
  - **Expected outcomes; positive impact**
Research Strategy
R01: 12 pages; R21: 6 pages

• Significance
  • Importance of the problem or critical barrier to be addressed
  • Rigor of the prior research supporting the aims (published and unpublished)
  • Significance of the expected research contribution

• Innovation
  • Least understood of the five core-review criteria
  • How the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms
  • Describe novel concepts, approaches or methodology, instrumentation, or interventions or the advantage over current concepts, approaches or methodology, instrumentation, or interventions
Enhancing Reproducibility through Rigor and Transparency

The information provided on this website is designed to assist the extramural community in addressing rigor and transparency in NIH grant applications and progress reports. Scientific rigor and transparency in conducting biomedical research is key to the successful application of knowledge toward improving health outcomes.

Definition

Scientific rigor is the strict application of the scientific method to ensure unbiased and well-controlled experimental design, methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of results.

Goals

The NIH strives to exemplify and promote the highest level of scientific integrity, public accountability, and social responsibility in the conduct of science. Grant applications instructions and the criteria by which reviewers are asked to evaluate the scientific merit of the application are intended to:

- ensure that NIH is funding the best and most rigorous science,
- highlight the need for applicants to describe details that may have been previously overlooked,
- highlight the need for reviewers to consider such details in their reviews through updated review language, and
- minimize additional burden.

Guidance: Rigor and Reproducibility in Grant Applications

Learn how to address rigor and reproducibility in your grant application and discover what reviewers are looking for as they evaluate the application for scientific merit.

Resources for Preparing Your Application

Learn how to prepare a rigorous application with select excerpts of rigor from awarded applications, authentication plan examples, and resources like the experimental design assistant (EDA), guidance on sample size calculation, and more.

Training and Other Resources

Resources and training on many aspects of rigor and reproducibility, including sex as a biological variable, research methods, reviewer guidance and more.

Notices, Blog Posts, and References

We are continuously working to enhance scientific rigor and transparency in biomedical research. Learn more about the timeline of our efforts.

Workshop
December 11th
12-1 pm

Research Strategy

Approach:
• Each Aim:
  • Introduction
  • Research Design
  • Expected outcomes
  • Potential problems and alternative strategies
  • Timeline and benchmarks for success
  • Future Directions
Research Strategy

- Consideration of relevant biological variables
  - Sex: full consideration requires more than just inclusion of both sexes

http://www.womenshealth.northwestern.edu/sex-inclusion

https://orwh.od.nih.gov/sex-gender

NIH is committed to improving health by supporting the rigorous science that drives medical advances. Sex/gender influence health and disease, and considering these factors in research informs the development of prevention strategies and treatment interventions for both men and women.

“Sex” refers to biological differences between females and males, including chromosomes, sex organs, and endogenous hormonal profiles. “Gender” refers to socially constructed and enacted roles and behaviors which occur in a historical and cultural context and vary across societies and over time. All individuals act in many ways that fulfill the gender expectations of their society. With continuous interaction between sex and gender, health is determined by both biology and the expression of gender.

Including women and diverse populations in research is not just a matter of enrolling women and diverse populations in clinical studies but requires changing norms of how research is designed, long before a volunteer signs up for a study.

Accordingly, NIH is calling on scientists to take a deliberate approach in considering sex and gender in research to make sure that women and men get the full benefit of medical research. By instructing researchers to take these factors into account as they develop their research questions, design experiments, analyze data, and report results, NIH continues to deliver the kind of rigorous science that drives the medical advances we need.
Biosketch and Facilities

• Normally not “score drivers”, but extremely important to demonstrate likelihood of success

• Biosketch
  • Personal statement and contributions:
    • Demonstrate that you (PI) can lead this proposal to success and that you can manage the team

• Facilities
  • Demonstrate that your environment will contribute to success
Budget

• Contact RASP as soon as you *think you may be* submitting (weeks ahead of deadline)
• Work with them on your budget as soon as you have a research plan
  • Modular budget ($250 K/year)
    • Internal budget; can be restructured post-award
  • Non-modular budget (>250K, subcontracts)
    • Detailed itemized budget to reviewers

• **Budget Justification**
  • Budget must be perceived by reviewers to be appropriate for success of the proposed research
Coverletter: Choice of study section

Study Sections

Applications are reviewed in study sections (Scientific Review Group, SRG). Integrated Review Groups (IRGs) are clusters of study sections based on scientific discipline.

Find a Study Section

Enter Keyword or Title

- OR -

Use our Guided Study Section Selector

Chartered Study Sections

Reviews most investigator-initiated research applications (R01, R03, R21, R15, and Ks). Chartered study sections are those with both regular and temporary members.

Regular Standing Study Sections and Continuing SEPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Section</th>
<th>Study Section Description</th>
<th>Scientific Review Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTS</td>
<td>Arthritis, Connective Tissue and Skin Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Robert Gersh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AICS</td>
<td>Atherosclerosis and Inflammation of the Cardiovascular System Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Natalia Komissarova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIE</td>
<td>Acute Neural Injury and Epilepsy Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Elyse Schauwecker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APDA</td>
<td>Adult Psychopathology and Disorders of Aging Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Serena Chu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIN</td>
<td>Addiction Risks and Mechanisms Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Kristen Prentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASG</td>
<td>Aging Systems and Geriatrics Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Inese Betins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUD</td>
<td>Auditory System Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Janita Turchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACP</td>
<td>Bacterial Pathogenesis Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Marci Scidmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBM</td>
<td>Biochemistry and Biophysics of Membranes Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Nuria Assa-Munt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCHI</td>
<td>Biomedical Computing and Health Informatics Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Karen Nieves Lugo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDMC</td>
<td>Biodata Management and Analysis Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Wenchi Liang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGES</td>
<td>Behavioral Genetics and Epidemiology Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Ramona Gianina Dumitrescu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>Brain Injury and Neurovascular Pathologies Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Alexander Yakovlev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMBI</td>
<td>Biomaterials and Biointerfaces Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Joseph Mosca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMCT</td>
<td>Basic Mechanisms of Cancer Therapeutics Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Lambratu Rahman Sesay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMIO</td>
<td>Behavioral Medicine, Interventions and Outcomes Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Lee Mann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMIT-A</td>
<td>Biomedical Imaging Technology A Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Sengtao Liu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMIT-B</td>
<td>Biomedical Imaging Technology B Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Mehrdad Mohseni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMRO</td>
<td>Biostatistical Methods and Research Design Study Section</td>
<td>Dr. Chittani Shivasubramanian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WORKING WITH RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS (RASP) TO PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL
Proposal Preparation Resources

• Sponsored Programs will:
  - Review Agency Guidelines
  - Develop Budget
  - Provide Assistance with budget narrative (financial language)
  - Compliance checking
  - Complete and provide assistance with forms
  - Electronic Submissions Support (FASTLANE, Research.gov, Grants.gov, Proposal Central, PAMS, NSPIRE, eBRAP, AHA, NMSS FLUXX, and others!)
  - Provide KUALI Assistance
Sponsored Programs

Lori Burchard  Beverly Robertson  Diana Skok  Mark van’t Hooft  Susan Goehring

Monica Morson  Angelina Steiner  Charmaine Streharsky  Susan Tribuzzo
Kent State University
Steps to Ensure a Successful Proposal Submission

10+ Business Days Before Deadline

Principal Investigator (PI):
- **ASAP**: Contact OSP with intent to submit and provide necessary info (link to RFP, collaborators, subawards)
- Inform department/college of intent to submit proposal
- If applicable, work with responsible unit(s) for any cost-share on proposal

Sponsored Programs (OSP)
- Create Kuali proposal record and grant PI access
- If applicable, contact proposal subawardees for budget and documentation

PI & OSP:
- Review proposal guidelines
- Develop budget in Kuali

5 Business Days Before Deadline

PI:
- Complete Kuali tasks (questionnaire, science code, research designation, others as needed)
- All named personnel complete Kuali Certification

PI & OSP:
- Finalize budget
- Provide/upload documents as available

OSP:
- Review proposal for compliance with agency guidelines, institutional (and other applicable) policies
- Route proposal for institutional approvals

2 Business Days Before Deadline

PI & OSP:
- Finalize all proposal documents

OSP:
- Secure internal approvals
- Review final proposal
- Submit final proposal
- Review submitted proposal and submit updates or corrections as needed

PI:
- If applicable, log into agency system to view submitted proposal
- Contact Research Safety & Compliance for any special review

Questions? Please contact us!
Kent State University | Office of Sponsored Programs | 207 Schwartz Center | 330-672-2070 | dskok@kent.edu
Research Development and Research Administration

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https://www.kent.edu/research/research-faculty-development
Ensuring High Quality Proposals

- Team building/matchmaking
- One on One consulting/editing
- Internal review of proposals
- External review of proposals
- Resource library
- Passport to grant success program

https://www.kent.edu/research/research-faculty-development
Passport to Grant Success – Pilot

• Contact program officer
• Meet with OSP to discuss budget
• Seek internal or external review (at least 3 weeks before deadline)
• Submit 4 days prior to deadline to OSP; submit to agency 1 day before deadline
• $1000 into faculty incentive account

https://www.kent.edu/research/research-faculty-development
I WROTE MY PROPOSAL, SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
Sponsored Programs (what do they do with it?)

• Use Kuali to submit to Grants.gov
• Check compliance with funding opportunity and guidelines
• Verify completeness and consistency (budget justification, biosketches, etc.)
• Ensure all documents are loaded in appropriate format/font/naming conventions
• Any issue results in an error and rejection of the grant application
Why it is important to not wait until the last minute

• Sloppy grants get scored poorly: typographical errors and inconsistencies will result in a worse score
• For standard deadlines, RASP staff have a list of proposals they are submitting that day
• Other KSU researchers’ grants are put on hold to submit one at the last minute
• Network slowdowns (internal and external)
• No time to address errors or to double check the assembled package
MY APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFULLY SUBMITTED, NOW WHAT?
CELEBRATE
Application will be assigned to a study section (you can request)

Scientific Review Officer (SRO) assembles reviewers, identifies conflicts, and assigns 3 reviewers to each application (you can view meeting rosters – cite pertinent members)

~3-4 weeks prior to the meeting reviewers get their assignments

~9 applications, mix of mechanisms and assignments (1st, 2nd, 3rd reviewer)
Reviewers

- Provide an expert, thorough, fair, and objective review of the scientific and technical merits of applications
  - Overall Impact – paragraph emphasizing score-driving strengths and weaknesses
  - 5 core review criteria – strength and weakness bullets
    - Significance
    - Investigators
    - Innovation
    - Approach
    - Environment
Score each criterion independently plus an overall score

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>LOW</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the five review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit, and give a separate score for each.

1. Significance

Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous? If the aims are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

- Focus on the importance of the research question, **assuming that all other aspects will be successful**. Any reservations you have about approach, investigators, etc., may temper your Overall Impact score, but the Significance score should be driven solely by importance of the question and the assumption that there are no flaws elsewhere.

- Please be sure to specifically address the rigor of the prior research.

**Strengths**

- 

**Weaknesses**

- 
Significance

• Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous? If the aims are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?
Significance (continued)

• Focus on the **importance** of the research question, assuming that all other aspects will be successful. Any reservations you have about approach, investigators, etc., may temper your Overall Impact score, but the Significance score should be driven solely by **importance** of the question and the assumption that there are **no flaws** elsewhere.

• Please be sure to specifically address the **rigor of the prior research**.
Investigator(s)

- Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If Early Stage Investigators or those in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?
Innovation

• Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?
Approach

• Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Have the investigators included plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project? Have the investigators presented strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? Have the investigators presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?
Approach (continued)

• If the project involves human subjects and/or NIH-defined clinical research, are the plans to address 1) the protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) the inclusion (or exclusion) of individuals on the basis of sex/gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as the inclusion (exclusion) of individuals of all ages (including children and older adults), justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

• Please be sure to include a comment that explicitly addresses the level of scientific rigor (do they provide enough information to convince you they have a robust and unbiased approach?).

• For single-sex studies, you should consider whether the scientific justification is convincing to you.
Environment

• Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?
Overall Impact

Please provide an overall impact paragraph to articulate your assessment of the “likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.” Your paragraph should:

• Introduce the general objective of the project in one or two sentences

• State the level of impact the application will have and why (what is the major contribution/advance to be gained?).

• Identify the major score-driving factors that informed your assessment

• Explain how you balanced/combined/weighted the various criteria to arrive at the overall impact score.
Considerations from the reviewer standpoint

1. As mentioned, 2-3 weeks to review a full slate of applications
2. “Normal” work doesn’t stop during this time, so reviews are done late at night and on weekends
3. Very little, if any, tolerance for typos and poor English
4. Style is important; figures; white space
   - Consistency between components
   - Tell the reviewer why existing literature and proposed research is rigorous
   - Innovation bullets
Review Process

• ~1 week before the in-person meeting (study section), reviewers post their preliminary scores
• Read-phase – reviewers look at other reviews, focusing on discrepant scores
• Reviewers can change their scores if they are convinced by the other reviewers’ comments
• End of the read-phase determines whether a proposal will be discussed (based on average score)
Study section meeting

- Reviewers arrive the night beforehand; start at 8AM
- Based on preliminary scores, the top half of proposals are scheduled for discussion: some exceptions
- Bottom half are non-discussed – you still get individual reviewer comments but no summary of discussion
- First reviewer presents the study and reasons for his/her score
- Second and third talk about what influenced their score
• Following third reviewer, full committee discusses
  • Unlikely that the remainder of the committee read the full proposal – Aims are critical

• After discussion, Chair summarizes and revisits final scores of reviewers

• Best and worst score following discussion determine the range of scores for the committee to score between
  • Opportunity to score out of range

• End up with an average score of all members
Post-meeting

• Reviewers asked to edit reviews to be consistent with changes in comments

• Summary statements
  • If discussed, SRO prepares a summary of discussion highlighting the major points of the discussion.

• Depending on score you may be asked for Just In Time documents, or you want to prepare for a revision
Revising your Proposal

• Talk to Program Officer – they were able to listen in to the review
• Resubmit as soon as you can (but be realistic about addressing concerns) in order to optimize the likelihood of the same reviewers.
• Spend a lot of time on your Introduction to Resubmission
Introduction to Resubmission

• 1-page to respond to 12 pages of reviewer comments

• Many styles
  • Highlight acknowledged strengths in prior version
  • Not always able to provide a point by point response: Identify common concerns
  • Identify changes in document with line in the margin
  • Be polite, “we weren’t clear…”
  • OK to argue a response but do so in a very respectful and well-defended way
Contact Information

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