

Overview of Restructured Applications

Within the Context of the Overall Enhancing Peer Review Initiative

Background

NIH Peer Review System

- Cornerstone of the NIH Extramural Mission
- Standard of Excellence Worldwide
- Collaboration between NIH Extramural Staff and Scientific Community

Goals of Peer Review Enhancements

- Recognize changing nature of research; identify and encourage new and early stage investigators; ease burden on research enterprise; and streamline time to award
- Fund the best science, by the best scientists, with the least amount of administrative burden

Year-long Deliberative Effort Gathering Feedback & Input:

- Requests for Information; NIH Staff survey; IC White Papers; Internal Town Hall Meetings; External Consultation Meetings; Data Analysis; Internal and External Working Groups

Policy Changes Already in Place

New Policy on Resubmissions

New Investigator (NI) and Early Stage Investigator (ESI) Policy Enhanced Review Criteria and New Scoring System

Review Changes Happening Soon (Due Dates on or after Jan 25, 2010)

Overview

- The Peer Review Enhancement initiative has entered into a new phase:
 - **Restructured application forms** to align with review criteria; and
 - **New instructions** which include **significantly shorter page limits**.
- These changes affect ALL applicants submitting applications (new, renewal, resubmission, and revision) for **due dates on or after January 25, 2010** (see [NOT-OD-09-149](#)).
 - [Applicants who are eligible for continuous submission](#) may continue to use current forms and instructions through February 7, 2010 for R01, R21, and R34 AIDS applications that would otherwise have been due on January 7, 2010.

Step-by-Step for Applicants

- New forms and instructions necessitate the following steps for applicants:
 1. Read about the requirement changes **now**.
 2. In **December**, go back to the updated Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or reissued Parent Announcement and download the new application forms.
 3. Read the new application instructions **carefully**
 4. For **due dates on or after January 25, 2010**, submit your electronic and paper applications, using the new application forms.

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- With a single attachment for the Research Strategy, applicants will enjoy simplified application preparation and increased control over the look and feel of the document. NIH will also be able to accurately validate the number of pages in the Research Strategy.

Restructured Application Forms

- The new application format will **align the structure and content of the application with review criteria**, focusing applicants and reviewers on the same elements.
- Alignment helps **ensure a more efficient and transparent review process**.
 - Changes to the application forms:
 - **Research Plan:**
 - **Specific Aims** will include new language about the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert; page limit will remain at 1 page.
 - **Research Strategy** will be created as a new section and will include 3 of the current sections - Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies/Progress Report, and Research Design and Methods.
 - **Select Agents Research** will be changed to reflect the Environment criterion.
 - **Resources:** The Facilities and Other Resources section will be changed to reflect the Environment criterion.
 - **Biographical Sketch:** New instructions require a Personal Statement and also provide guidelines for the inclusion of references.

Shorter Page Limits

- The current grant application is among the longest used by funding agencies and foundations worldwide.
- Shortened page limits help accomplish the following:
 - **Reduced administrative burden** on applicants, reviewers, and staff
 - **Applications focused on the essentials of the science**, avoiding information overload
- Changes to the page limits:
 - The page limits for the new Research Strategy section generally will be 6 or 12 pages (with an additional 1 page for Specific Aims), according to the chart below. As always, if the FOA requires page limits that differ from the application instructions, the FOA page limits should be followed.

Current Page Limit (Section 2-5 of the Research Plan)	New Page Limit (Research Strategy)
<25	6
25	12
>25	Follow FOA Instructions

The full table of page limits is available at http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/page_limits.html