



NIH Peer Review: Life as an Established Investigator and Reviewer



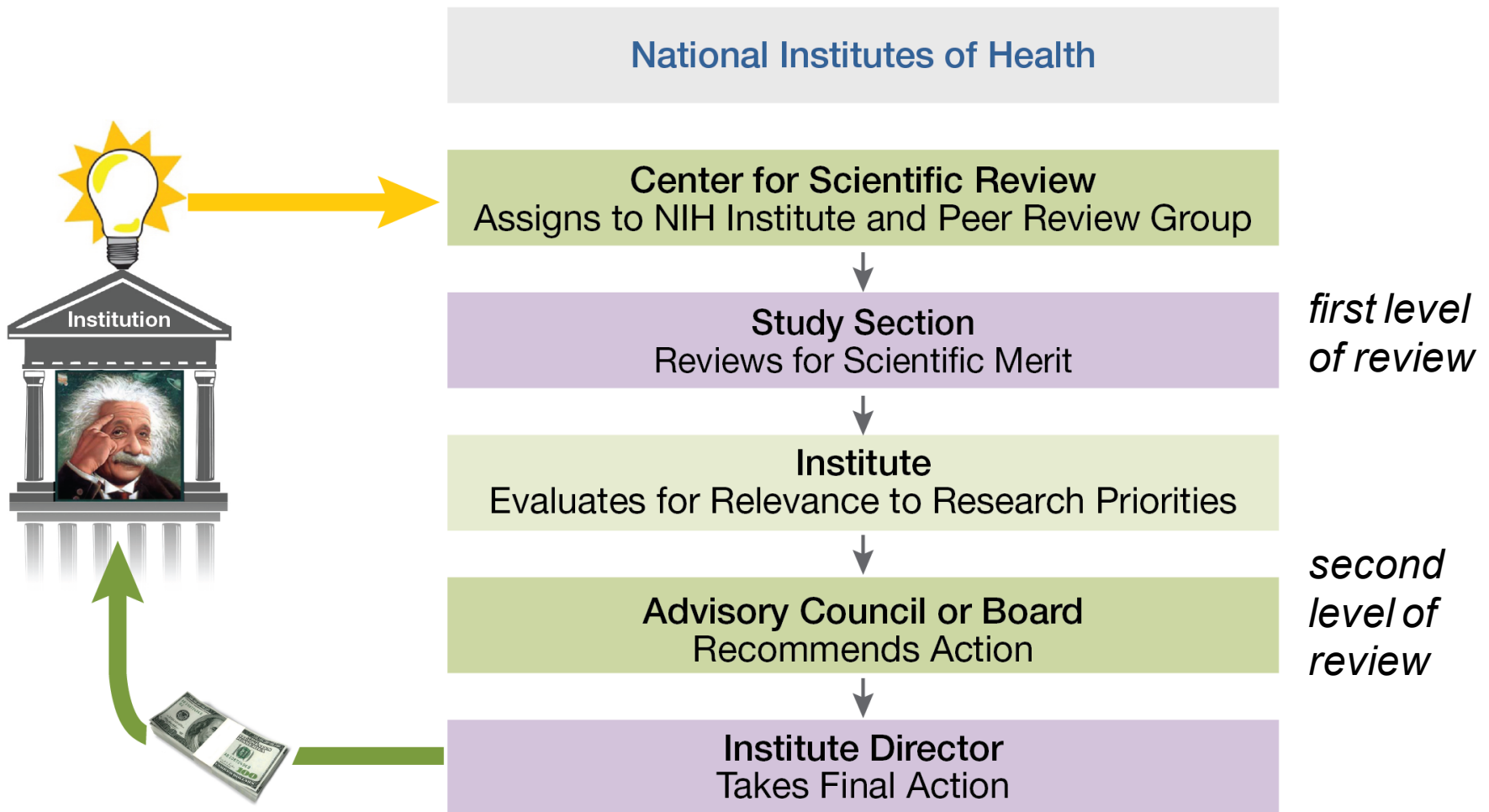
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Assistant Director, Division of Receipt & Referral

NCI Division of Cancer Biology January 14, 2021
20th Annual New Grantee Workshop

Goals for today's talk


- To learn the basics of the NIH Peer Review Process
- To gain insight into preparing your own applications
- To learn how you can participate in the NIH Peer Review Process

Peer Review and Funding of NIH Grant Applications



Tools to Help You Find the Right Review Home

- CSR Assisted Referral Tool (ART)

 Center for Scientific Review

Assisted Referral Tool (ART) [Help](#)

[ART Home](#) >> [SRG](#) >> Report

Enter application text and hit the Submit button to get a list of relevant study sections. Entering the Specific Aims is highly recommended. ☐ Ar

Title

The microbes in our bodies are part of our immune systems and protect us from disease. In the deep oceans, mysterious creatures without mouths or guts depend on microbes for all their energy. Bacteria provide squid with invisibility cloaks, help beetles to bring down forests, and allow worms to cause diseases that afflict millions of people.

Many people think of microbes as germs to be eradicated, but those that live with us—the microbiome—build our bodies, protect our health, shape our identities, and grant us incredible abilities. In this astonishing book, Ed takes us on a grand tour through our microbial partners, and introduces us to the scientists on the front lines of discovery. It will change both our view of nature and our sense of where we belong in it.

Terms will be weighted by frequency of appearance in the text above. The process is automated and confidential. ART does not track or store submitted text. Characters left: 18900

[Report erroneous classification](#)

Relevance	SRG	IRG	Membership	Name
Strong	HIBP	IDM	Roster	Host Interactions with Bacterial Pathogens Study Section
Strong	GMPB	DKUS	Roster	Gastrointestinal Mucosal Pathobiology Study Section
Strong	PCMB	GGG	Roster	Prokaryotic Cell and Molecular Biology Study Section
Possible	ODCS	MOSS	Roster	Oral, Dental and Craniofacial Sciences Study Section
Possible	BACP	IDM	Roster	Bacterial Pathogenesis Study Section
Possible	IHD	IMM	Roster	Immunity and Host Defense Study Section
Possible	VB	IDM	Roster	Vector Biology Study Section
Possible	BDMA	BST	Roster	Biodata Management and Analysis Study Section

<https://art.csr.nih.gov/>

- NIH RePORTER

 Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT)

Search

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[HOME](#) > [RePORTER](#) > Matchmaker  [Login](#) | [Register](#) | [RePORTER Manual](#) | System Health: GREEN

 Version: 7.31.0

[About RePORTER DATA](#) [FAQ](#) [ExPORTER](#) [RSS of Newly Added Projects](#)  

[QUERY](#) [BROWSE NIH](#) [MATCHMAKER](#) [SEARCH PUBLICATIONS BETA](#)

Use Matchmaker to find similar projects and program officials

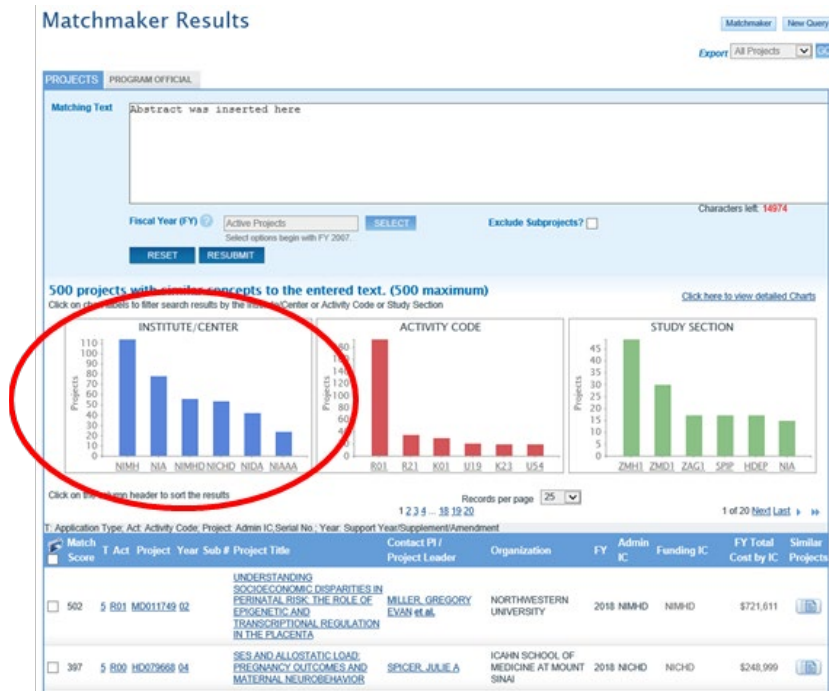
Enter abstracts or other scientific text and Matchmaker will return lists of similar projects from RePORTER or program officials associated with those projects. These matches are based on the terms and concepts used in the submitted text. Up to 15,000 characters are permitted. Matchmaker summarizes the projects by the program official, institute or center, review panel, and activity code. [VIEW TUTORIAL](#)

Enter your Text:

Terms will be weighted by frequency of appearance in the text above. The process is automated and confidential. The Matchmaker system does not track and store submitted text. Characters left: 15000

<http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm>

Help Your Application Get to the Right Institute



- Copy abstract/Aims
- Matchmaker Search returns:
 - List of Institutes
 - List of funded grants
 - Link to Program Officials

Cover Letter

You can use a cover letter to:

- Explain why your application is late ([NOT-OD-15-039](#))
- Provide notice of plans to submit a video
- Identify your project as generating large-scale genomic data
- Provide pre-approvals (\$500k, conference grants)

You should NOT use a cover letter to:

- Make assignment requests (use the ARF!)
- Suggest specific reviewers (***never*** do this!)

Tell CSR Your Assignment Preferences

Assignment Request Form

Request Institute assignment(s) ➡

-Make sure they participate in your FOA!!!

Request review group assignment ➡

Identify conflicts of interests ➡

Suggest expertise ➡

Never Request Specific Reviewers

The screenshot displays the 'PHS Assignment Request Form'. At the top right, it shows 'OMB Number: 0925-0001' and 'Expiration Date: 10/31/2018'. The form includes fields for 'Funding Opportunity Number' and 'Funding Opportunity Title'. Below these are sections for 'Awarding Component Assignment Request (optional)' and 'Study Section Assignment Request (optional)'. Each section contains a table with columns for 'Assign to Awarding Component' or 'Assign to Study Section' and 'Do Not Assign to Awarding Component' or 'Do Not Assign to Study Section'. The 'Awarding Component' section has three columns, and the 'Study Section' section has five columns. Instructions and links are provided for each section.

Reviewer Conflicts of Interest (COI)

What Constitutes a Reviewer COI?

- Institutional
- Family member/close friend
- Collaborator/Key Personnel
- Longstanding scientific disagreement
- Personal bias
- Appearance of conflict

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer_coi.htm

Confidentiality

- Review materials and proceedings of review meetings represent confidential information for reviewers and NIH staff.
- At the end of each meeting, reviewers must destroy or return all review-related material.
- Reviewers should not discuss review proceedings with anyone except the SRO.
- Questions concerning review proceedings should be referred to the SRO.
- Applicants should never communicate directly with any members of the study section about an application.
- Statute of confidentiality is life long.

Peer Review Integrity Issues

- For concerns or questions about possible violations of peer review integrity contact:
 - Your Scientific Review Officer
 - CSR Review Integrity Officer at: csrrio@mail.nih.gov
 - NIH Review Policy Officer at: reviewpolicyofficer@mail.nih.gov

Before the Study Section Meeting



Each application is assigned to 3 or more reviewers 5-6 weeks in advance

Reviewers Assess Each Application by Providing:

- Preliminary Overall Impact score
- Criterion scores for each of the 5 core review criteria
- Comment on appropriateness of your budget
- A written critique

Reviewing Rigor and Transparency

Research Project Grant Applications

Can Affect Overall Impact Score!

Rigor and Transparency Element	Which applications?	Where in the application?	Which Criteria?	What's added to the review criteria?
Rigor of Prior Research	All	Research Strategy	Significance	Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous?
		Research Strategy (Approach)	Approach	Have the investigators included plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project
Scientific Rigor	All	Research Strategy (Approach)	Approach	Are there strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach?
Consideration of Relevant Biological Variables, Such as Sex	Projects with vertebrate animals and/or human subjects	Research Strategy (Approach)	Approach	Are adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, included for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?

At the Meeting

Not Discussed Applications

- About half the applications will be discussed
- Applications unanimously judged by the review committee to be in the lower half are not discussed

Clustering of Review

- New Investigator R01 & some types of applications are often reviewed together

Order of Review

- Applications to be discussed are reviewed in random order within each cluster.



At the Meeting: Application Discussion

- Any member in conflict with an application leaves the room
- Reviewer 1 introduces the application and presents critique
- Reviewers 2 and 3 highlight new issues and areas that significantly impact scores
- All members without a conflict are invited to join the discussion and then vote on the final overall impact score

Scoring

9-point score scale is used to provide:

- Criterion Scores for each of the 5 core review criteria
- Overall Impact/Priority Score based on but not a sum of the core criterion scores plus additional criteria

All applications receive scores:

- Not discussed applications will receive only initial criterion scores from the three assigned reviewers.
- Discussed applications also receive an averaged overall impact score from eligible (i.e., without conflicts of interest) panel members.

NIH's Resubmission Policy

After an unsuccessful new (A0) application or an unsuccessful resubmission (A1) application, you may submit a new (A0) application with the same idea as long as your summary statement has been issued.

The NIH will not accept:

- An A0 or A1 application that overlaps a funded application
- Simultaneous submissions of overlapping applications
- An A0 or A1 application before NIH issues the summary statement of an earlier, overlapping application.

Resubmission FAQs

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/resubmission_q&a.htm

Your New Application Must Be Written as New

Your new (A0) application should not contain information that might bias the review or provide a competitive advantage:

You Cannot Refer to a Previous Review

- No mention of previous score
- No mention of previous reviewer comments
- No mention of how the A0 is responsive to previous review
- No marks in text to indicate changes

You Cannot Submit Elements of a Renewal

- No Progress Report
- No Progress Report Publication List

What Makes a Good Reviewer?

- Scientific expertise (funding, publications, etc.)
- Fair and objective
 - Ability to appreciate areas of science outside their immediate area of expertise
- Good communication skills
 - Articulate your views succinctly
 - Engage in productive discussions
 - Participate in discussion of applications beyond your assignments
 - Ability to help focus/facilitate the discussion
- Ability to remain engaged
 - Ensure fairness and consistency of the scoring throughout the meeting
- Ability to work collegially in a group setting

Where Do We Find Reviewers?

- Successful applicants
- Recommendations from reviewers and NIH staff
- NIH RePORTER (<http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm>)
- NIH PI and reviewer databases
- Internet
- Scientific conferences
- Scientific society recommendations
- Volunteers

Become a Reviewer

- **Contact a CSR Scientific Review Officer:** Send them your CV
- **Let Us Try to Find a Good Review Group for You:** Send your CV to csrvolunteer@mail.nih.gov



www.csr.nih.gov/review4CSR

NIH Peer Review Information on the Web

National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nih.gov>

- **Office of Extramural Research**
<http://www.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>
- **Grants Policy**
<http://www.nih.gov/grants/policy/policy.htm>
- **Electronic Submission**
<http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt>

Center for Scientific Review: <http://www.csr.nih.gov>

- **Resources for Applicants**
<http://www.csr.nih.gov/ResourcesforApplicants>
- **CSR Study Section Descriptions**
<http://public.csr.nih.gov/StudySections>
- **CSR Rosters and Meeting Dates**
<http://public.csr.nih.gov/RosterAndMeetings>