

# NCI ESI Method to Extend Research in Time (MERIT) R37 Award Extension Process

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*on behalf of the NCI ESI Activities Committee*

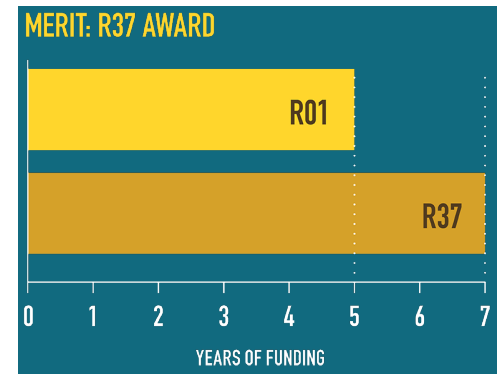
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# NCI ESI MERIT Awards (R37)

Guide Notice: [NOT-CA-18-037](#), January 2018

- NCI issued ESI MERIT Awards beginning FY18
  - **Longer-term grant** support for ESIs (up to 7 years)
  - Flexibility and opportunity for **creativity and innovation**
  - Additional time to **successfully launch careers** as early stage faculty
  - **Enhance number of publications and productivity** before R01 renewal application and increased flexibility to stagger awards
  
- ESI R01 applications that are percentiled and score within the EI/NI payline are converted to R37 awards that are eligible for 2-year extensions, following an expedited NCI administrative review of accomplishments during the initial funding segment.



# ESI MERIT Award Extension Request Process

## *Communication*

- NCI Program Officials (POs) are the point of contact.
- Extension request deadlines and requirements will be indicated in the R37 Notice of Award (NoA).
  - *Direct reminder email communications from Office of Grants Administration (OGA) are currently being sent to the PI and Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).*
- Requests must be submitted via email to [NCIOGAProgressReports@mail.nih.gov](mailto:NCIOGAProgressReports@mail.nih.gov) and to the PO.
- All requests will be for a **2-year extension** of the award (not to exceed 7 years total)

# Request and Evaluation Deadlines Per NCAB Round

Submission Cycle (start dates)	Due Date of R37 Extension Request (of penultimate R37 year)	Due Date of PO Evaluation to the DOC director (of penultimate R37 year)	NCAB Date (of penultimate R37 year)
Cycle 1 (Dec – Mar)	July 1	August 1	September
Cycle 2 (Apr – June)	November 1	December 1	February
Cycle 3 (July – Sept 30)	March 1	April 1	June

## Example:

A grant project period cycles April 1 (R37 ends March 31, 2023).

The ESI MERIT Award extension request is due Nov 1, 2021.

The request is reviewed by NCAB in Feb 2022.

July 2022, Nov 2022, & Mar 2023 are the most common extension request deadlines for this group of R37 recipients.

**Check with your PO and/or GMS if you have questions about your receipt date.**

# ESI MERIT Award Extension Request Process

## *Components to include (PHS 398 Forms\*)*

1. Face page signed by AOR.
2. Specific Aims page from the initial grant application (1-page maximum).
3. Research Strategy section (5-pages maximum).
  - a. Progress Report
  - b. Research Plan for the 2-year extension period
    - i. Include any updated specific aims/objectives for the extension period.
    - ii. Explain how the plan falls within scope<sup>†</sup> of the parent grant and represents a logical extension of the original aims.
4. Budget (modular or categorical as appropriate) that can be requested will be indicated on the penultimate year Notice of Award. Questions about the budget cap should be directed to the NCI Grants Management Specialist (GMS) assigned to the award.

\*PHS 398 Forms: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>

<sup>†</sup> NIH Grants Policy Statement Section on Change in Scope: [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/HTML5/section\\_8/8.1.2\\_prior\\_approval\\_requirements.htm#Change4](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/HTML5/section_8/8.1.2_prior_approval_requirements.htm#Change4)

# ESI MERIT Award Extension Request Process

## *Components to include, continued.*

5. Updated human subjects and/or vertebrate animals sections if changes from the current project period are proposed. If there are no changes, then include a statement to indicate that there are no changes to human subjects and/or vertebrate animals.
6. A separate list of the following items since the original date of the ESI MERIT Award:
  - a. all grant-related publications (published and submitted);
  - b. presentations at national and international meetings;
  - c. resource and data sharing, if applicable.
7. myNCBI award compliance report documenting publication compliance with the NIH public access policy.
8. Other Support.

# ESI MERIT Award Extension Review Process

## *PO Review*

- The PO will conduct an administrative review of the extension request and develop a recommendation for NCAB.
  
- The review criteria include:
  - Evaluation of whether the extension request is within scope of the parent award and continues to be in an area of scientific importance or promise to the NCI.
  - Timeliness and significance of the research.
  - Productivity of the applicant and progress made during the current award period.

# ESI MERIT Award Extension Award Process

Extension request is approved



PO notifies the PI and AOR



NoAs will be issued to award the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> extension year



# Digital Communication About the Process with PIs and POs

NCI webpage – <https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/grants-funding/funding-opportunities/merit>)



Be sure to check the NCI MERIT Award Webpage before submission to ensure that the most current guidelines are being followed.



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- MERIT Award**
- Research Program Contacts
- Funding Strategy

## MERIT Award

The Method to Extend Research in Time (MERIT)(R37) Award provides longer term grant support to Early Stage Investigators (ESIs)\* beginning with new, competing awards issued in FY 2018. Eligible investigators may obtain up to seven years of support in two segments: an initial five-year award and an opportunity for an extension of up to two additional years, based on an expedited NCI review of the accomplishments during the initial funding segment.

Investigators may not apply for an ESI MERIT award. ESIs who have submitted a single-Principal Investigator (PI) R01 application that received a score within the NCI pipeline are eligible for consideration. NCI program staff members will identify eligible candidate applications for the award and submit them to the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) for consideration. If recommended by NCAB and approved by NCI leadership, the ESI R01 will be converted to an ESI MERIT Award (R37) for the initial five-year funding segment.

The ESI MERIT Award extension application will be submitted to the NCI 18 months prior to the end of the initial five-year project period. The extension application will be reviewed by NCI staff and submitted to NCAB for review and recommendation. If an extension is granted, the ESI MERIT Awardee will be notified of the length of time of the extension and the approved budget. If a proposed award does not receive an extension, the awardee may submit an application for review as a regular competing research grant application.

By providing ESIs with this prospect for longer term support, NCI intends to give awardees the opportunity for greater flexibility, creativity, and innovation in their research, as well as additional time to become more established before having to submit renewal applications.

*\* An Early Stage Investigator is a program director /principal investigator (PD/PI) who has completed his or her terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and has not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award.*

*Thank you:  
NCI ESI Activities Committee*