



Frequently Asked Questions About the Video

What special consideration do reviewers give to new applicants?

Reviewers take into consideration the [career stage](#) of new investigators applying for [R01](#) applications.

How different is the meeting in the video from a real study section meeting?

A typical study section is larger, with about 20-35 reviewers assessing about 50 to 120 applications. The review discussions last longer. Meetings usually take about 1 to 1 ½ days. Also, CSR sometimes holds electronic meetings to ensure the best reviewers are engaged:

- [Internet-Assisted meetings](#), where reviewers discuss applications using secure online "chat rooms."
- [Video-Assisted meetings](#), where reviewers meet online using video cameras.
- Telepresence-Assisted meetings, where reviewers meet at regional videoconference centers to discuss applications
- Telephone-Assisted meetings, where small groups of reviewers discuss applications in teleconferences.

What do reviewers consider when they score the "Overall Impact" of an application?

Reviewers focus on the likelihood for the proposed research to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.

Does an application need to have clinical relevance to get a good impact score?

Not necessarily. Most major papers in medicine represented advancements in basic knowledge. Basic science and technology applications with no apparent clinical relevance can receive the highest impact score possible if they are found to have the potential to significantly advance research in one of the scientific fields NIH funds.

What are the other things that reviewers consider when they score an application?

Reviewers may consider how well the applicant addresses the needs to:

- [Protect human subjects from research risks](#)
- [Include women and minorities in the research](#)
- [Include children in human subjects research](#)
- [Use and treatment of vertebrate animals appropriately](#)
- [Manage hazardous materials appropriately](#)

What is meant by 'preliminary scores' – where do they come from?

Before the meeting, each of the reviewers assigned to an application provide preliminary scores for the overall impact. CSR averages these scores and reviewers discuss applications in the order of their preliminary scores. The best scoring applications are reviewed first.

What is the role of the Scientific Review Officer in the meeting?

At the beginning of the meeting, the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) reminds reviewers about [conflict of interest, confidentiality and scientific misconduct rules](#); tells them about recent review [policy](#) changes; and discusses other specific policies or procedures as needed. SROs will clarify policy during the meeting if necessary, and they work as a team with their

study section chairs to make sure review criteria are properly applied. SROs also take notes during the discussion of each application to write the resume and summary of discussion that highlights the score-driving issues.

How do SROs find and recruit reviewers?

CSR has an [Early Career Reviewer Program](#) to train reviewers and help jumpstart the careers of emerging reviewers. SROs identify highly regarded reviewers by following the literature and attending scientific meetings in their fields. Identified scientists usually serve as temporary reviewers first, and once they have proven themselves, they may be recruited to serve a 4- or 6-year term as chartered members of a study section. Visit our [Become a Reviewer Web page](#) to learn more about how SROs recruit reviewers.

Criteria for being an NIH-CSR reviewer:

- Have substantial and broad independent research experience
- Have received major peer-reviewed grants (R01 or equivalent)
- Understand the review process
- Show dedication to high quality, fair reviews

CSR also looks for individuals with diverse backgrounds to serve on its study sections.

How do NIH institutes and centers make their final funding decisions?

NIH institutes work with their advisory councils to perform [a second level of peer review](#). Though they take very seriously the scientific assessments provided by study sections, they are also responsible for further assessing applications for how well they meet established research priorities and public health needs. The director of each NIH institute or center makes the final funding decisions.

Who are the people observing the review meeting?

CSR and other NIH staff members sometimes observe study section meetings. NIH program officers from the institute or center that could fund your application usually attend or dial in to hear the discussion of your application. Doing so enables them to better respond to your questions about your review and advise you on your next steps.

What happens if a reviewer has a conflict of interest with my application?

Reviewers who have a [conflict of interest](#) with your application must recuse themselves and are required to leave the room when it is discussed.

Who reviews the applications that CSR doesn't review?

About 20 percent of NIH grant applications are reviewed by peer review panels that are organized by individual NIH institutes and centers. These applications are often submitted for institute- or center-specific grants, such as those solicited by requests for applications.

Have a question that's not here, send it to CSRCommunicationsOffice@csr.nih.gov.

Get More Information from CSR's Website:

View a [CSR Webinar](#) for applicants seeking an R01, Small Business, Fellowship or R15 grant.
View more [CSR Videos](#).

[Insider Guide to NIH Peer Review for Applicants](#)

<http://www.csr.nih.gov>

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