



What Happens to Your Grant Application A Primer for New Applicants

The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) receives all NIH and some other Public Health Service grant applications. Most investigator-initiated applications for NIH funds are referred to CSR review groups.

Your application is assigned to a review group and an NIH Institute or Center

One or more CSR Referral Officers examine your application and determine the most appropriate Integrated Review Group (IRG) to assess its scientific and technical merit. Your application is then assigned to one of the IRG's study sections. A study section typically includes 20 or more scientists from the community of productive researchers. Your application also will be assigned to the NIH Institute or Center (IC) best suited to fund your application should it have sufficient merit. (More than one IC may be assigned if appropriate.)

Referral Officers follow established guidelines that define the review boundaries of each study section. These boundaries frequently overlap, and more than one study section may have the expertise to review your application. You may request in a **cover letter** with your application that it be assigned to a particular study section or IC. The CSR referral office seriously considers such requests.

The combined expertise of the scientists in a study section is intended to span the breadth and diversity of the science it covers. CSR may recruit temporary reviewers or secure mail reviews from outside consultants.



One of CSR's Referral Officers, who help assign applications to the right review groups and ICs.

Checking the status of your application

As soon as your application is received and assigned to a study section, information is posted to your online NIH Commons account. Information on the Commons and how to register is available at <https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons>. You may question either your study section or IC assignment by contacting the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) named in your notification or the CSR referral office (301-435-0715). It usually takes weeks to refer the thousands of applications submitted each round. If information is not posted in your Commons account within 2 weeks of the submission date, contact the referral office.

Reviewers are identified



Some of about thousands of scientists who review NIH grant applications at CSR.

Your SRO will analyze the content of your application, check for completeness and compliance with policies, and decide which reviewers can best evaluate it. Reviewers have access to your application approximately 6 weeks before their meeting. Each application is assigned to three or more reviewers, and at least two of them provide written critiques. These assigned reviewers lead the discussions at the meeting.

Make sure your application is complete and correct when you submit it because there are significant limits on the kinds of **post-submission** information you may submit. Contact your SRO if you have questions about what is possible.

Before the study section meets, reviewers confidentially submit to CSR preliminary critiques. Reviewers also assign preliminary scores for each review criterion and for the overall impact of the application. The SRO then uses the preliminary overall impact scores to order the reviews. Applications in the lower half are not typically discussed. This does not mean they are disapproved. Applicants may resubmit a better application after considering the critiques they receive.

The review meeting is convened

Study sections convene for 1 to 2 days. One member serves as chair and conducts the meeting with the SRO. Relevant NIH program staff is encouraged to attend, but they do not participate in the evaluation. Assigned reviewers present their evaluations and outside opinions are read. After a general discussion, reviewers privately submit priority scores to CSR.



A typical CSR study section meeting. CSR also convenes online meetings when they are a way to recruit the best reviewers.

The results are released to you

Within a few days after the meeting, your priority score and percentile ranking are available to you online via the NIH Commons. Within a month, your summary statement will be available via your NIH Commons account. It will include (1) the written critiques produced by the assigned reviewers, (2) SRO's summary of the study section's discussion, (3) preliminary scores for each review criterion, (4) study section recommendations, and (4) administrative notes of special consideration. For new investigators submitting R01 applications, their summary statements are posted within 10 days after the meeting. If your application was not discussed, you will receive the reviewer critiques and preliminary scores for each review criterion.

The assigned NIH Institute or Center takes charge

After the review, an IC Program Officer will be your main point of contact. He or she may help interpret your review results or answer questions about the further consideration of your application. In a second level of peer review, IC Advisory Councils may consider the study section's recommendations and determine the relevance of your proposed research to IC priorities and public health needs.

<p>View the Video!</p> <p>NIH Peer Review Revealed</p> <p>CSR has produced a video of a mock study section meeting to provide another inside look at how NIH grant applications are reviewed for scientific and technical merit.</p> <p>View the video via the Web:</p> <p>http://www.csr.nih.gov/Video/Video.asp</p>	<p>Learn More About CSR</p> <p>CSR organizes peer review groups that evaluate three quarters of the grant applications submitted to NIH. CSR also receives all NIH and many Public Health Service grant applications and assigns them to the appropriate NIH Institutes and Centers and PHS agencies.</p> <p>Visit our Web site or call for more information:</p> <p>http://www.csr.nih.gov 301 435-1115</p>
<p>Grant Info</p> <p>Get info on funding opportunities, application forms, instructions and policies from the NIH Office of Extramural Research: http://www.grants.nih.gov.</p>	



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