2024 CSR Incoming Chair Orientation

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Upcoming changes to peer review across NIH

In effect for Summer 2025 meetings (applications received on/after Jan 25, 2025)

Simplified review framework for most NIH research project grants (RPGs)

 Focuses peer review on scientific/technical merit, mitigates reputational bias, reduces reviewer burden

Changes to fellowship review criteria and application

- Changes to the review criteria to better focus reviewers on key assessments relevant to training, mitigate reputational bias
- Changes to the application to align it with the review criteria, clarify instructions, reduce applicant burden



RPG Review: 5 Criteria \rightarrow 3 Factors

<u>Through Feb/Mar 2025</u> <u>meetings</u>

Overall Impact Score based on 5 criteria

- Significance scored 1-9
- Investigator(s) scored 1-9
- Innovation scored 1-9
- Approach scored 1-9
- Environment scored 1-9

Summer 2025 meetings

Overall Impact Score based on 3 Factors

- Factor 1: Importance of the Research (should it be done?)
 - Scored 1-9
- Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility (can it be done?)
 - Scored 1-9
- Factor 3: Expertise and Resources (are the expertise and resources in place to do it?)
 - Evaluated as "appropriate" or "additional expertise/resources needed"; if additional needs are identified, comments are required
 - Gaps in expertise and/or resources should affect Overall Impact score

*Applies to most RPGs: R01, R03, R15, R16, R21, R33, R34, R36, R61, RC1, RC2, RC4, RF1, RL1, RL2, U01, U34, U3R, UA5, UC1, UC2, UC4, UF1, UG3, UH2, UH3, UH5, R21/R33, UH2/UH3, UG3/UH3, R61/R33



RPG review changes based on extensive input from scientific community

Jan 2020 – April 2021: Working Groups of CSR Advisory Council

- Initial input gathering through blog posts (Open Mike, Review Matters), >400 comments, content analyses
- Convened two CSR Advisory Council working groups with overlapping membership to consider non-clinical trials (~90% of NIH applications) and clinical trials RPGs.
- Legal and regulatory guardrails provided: 5 review criteria (Significance, Investigators, Innovation, Approach, Environment) are defined by PHS C.F.R. 52.h.8– NIH has discretion about how to interpret or group them, and on all matters of scoring. Working groups held 11 virtual meetings to develop framework and recommendations
- Full CSR Advisory Council approval of working group recommendations, publication of report

July 2021 – Sept 2022: NIH leadership input

• Internal NIH discussions, input/modifications to the framework, approval by IC and NIH leadership

Dec 2022 – March 2023: Public Request for Information (RFI)

- Over 800 responses, from individuals, societies. Majority of respondents were very supportive not surprising given that these changes were developed with significant, sustained input from the broader extramural scientific community
- Minority felt that Factor 3 should be scored; smaller minority suggested blinded reviews
- Most recommended that CSR develop strong training resources to socialize the change for reviewers, study section chairs, and scientific review officers

Oct 2023: NIH announced the launch of SRF (NOT-OD-24-010), effective Jan 2025 receipt dates



Fellowship Review: 5 Criteria → 3 Criteria

Achieved through similar process of extensive community input/engagement

Current

Overall Impact Score based on 5 criteria

- Fellowship Candidate
- Sponsors, Collaborators, Consultants
- Research Training Plan
- Training Potential
- Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

Applications submitted on or after Jan 25, 2025

Overall Impact Score based on 3 criteria

Candidate Preparedness and Potential

- Wider range of indicators of scientific potential and preparedness
- Research Training Plan

Commitment to Candidate

Evaluations of the sponsor and environment framed in terms of their contributions to the applicant's scientific training. Sponsor's extramural funding is not considered by peer reviewers.

Revised fellowship application

- Aligned with the new criteria for more emphasis on quality of the training plan; grades not required or allowed
- Shorter, more structured, targeted, reduces boilerplate



Learn more on NIH's one-stop shop sites for RPGs, Fellowships

Register for public webinars, view recorded webinars, resources, FAQs, and more

Research Project Grants (RPGs)

https://grants.nih.gov/policy/peer/simplifying-review.htm

HOME	ABOUT GRANTS	FUNDING	POLICY & COMPLIANCE	NEWS & EVENTS	
Home » Policy & Compliance »	Peer Review Policies and Practi	ices » Simplifying Review of Re	search Project Grant		
POLICY & COMPLIANCE	Simplifying	Review of Resea	rch Project Grant Ap	plications	
Policy Topics		NIH is implementing a simplified framework for the peer review of the majority of competing research project grant (RPG)			
Peer Review Policies and Practices		applications, beginning with submissions with due dates of January 25, 2025. The simplified peer review framework aims to better facilitate the mission of scientific peer review – identification of the strongest, highest-impact research – by:			
Revisions to the NIH Fellowship Application and Review Process		 Enabling peer reviewers to better focus on answering the key questions necessary to assess the scientific and technical merit of proposed research projects; 			
Simplifying Review of Research Project Grant Applications	 Should the 	• Should the proposed research project be conducted?			
Background	2. Mitigating the eff	 Can the proposed research project be conducted? Mitigating the effect of reputational bias by refocusing the evaluation of investigator/environment to within the context of the proposed research. 			
Simplified Peer Review Framework	3. Reducing reviewer burden by shifting policy compliance activities to NIH staff.				

Fellowships

https://grants.nih.gov/policy/peer/revisions-nihfellowship-application-review-process.htm

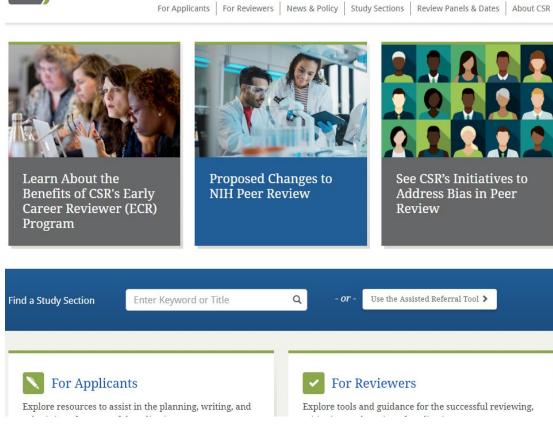


CSR training sessions for study section chairs – Spring 2025



Learn more about other CSR initiatives and priorities

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What are you searching for?

CSR's Website: https://public.csr.nih.gov/

- CSR's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan
- Data, full reports, analyses, e.g.
 - Upcoming changes in the review of RPGs, fellowships
 - Actions to address bias in peer review
 - Early Career Reviewer (ECR) program
 - In-person versus Zoom meeting evaluation
 - Reviewer demographics
 - CSR Advisory Council, Council working group reports
 And much more.....

Q/A, Discussion, Comments noni.byrnes@nih.gov



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