

Checklist for Grant Review

Does the Project

Description/Abstract:

- State the overall objective of the research?

- Succinctly state the specific aims?

- Briefly describe the methods?

- Indicate the long-term goal of the research?

- Give a snapshot of the whole proposal?

Do the specific aims:

- Address your research goals in specific terms (defined objectives that can be reached during the grant period) rather than generalizations?

- Avoid vague terms such as "describe the process of . . .", "characterize the phenomenon of . . .", or "elucidate mechanisms for . . ."?

- State hypotheses where appropriate?

- Begin with an introductory statement that provides a mini-background? (This is especially important, given that NIH grants no longer have a Background Section.)

- Seem clearly related to each other? Directly related to the methods described later in the proposal?

- Avoid being a fishing expedition (i.e., avoid collecting data with no clear indication of how it will be used)? Do you limit yourself to 3 or 4 aims?

- Present a doable body of work, rather than being too broad or ambitious?

Does the statement of significance:

- State and explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier you propose to investigate?

- Explain how proposed work will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in your field?

- Describe how major driving factors in your field will change if your work succeeds?
 - Driving factors include
 - Concepts
 - Methods
 - Technologies
 - Treatments
 - Services
 - Prevention

Does the innovation statement:

- ❑ Explain how the proposed work challenges or seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms?
- ❑ Describe a novel theory, approach, method, instrumentation, or invention that you will develop, **or** explain refinements/improvements or new applications of existing concepts, methods, or technologies?
- ❑ Describe advantages of your proposed development? (Refinements or small changes may have a large impact; if so, say so!)

Does the approach/methods section:

- ❑ *First* give an overview of the experimental strategy or design, *then* describe the methods succinctly?
- ❑ Relate the design and methods back to each specific aim?
- ❑ Use diagrams or flow charts to explain complex protocols?
- ❑ Give sufficient detail on methods to demonstrate that you know what you are talking about, while also citing key references on techniques to avoid unnecessary description? (With new, reduced page limits for NIH grants, this balance is *critical*.)
- ❑ Give examples of the results you expect and how you will interpret them?

- ❑ Anticipate pitfalls you might face and explain how to deal with them?
- ❑ Provide a time line that shows you have not designed an overly ambitious project?

Do the preliminary data:

- ❑ Include only data pertinent to your proposal?
- ❑ Support the hypothesis(es) being tested?
- ❑ Demonstrate expertise with the techniques and methods you are going to use and show feasibility of the project?
- ❑ Use clear, readable graphs or charts instead of tables or text whenever feasible? (Clear and readable means: not cluttered, legible if printed in B&W, supplied with legends and titles that allow them to stand alone.)
- ❑ Make a clear point about innovation, significance, or the value and appropriateness of your techniques/methods with each graph, figure or table? Use only one table or figure to make each point?
- ❑ Interpret data critically and use appropriate statistics?