

# Enhancing Peer Review Application Changes *for the Applicant*

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## Overview

- The Peer Review Enhancement initiative has entered into a new phase, preparing for two major changes for due dates on or after January 25, 2010:
  - **Restructured application forms**; and
  - **New instructions** including **shorter page limits**
- These changes affect ALL competing applications: New, renewal, resubmission, and revision (see [NOT-OD-09-149](#)) with the exception of:
  - [Applicants who are eligible for continuous submission](#) should use current forms and instructions through February 7, 2010 for R01, R21, and R34 AIDS applications that would otherwise have been due on January 7, 2010.
- These changes implement the final recommendations of the 2+ year effort of Enhancing Peer Review, the focus of which is to fund the best science, by the best scientists, with the least amount of administrative burden.

## Why are the applications being restructured?

- The new application format will **align the structure and content of the application with review criteria**, focusing applicants and reviewers on the same elements.
- This alignment will help **ensure a more efficient and transparent review process**.

## What do applicants need to do?

- Applicants targeting due dates of January 25, 2010 and beyond should:
  1. Read about the current changes now and begin writing their Research Strategy
  2. In December, return to the updated Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or reissued Parent Announcement and download the new application package and instructions
  3. Read the updated application instructions
  4. For due dates on or after January 25, 2010, submit electronic and paper applications using the new application forms.

## What changes are being made to the application forms?

- **Research Plan:**
  - **Specific Aims** will include new language about the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert; page limit will remain at 1 page.
  - **Research Strategy** will be created as a new section and will include 3 of the current sections - Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies/Progress Report, and Research Design and Methods.
  - **Select Agents Research** will be changed to reflect the Environment criterion.

- **Resources:** The Facilities and Other Resources section will be changed to require a description of how the scientific environment will contribute to the probability of success of the project, unique features of the environment, and for Early Stage Investigators, the institutional investment in the success of the investigator (e.g. resources, classes, etc.).
- **Biographical Sketch:** New instructions require a Personal Statement and also provide guidelines for the inclusion of references, limiting the list to no more than 15.

### Why are the page limits being reduced?

- The current grant application is among the longest used by funding agencies and foundations worldwide.
- Shorter page limits will **reduce the administrative burden** placed upon applicants, reviewers, and staff.
- Shorter applications will put the **focus on the essentials of the science**, avoiding information overload.

### What are the actual page limit changes?

- The page limits for the new Research Strategy section generally will be 6 or 12 pages (with an additional 1 page for Specific Aims), according to the chart below. As always, if the FOA requires page limits that differ from the application instructions, the FOA page limits should be followed.

Current Page Limit (Section 2-5 of the Research Plan)	New Page Limit (Research Strategy)
<25	6
25	12
>25	Follow FOA Instructions

The full table of page limits is available at [http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/page\\_limits.html](http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/page_limits.html).

### What are the benefits to applicants?

- Simplified application preparation and increased control over the look and feel of the Research Strategy
  - Single attachment for the Research Strategy (instead of three attachments)
  - Gives the applicant more control over the presentation and makes it easier for the reviewer to read

### Will applications using the new forms and instructions be reviewed with the current applications?

- To ensure equitable reviews, applications of the same Activity Code submitted using different application packages and instructions will not be reviewed together.

For more information, refer to <http://enhancing-peer-review.od.nih.gov/>