NIH eRA Commons (Version 2.2.4.0) Release Notes
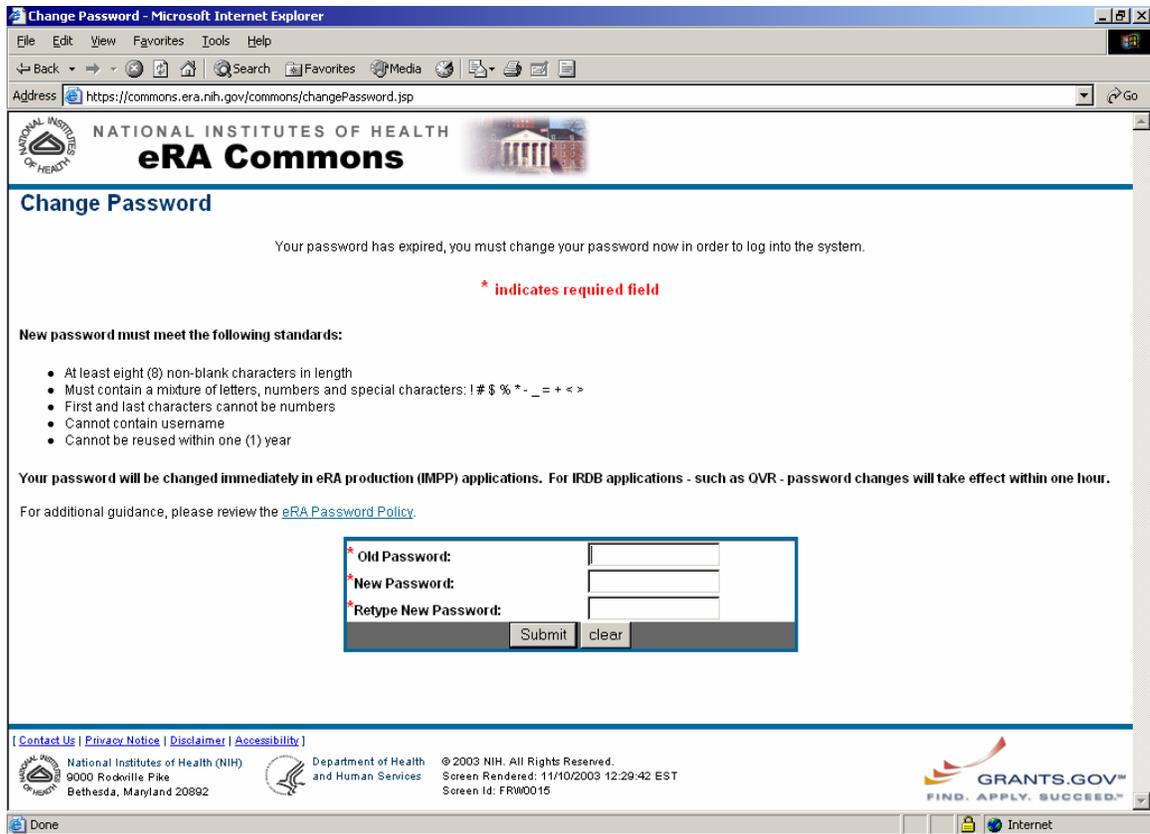
Introduction

This document describes the changes and enhancement made to the NIH eRA Commons system for the November 7, 2003 release. These release notes also include information on changes and enhancements made to the modules accessed from the system.

New eRA Password Policy

Effective November 7, eRA will enforce a more stringent password policy to reduce the risk of unauthorized access to the system. Users must change their passwords at least every 180 days.

The following are the highlights of new password requirements for eRA System users.

- End users must change their passwords at least every 180 days.

- Password length must be at least eight (8) characters non-blank characters.
- The password must contain a mixture of alpha, numeric and special characters.
- The first and last characters must not be numeric.
- The password cannot contain the user's login name.
- Passwords cannot be reused for a period of one year.

(*Figure 1.1: NIH eRA Commons Change Password Screen*)

NIH eRA Commons

Status Query Changes

The Status section has been significantly enhanced to provide more standard query options for the Signing Official (SO) and the Administrative Official (AO).

Users can now use the Status section to launch application specific functionality such as eSNAP, Just-in-Time (JIT), and project extensions. Electronic applications submissions to the NIH are available through the Status section as well.

Project Extensions
Signing Officials may submit a Project Extension automatically to the NIH. Extensions may be done up to the very last day of the project and will take affect immediately upon submission.

NOTE: Project extensions may be performed automatically through the NIH eRA Commons one time only.

Just-in-Time
Prior to award, the Just In Time (JIT) information for Other Support Documentation, IACUC, IRB, and Human Subjects Education may be submitted through the NIH eRA Commons when requested by NIH. Only a Signing Official may submit JIT information and there is only one opportunity to submit JIT information automatically through the NIH eRA Commons. Other Support is always required. IACUC, IRB are also always required if the application involves animal or human subjects.

Electronic Streamlined Non-competing Award Process (eSNAP)

Inclusion protocol

If the protocol had not been previously entered into the system by NIH staff, then the system will create a default protocol so that the Institution submitting the eSNAP can continue the POP Tracking process. The system will email the NIH IC Program Director to alert them that a default protocol has been created.

Other Documentation Upload

The system will create a third upload file to document other items. Examples include pre-published citations, mentor letters and any additions to progress reports.

Key Personnel and Performance Sites will Carry Forward

All key personnel and performance sites recorded on the last eSNAP submitted for a particular grant are included in the current eSNAP automatically.

Internet-Assisted Review (IAR)

IAR allows reviewers to view and submit critiques and preliminary scores for applications they are reviewing.

Further information about IAR can be found in the online help and in the IAR user guide, located at http://impacii.nih.gov/revdoc/IAR_Reviewer_UG_Dec2002.pdf.

Enhanced Performance for List of Applications Page

The List of Applications page now loads more quickly, especially for medium to large meeting sizes. Loading time should be 25 seconds or less.

Account Status Changes for the IAR Control Center

The label for the Active Account column has been changed to Account Status. If the reviewer does not have an NIH eRA Commons account, the column is blank. If the reviewer does have an account, this column now indicates the following categories of account status:

- **Pending Rvwr -** Indicates that the reviewer has initiated but not yet completed the account creation process.
- **Pending NIH -** Indicates that the reviewer has completed the account creation process but NIH has not yet activated the account.
- **Declined** - Indicates that the request for an account has been denied.
- **Active** - Indicates that the account has been activated by the NIH.

Enhancements to Reviewer Invitation Emails

Email invitations sent to reviewers have been enhanced as follows:

- Text has been revised for clarity.
- A note has been added that IAR cannot be used until the reviewer account is activated by the NIH.
- A note has been added that the passwords must be at least eight characters in length and may contain letters, numbers, and special characters.
- A note has been added that the reviewer should visit the IAR site to create an account no later than one week before reviews are due.

IAR Available in NIH eRA Commons Demo Facility

Reviewers with a PI role can now access a demonstration version of IAR with full IAR reviewer functionality.

NIH eRA Commons demo facility users with the IAR role can access three meetings on the list of meetings. Each meeting is in a different phase (Submit, Read, and Edit). Each meeting contains one application that is assigned to the demo facility IAR user and one that is not assigned. Each application has three assignments (Rev 1, Rev 2, and Dis 1). The demo facility IAR user is Rev 1 on the assigned application. Critiques and scores are available for viewing for Rev 2 and Dis 1 on the assigned application. On the unassigned application, Rev 1 and Rev 2 have critiques and scores and the Dis 1 has a score only. The demo facility IAR user is able to view, submit, and delete critiques during the appropriate phases.

Issues Resolved in this Release

Secondary SRAs are No Longer Able to Select and Enable Themselves in the Control Center.

Reviewer Access to Meetings

Reviewers' access to a meeting in IAR end at the meeting's Edit phase end date or at the meeting's Read phase end date (if there is not an Edit phase).

Financial Status Reports (FSR)

Changes and enhancements made to the Financial Status Reports module of the NIH eRA Commons system can be found at http://era.nih.gov/Docs/FSR_RN.pdf.