

Center for Scientific Review

National Institutes of Health

Referral & Review

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF SHARED INSTRUMENTATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

BACKGROUND

The review of proposals for the Shared Instrumentation Program of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) requires a very different approach from that used for the review of other types of applications submitted to the National Institutes of Health. The program announcement for this grant mechanism should be examined carefully prior to reviewing any applications, paying particular attention to the sections on review procedures and criteria.

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-028.html>

Prepare your reviews according to the following headings. You may add more comments if you like, but please organize your reviews in the format indicated below. If this is a resubmission, address the applicant's response to the earlier summary statement.

SECTIONS OF THE SUMMARY STATEMENT

JUSTIFICATION OF NEED: Give a brief statement on the nature of the application (instrument requested, number of users, type of research). Is the need for the instrument clearly and adequately justified? Is the equipment essential and appropriate?

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE: Does the institution have the technical expertise to make effective use of the requested equipment? How well qualified are the participating investigators to operate and maintain the instrument, conduct the projects, and evaluate the research results? How will new users be trained? How will biosafety procedures be implemented?

RESEARCH PROJECTS: Will research with the requested instrument advance the knowledge and understanding of the proposed projects? How would the research project of each major user be enhanced? You have to pass judgment on the need for and appropriateness of the requested instrumentation, not the research itself; these latter judgments have been rendered by other Study Sections.

ADMINISTRATION: Is the plan for the management and maintenance of the requested instrument appropriate? Is the membership of the advisory committee broadly based to oversee the use of the instrument for a wide range of biomedical investigators? How will research time be allocated among the projects? Are the sharing arrangements equitable? If needed, are the policies to manage human subject, animal or biohazardous materials projects adequate? Is the financial plan for long-term operation and maintenance of the instrument reasonable?

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT: What is the evidence of institutional commitment for continued support of the utilization and maintenance of the instrument? Is there appropriate documentation (letters from institutional officials)?

OVERALL BENEFIT: Will the instrument requested benefit the overall research community and have a significant impact on NIH-funded research?

OVERALL EVALUATION: Briefly summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the application. Provide comments on the overall need of the users which led you to your final recommendation and level of enthusiasm.

BUDGET: Base your budget recommendation on the total cost of upgrading or acquiring an appropriately equipped, but cost-effective, instrument. Recommend deletions or changes for inappropriate items. Do not concern yourself with the administrative cost floor or ceiling given in the program announcement. Please be specific in describing the requisite capabilities of an instrument appropriate to the needs of the investigators. This information should be valuable not only for NCRR staff in negotiating the terms of an award, but also to investigators who may have more limited experience than you with the requested instrumentation.

STUDY SECTION MEETING PROCEDURES:

Applications may be subjected to streamlined review procedures (for S10s usually 30% streamlining rather than the 50% usual for R01s). As an application comes up for discussion, the assigned reviewers will state their levels (or ranges) of enthusiasm using numbers from 1.0 (best) to 5.0 (worst). The median score of the group of applications being reviewed should be 3.0. The budget will be considered only after the application has been fully discussed and scored. Summary statements for all applications will consist of the unedited critiques provided by the assigned reviewers and a Resume and Summary of Discussion written by the Scientific Review Officer after the meeting. Therefore, if reviewers change their opinions during the discussion, they should adjust their written comments to reflect their opinions at the time of assigning a score to the application.

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