

S10 GUIDE FOR REVIEWERS

Shared Instrumentation Grant Applications

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shared Instrumentation Grant Program (S10)

- Encourages applications from groups of NIH-supported investigators to purchase or upgrade commercially available instruments that cost at least \$100,000.
- Maximum award is \$500,000.
- Reviewers should not evaluate the scientific merit of the research project components, because these have been previously peer reviewed.
- Types of instruments supported include confocal and electron microscopes, biomedical imagers, mass spectrometers, DNA sequencers, biosensors, cell sorters, X-ray diffraction systems, and NMR spectrometers among others.

Vist FOA at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-09-028.html>.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITTEN CRITIQUE AND PRELIMINARY SCORES

Please use the following guidelines when preparing written comments on S10 applications assigned to you for review.

Written Critiques

- The format of the critiques should follow the structured template provided for each mechanism, which can be downloaded from the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) site and found on the CD.
- Each core criterion and additional review criteria are represented in the reviewer template and should be commented on, listing the strengths and weaknesses of each in a bulleted form.
- The goal is to provide the maximum and most pertinent information in a concise manner.
- After considering all of the review criteria, briefly summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the application in the Overall Impact (Overall Benefit) section of the template.
- Assigned reviewers must upload critiques before entering an overall impact/priority score.
- Criterion scores should be entered in IAR before the review meeting.

- Assigned reviewers may submit criterion scores only after their critiques have been uploaded. At the SRO's discretion, discussants who are assigned to the application and SRG members who are not assigned to the application may submit criterion scores without critiques.
- The criterion scores may be changed during FINAL SCORING on your electronic or paper Voter/Scoring Sheet, or following the review meeting during the EDIT phase.
- Please do not write your criterion scores on the critique template.

Preliminary Scores

- Each core review criterion should be given a score using the nine-point rating scale.
- The criterion scores for the applications should be entered in the meeting Internet Assisted Review (IAR) site in NIH Commons before the review meeting using the same page that is used for submitting the preliminary impact/priority score and critique.
- The criterion scores may be changed following the review meeting during the EDIT phase.
- In the READ phase of the meeting reviewers may submit their scores and critiques, but may not edit them. Core criterion scores can be submitted only after your critique had been uploaded into IAR.
- The criterion scores will appear in the summary statement as part of your critique.

Core Review Criteria

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 need to judge 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)?

Additional Review Criteria

Resubmission Applications

Are the responses to comments from the previous scientific review group adequate? Are the improvements in the resubmission application appropriate?

Overall Impact/Benefit

Briefly summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the application. Assess the potential benefit of the instrument requested for the overall research community and have a significant impact on NIH-funded research. Provide comments on the overall need of the users which led you to your final recommendation and level of enthusiasm.

Additional Review Considerations

Budget and Period of Support

The reasonableness of the proposed budget and the appropriateness of the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research may be assessed by the reviewers. The priority score should not be affected by the evaluation of the 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 NCR staff in negotiating the terms of an award, but also to investigators who may have more limited experience than you with the requested instrumentation.