PEER REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

- **Where can I find basic information about peer review?**

  See Grant Application Basics and the Peer Review Process for information.

  The Center for Scientific Review also provides an overview on the Peer Review Process including a video of a study section meeting. Guidelines for Reviewers provides important information on the review criteria for grant applications including guidelines for human subjects research and specific grant mechanisms.

- **What is peer reviewed at NCI?**

  NCI reviews the following:

  o Investigator-initiated applications using for the following mechanisms - program projects, conference, training, and career development. In addition, applications submitted in response to some PARs are reviewed at NCI such as small grant PARs.
  o All applications for center grants (e.g., P20, P30, P50) and cooperative agreements, and all applications received in response to Requests for Applications.
  o Research and development contract proposals received in response to requests for proposals.

- **How do I find grants or contracts staff to discuss my application prior to submission?**

  Go to NCI Contacts for Applicants for program staff working with grants, contracts, and small business and research training awards.

- **Whom do I contact at NCI before the initial review of my application?**

  Call the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) of the scientific review group reviewing your application. The SRO's name is available in your eRA Commons account.

- **How and when can I obtain information about the status of my application?**

  Notification that CSR has assigned your application to an IC and to a scientific review group should be available in your eRA Commons account within 3 weeks of the submission deadline. If this notification does not appear in this timeframe, please contact the CSR Division of Receipt and Referral (Ph: 301-435-0715).

  Your scores should appear in your Commons account within 3 business days, and your summary statement within 30 days after the review. New Investigators who submitted R01 applications should be able to access their summary statement within 10 days after the review meeting.

- **Whom do I contact at NCI after the review of my application?**

  Call the program director or official listed on your summary statement.

- **If I forget something, may I send it after the due date?**

  If your application is incomplete, you can call the SRO listed in your eRA Commons account to see if you can send additional information, or the SRO may contact you so you may quickly send

in the required information. It's up to the SRO, and the policy within the review program, whether to accept late information.

See NIH Policy on Submission of Additional Grant Materials for more information.

- **How will Data Sharing Plans and sharing plans for Genome Wide Association Studies (GWAS) and Model Organisms be reviewed?**

  Peer reviewers will evaluate data sharing plans for consistency with the NIH policies and will provide comments on them in the Administrative Remarks section of summary statements. Program staff are responsible for assessing the appropriateness and adequacy of proposed data sharing plans. Program concerns regarding data sharing plans must be resolved prior to making awards.

  See NIH Data Sharing policy, GWAS policy, and Model Organism Sharing policy for more information.

- **Will compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy affect the outcome of the application review?**

  Compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy is not a factor in the scientific and technical merit evaluation of grant applications. Non-compliance will be addressed administratively, and may delay or prevent awarding of funds.

- **How does NCI handle conflict of interest in review?**

  NCI follows standard NIH procedures to prevent program and project officers, peer reviewers, or National Cancer Advisory Board members who have a real or apparent conflict of interest with an applicant from participating in a peer review. See the Conflict of Interest in Peer Review link.

- **Will most reviewers on the review committee be experts in my specific field?**

  For chartered study sections, there will generally be several experts in each of the broad fields included in the topics of the study section. The reviewer roster as a whole will cover many overlapping areas in the broader field. However, there may not be an expert in your specific sub-field on the roster. You may suggest areas of expertise that should be included in the review of your application in your cover letter or contact the SRO. The SRO may recruit one or more ad hoc reviewers to participate in the review, if needed. You should also make sure that your application explains the significance and approach of your research in language that can be understood by experts in the general field of your research.

- **How does NIH ensure that peer review panels have the appropriate expertise and experience and how can I ensure that my application gets an appropriate review?**

  Peer review is generally conducted by established panels composed of reviewers who have broad and overlapping areas of expertise. These panels may also include some ad hoc review members who have expertise in specific areas of science needed for one or more specific applications.

However, it is impossible to have experts in each grant application's specific research area on study sections that review up to 120 applications. If you feel the assigned study section does not have the appropriate expertise, contact the SRO to discuss the general areas of expertise needed. You may also include this information in your cover letter.

- **What is being done to recruit senior and experienced peer reviewers?**

  Scientific Review Officers strive to recruit senior and experienced peer reviewers whenever possible. The majority of reviewers serving on CSR study sections are successful peer reviewed investigators at the Associate Professor level or above. Training committees or ad hoc committees organized to review specific initiatives, such as RFAs, may have junior investigators if the scientific area is a narrow research field and many of the senior experts have applied.

  NIH is striving to recruit experienced reviewers and improve reviewer retention by providing reviewers more flexibility regarding their tour of duty, and by instituting a continuous R01 applications submission process for appointed members of chartered NIH study sections (NOT-OD-08-026). See the Enhancing Peer Review at NIH web site for more information on recommendations for recruiting the best reviewers.

- **Is there a way to shorten the review process so that investigators can receive the review outcome and resubmit more rapidly?**

  Beginning with the September/October 2007 study section meetings, new investigators now have the option of submitting a resubmission/amended R01 application for consecutive review cycles, saving four months. The summary statements for qualifying applications will have an explicit note indicating eligibility for next cycle submission. See NOT-OD-07-083 for more information.

- **There is concern that innovation in research is not adequately emphasized in peer review.**

  The NIH Roadmap has created new high risk research programs to encourage innovation such as the NIH Director's Pioneer Award, NIH Director's New Innovator Award, and the Transformative R01 Program.

  In addition, many of the recommendations of the NIH report on Enhancing Peer Review at NIH encourage reviewers to emphasize innovation rather than methodology in their reviews. See the NIH web site, Enhancing Peer Review, for more information and a timeline for implementation.

- **Where do I find rosters and review dates for CSR study sections?**

  On the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR) Web site, go to CSR Study Section Roster Index.

- **Where do I find rosters and review dates for NCI review committees?**

  Find them on NCI's Advisory Boards and Groups page. Chartered Initial Review Group (IRG) subcommittees review training, career development, cancer centers, and the clinical trials cooperative groups. NCI Special Emphasis Panels review program projects, conference grants, RFAs, contracts, and PAs assigned to NCI for review.

- **How do SROs select reviewers and how can I volunteer to serve on a review committee?**

  The SRO contacts senior or NIH funded investigators who have been successful at obtaining funding in the past and have an understanding of the grant and peer review process. For CSR

study sections, reviewers with broad expertise in the scientific field of interest are sought. For special initiatives, reviewers with special expertise in the given field are selected.

Contact the Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NCI, if you are interested in volunteering for NCI review committees or councils. For CSR peer review committees, go to "How to Become a CSR Reviewer" for information on reviewer qualifications and CSR nomination process.

- **How do patient advocates participate in NCI's research activities and programs?**

The NCI has established the Consumer Advocates in Research and Related Activities (CARRA) program within the Office of Advocacy Relations (OAR). The CARRA program was created to integrate the perspective of people affected by cancer into a wide range of NCI's programs and activities, including peer review of clinical research. See CARRA web page for more information.