

ADVISORY BOARDS

- **Where can I find information about National Cancer Institute advisory boards, committees, etc.?**

Find basic information at the main [NCI Advisory Boards and Groups](#) web page, including charters, members, meeting agendas and dates, and meeting minutes and slide presentations.

- **What is the National Cancer Advisory Board?**

The National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) is a chartered advisory committee that provides a diverse perspective on science, health, and the human impact of disease. The NCAB is responsible for advising NCI on policy, making recommendations on future directions, and performing the second level of review for grant applications. For more information, see the [NCAB](#) web page and [NCAB Orientation Book](#).

- **Do all NIH institutes have an advisory council?**

Yes. By law, each institute at NIH must have an advisory council. To read the law, go to the [Federal Advisory Committee Act \(FACA\) of 1992 \(P.L. 92-463\)](#). NCI has the only presidentially appointed advisory group which is termed a “board” and not “council”.

- **Who is on the National Cancer Advisory Board?**

The NCAB has 18 voting members, including 12 health or science experts and six lay members, all of whom usually serve overlapping terms of four years. The NCAB also includes twelve nonvoting *ex officio* members who provide liaison with higher level organizations. Find the list of current members at [NCAB Membership](#).

- **When does the NCAB meet?**

The NCAB is mandated to meet four times annually. Meetings are generally held in February, June, September, and December for two days. Meetings in February, June, and September are for second level review and December for review of the intramural programs. For meeting dates, go to [Agenda and Future Meetings](#) web site.

- **What takes place during a NCAB meeting?**

Meetings consist of open sessions for special presentations, subcommittee reports, and remarks by NCI Director. Closed sessions include the full second-level review of applications, including review of grant applications needing special consideration. The NCAB open sessions may be viewed on <http://videocast.nih.gov/>.

- **What does the NCAB look at during second level review?**

The NCAB reviews all grant applications with reference to the needs of the institute and the priorities of the National Cancer Program. During the [second level](#) review, the Special Actions Subcommittee is informed of applications for which reviewers expressed concern about any biohazard, human subjects, animal, child, gender, or minority welfare concern. Applications from foreign institutions are brought to the attention of the NCAB and reviewed for concurrence with the NIH policy on foreign grants. MERIT nominations and extensions are reviewed and extensions are

voted upon individually. Appeal letters are reviewed and staff recommendations to concur or request a variance from recommendations of study sections are considered. Council does *not* look at the scientific merit of an application and does not repeat the [initial peer review](#).

- **How does the appeals process actually function?**

NIH has a formal process to resolve disagreements between applicants and NIH review committees and/or NIH staff concerning the referral (assignment) and review of applications. Note that disagreements are not necessarily grounds for appeal. Each institute has an assigned appeals officer. The [NIH appeals policy and process](#) is described in the *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*.

Before beginning the appeals process, the applicant is strongly advised to speak with the NCI [program director](#) responsible for the application. The program director can explain the options and consequences and is often in a position to help the applicant understand the study section's recommendation. Appeal letters should be submitted to the NCI program director. NCI will make the appeal letter together with the staff recommendation available to the [National Cancer Advisory Board](#) for its consideration during the closed session.

- **Do all applications need NCAB's recommendation before funding?**

By law, applications must be approved by an outside body, or the NCAB, before they can be funded with the exception of Individual [National Research Service Award](#) (NRSA) applications.

- **What is expedited Council review?**

The NCI has implemented a procedure to streamline the second-level review to expedite Institute funding of specific mechanisms. The expedited NCAB approval process is used for percentiled R01s reviewed by CSR and for all R21s, except for those applications submitted in response to a set-aside (RFA or PA with a set-aside). Qualifying applications must have received an [initial peer review](#), rank within the payline, and have no special concerns such as [human subjects](#) or [animal concerns](#).

- **Does Council recommend applications before human, animal, and other issues are resolved?**

Yes. If the application is selected to pay, program or grants management staff will contact the PI to resolve any issues and seek the appropriate NIH and NCI approval.

- **What is the Board of Scientific Advisors?**

The Board of Scientific Advisors (BSA) is a chartered advisory group that provides scientific advice on a wide variety of matters concerning scientific program policy, progress and future direction of the NCI's extramural research programs, and concept review of extramural program initiatives. Information on membership and agendas is provided on the [BSA](#) web site.

- **What is concept clearance and the BSA's role in it?**

Concept clearance is a review of each new program initiative and reissuance proposed -- [Request for Applications](#) or [Request for Proposals](#). Concept clearance is a mandatory step before NCI can develop and publish an initiative. Go to the NCI [Extramural Funding Opportunities](#) for a list of active initiatives.

- **Who is the point of contact for nominations for Boards or review committees?**

Contact the Director, [Division of Extramural Activities](#), NCI, if you are interested in volunteering for NCI review committees or boards, committees, etc.