

Clarification of Guidelines Relevant to Overall Budget Recommendation

The Guidelines state that if, after evaluating all individual budget requests, the total budget seems excessive relative to the overall quality of the cancer focused science in the center, or in relationship to their NCI funding base, reviewers may recommend a single cut in the overall budget without identifying specific areas for reduction.

Peer reviewers should scrutinize all budget requests to ensure they are well justified. Since reviewers do not know the final priority score, judgments regarding overall quality of the science must be predicated on the merit descriptors assigned to the various elements during discussion at the parent committee meeting; scientific progress and quality is typically reflected in these descriptors. It is appropriate for reviewers to consider the funding level in relation to the overall merit of the application and the NCI funding base and funding request indicated on the generic sheet; this is particularly true for applications with budget requests that are beyond the Guidelines benchmark ratio of 0.15.