

ENHANCING PEER REVIEW

What Applicants Need to Know Now

Slides Accompanying Video of Dr. Alan Willard, November 2009



Goals of this Video

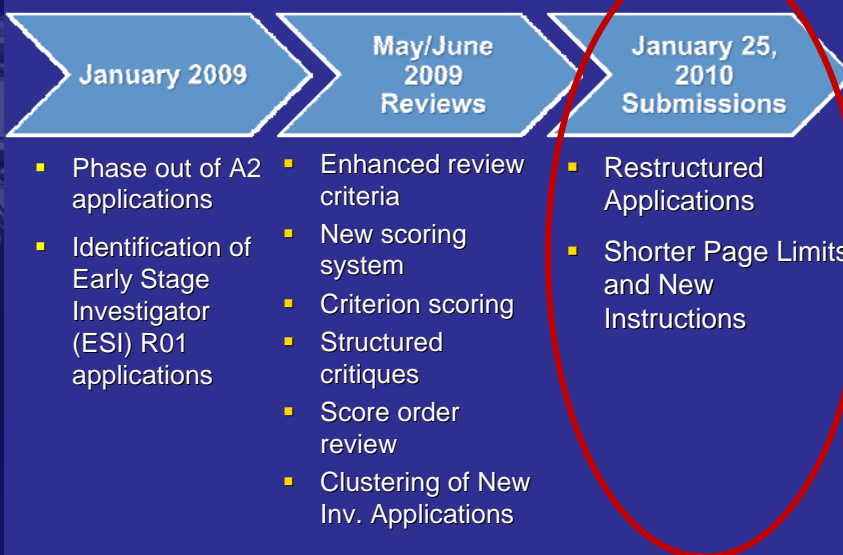
- Prepare for major application changes for due dates on or after January 25, 2010
- Supplement resources on the Enhancing Peer Review Web site:

<http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov>

- Video – Overview of Enhancements
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Details of Application Changes



Enhancing Peer Review Overview and Timeline



Major Changes to Applications

For due dates on or after Jan 25, 2010

- Restructured Application Forms
- Shorter Page Limits and New Instructions

For ALL competing applications:
New, Renewal, Revision, and Resubmission



Applicants who are eligible for continuous submission should use current forms and instructions through February 7, 2010 for AIDS applications that would have been due on January 7, 2010.

Goals of Restructured Applications

- Align the structure and content of the forms with review criteria
- To focus the applicants and reviewers on the same elements
- To help ensure a more efficient and transparent review process



Goals of Shortened Page Limits

- Reduce burden
- Focus on the essentials of the science
- Avoid information overload



Overview of the Application Changes

Application forms will be revised in three sections:

- Research Plan
- Biographical Sketch
- Resources and Facilities



Major Changes to the Research Plan

- Specific Aims will include new language about the impact of the proposed research.
- Research Strategy will be created as a new section and will include 3 of the current sections
 - *Background and Significance*
 - *Preliminary Studies/Progress Report*
 - *Research Design and Methods*



New Research Plan Components

Introduction

Specific Aims

Background and Significance

Preliminary Studies/Progress Report

Research Design and Methods

*Research
Strategy*

Inclusion Enrollment Report

Bibliography and References Cited

Human Subjects Sections....

protections, women/minorities, enrollment,
children

Other Research Plan Sections....

animals, select agents, multi PD/PI, consortium,
support, resource sharing

Appendix



Research Plan to align with Significance, Innovation, and Approach
Enhanced Review criteria.

Changes to Biographical Sketch

- Personal Statement added:
 - “Briefly describe why your experience and qualifications make you particularly well-suited for your role in the project”
- Publications revised:
 - Limit the list of publications or manuscripts to no more than 15
 - Applicant is encouraged to make selections based on recency, importance to the field, and/or relevance to the application



The Biographical Sketch corresponds to the Investigator(s) criterion.

Changes to Resources and Facilities

- Instructions added to Resources:
 - Provide a description of how the scientific environment will contribute to the probability of success of the project
 - For Early Stage Investigators (ESIs), describe the institutional investment in the success of the investigator



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These two sections correspond to the Environment **criterion**.

Early Stage Investigator (ESI): An individual who is classified as a New or First-Time Investigator and is within 10 years of completing his/her terminal research degree or is within 10 years of completing medical residency (or the equivalent) is considered an Early Stage Investigator (ESI).

Application Alignment with Review Criteria: Major Examples

Criteria	Application
Significance	Research Strategy a. Significance
Investigator(s)	Biosketch
Innovation	Research Strategy b. Innovation
Approach	Research Strategy c. Approach
Environment	Resources



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There will be additional sections in some applications that align with review criteria. For example, in multi PD/PI applications, the Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan is also aligned with the Investigator(s) review criterion. A second example would be applications in which select agents are used, the Select Agent Research section of the Research Plan aligns with the Environment review criterion.

Overview of Shorter Page Limits

Current Page Limit (Section 2-5 of the Research Plan)	New Page Limit (Research Strategy)
<25	6
25	12
>25	Follow FOA Instructions

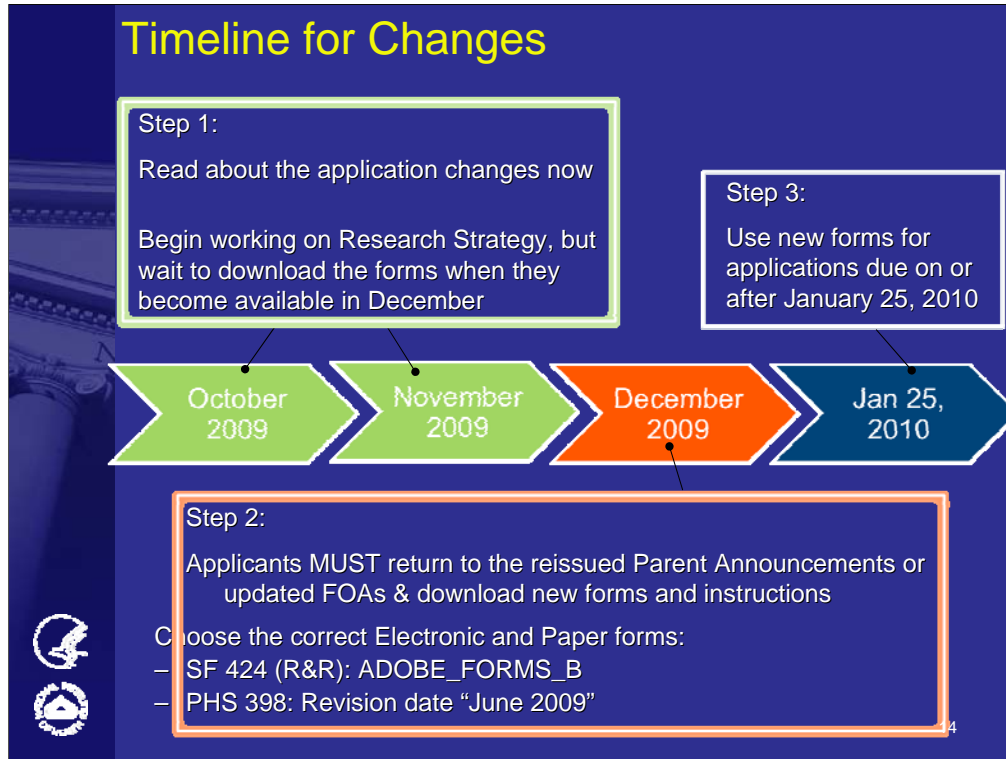
Note: Follow FOA page limit requirements if different from the application instructions.

Full table of page limits available at:

http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/page_limits.html

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Updated FOAs for the following applications will be posted in early 2010:

- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR [R43/R44])/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR [R41/R42]) applications
- Conference (R13/U13) grant applications
- Individual Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Fellowship applications (F30, F31, F32, and F33).

Steps for Success – Part 1

- Read about the upcoming requirement changes *now* so that you can begin writing your Research Strategy
- Information available on the Enhancing Peer Review website includes:
 - Policy Announcements: NOT-OD-09-149
NOT-OD-10-002
 - Details of Application Changes
 - Training & Communications Resources



<http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/>

Steps for Success – Part 2

- In *December*, go back to the updated FOA or reissued Parent Announcement
- For both electronic and paper, choose the *correct* application package and instructions to download:
 - SF 424 (R&R): ADOBE_FORMS_B
 - PHS 398: Revision date “June 2009”



Applications submitted using incorrect forms will be delayed and may not be reviewed!

Steps for Success – Part 3

- Read the new application instructions *carefully*
- For due dates *on or after January 25, 2010*, submit your electronic and paper applications using the new application forms



What Has Not Changed

- Need to have a good idea about how to answer an important question
- Reviewers need to be able to understand WHAT you want to do, WHY it is important, and can YOU do it?
- Need to align YOUR goals with the funding agency goals.



For Additional Information:

Enhancing Peer Review at NIH Web Site



<http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov>



Tips From NIH

▪ Focus on your strategy.

- Spend less time writing the application and more on your strategy.
- Rather than detailing all your experiments, describe your strategy in the application.
- Think of various, interesting pathways you could pursue depending on your results.
- Give details for initial experiments, then show branching depending on the outcome of the research: if this works you will do x, if it doesn't you will do y.
- Use graphics to convey complex information in a small space.



Tips From NIH

- **Detail Experiments that let you shine.**

- If your first experiments are pedestrian or contracted out, focus on those that show your unique especially interesting.
- Highlight what you can do that's different and that you do well. Excelling here also helps the investigator review criterion.

- **Limit your aims.**

- A strong application probably has no more than one Specific Aim for each year of requested support.



Tips From NIH

- **Know when detail is needed.**
 - Give preliminary data to show you are on the right track.
 - Give more detail for unique or new methods.



Tips From NIH

■ Know when you can skip details.

- Describe methods in less detail than you would in a publication.
- Reference any published methods.
- Add enough detail to convince reviewers that you understand what the work entails and have the resources and expertise to conduct the research.
- If you're a more experienced investigator, cite relevant work so reviewers will know of your expertise.
- If you're a new investigator, show you can handle an experimental method. Point out if you've used it before. If you have, cite and skip the description.
- If you lack the expertise to accomplish any of the work, refer to others who do. Make sure they tailor their biosketch to highlight experience that supports their role on your application.



Tips From NIH

- **Expected Results**

- Think of various, interesting pathways you could pursue depending on your results.
- Give details for initial experiments, then show branching depending on the outcome of the research: if this works you will do x, if it doesn't you will do you.

