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 **Mock Study Section Guidelines for Participants**

**ACTS Translational Science**

# **ROLES**

**Reviewer:** Critique and score assigned grant and present at the mock study section

**Co-Chairs**: Will direct and ensure a uniform and fair process of review

**SRO:** NIH professional Scientific Review Officer will ensure policies and procedures are followed

# **Mock Study Section Groups**

1. There are seven study sections divided by grant type (2 R, 3 K, 2 F), with three applications reviewed per room.
2. Although each reviewer is assigned only one application to present, you should read all of the applications that will be reviewed in your room so you can participate in discussions. For each application, there will be three to six reviewers, but each reviewer should prepare the review as though you might be primary. You will be asked for your overall impact score (which is not necessarily the average of the component scores) at the beginning of the review.
3. There will be two co-chairs and one NIH SRO per group.
4. Also note that people who were on the waiting list will also be assigned to rooms. They will have access to the same material as do those who will actually be doing the reviewing, so they also should read all of the grant proposals that will be reviewed in their room. Unfortunately there will not be enough time for them to present and discuss their own reviews a proposal.

# Reviewer Responsibilities

1. Review the following NIH guidelines **prior to** reviewing your grant.
* [NIH Reviewer Orientation](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/reviewer_orientation.pdf)
* [Review Criteria at a Glance - Master](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/Review_Criteria_at_a_glance.pdf)
* [Scoring System and Procedure](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/scoring_system_and_procedure.pdf)
* [Guidelines for the Review of Human Subjects Section](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/Guidelines_for_the_Review_of_the_Human_Subjects.pdf)
* [Budget Information](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/budget_information.pdf) *(FYI: the budget has been removed from some applications)*
* [NIH Peer Review Revealed Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx6qO8z9swQ)

These documents can also be found at [*http://grants.nih.gov/Grants/peer/reviewer\_guidelines.htm*](http://grants.nih.gov/Grants/peer/reviewer_guidelines.htm)

1. Access your grant application and assignment (an email will be sent with access information).
2. Critique and score the grant to which you have been assigned **prior to** the meeting of the mock study section using the appropriate scoring template that you can download from the website. Tip: Start your review at the Career Development or Research Plan part of the application, *then* review biosketches, etc.

Record and justify all five score review criteria and the overall impact/significance score based on the 9-point scale.Only the overall score is reported and discussed during the meeting. **There will be no place to enter the overall impact score on the critique template, so include it in the text of your critique\*.** *Note: This is not done in official sections but is being implemented to simplify the process for our event.*

1. Print your completed critique and bring it to the mock study section (or bring it on your laptop or tablet). You **do not** need to email your scores.
2. Reviewers should also read and mentally critique all other applications to be reviewed by their group. The grants for each room are listed on the spreadsheet with the assignments.
3. Once the mock study section is completed, any printed grant applications that you bring should be destroyed. While we have explicit permission to use the grants that have been distributed, they contain privileged information and should not be divulged outside the group. This follows NIH protocol on confidentiality of research applications. All applications being used have been submitted to the NIH, either in the current state as you see them, or in a revised version.

# **Role of Co-Chairs & SROs**

Co-chairs are faculty who have volunteered to lend their expertise to the Mock Study Section. Co-chairs act as moderators, ensuring a uniform and fair review process. They will guide a structured review process at the meeting that follows the NIH study section protocol. Scientific Review Officers (SROs) are Designated Federal Officials responsible for ensuring that Federal statutes/regulations/NIH policies are followed during the meeting.

# **Mock Study Section Procedures**

1. The meeting opens with opening comments from the co-chairs and SRO addressing the meeting process.
2. To begin the review of the first grant, the chair will ask those reviewers who have a conflict with the current application leave the room. **Note**: No reviewer is in conflict at this meeting.
3. Study section members will listen to critiques by the assigned reviewers, beginning with the Primary Reviewer, followed by the Secondary Reviewer, Tertiary Reviewer, and any “Discussants.” The Primary Reviewer will give a brief summary of the project, before giving their critique. The secondary reviewer and discussants will then add additional information.
4. **Reviewers should not read their critique verbatim**. Rather, they should focus their critique on major concerns they feel may affect the priority score and points upon which there may be differences of opinion among reviewers. If comments are generated during the discussion that did not appear in written statements made by the assigned reviewers, it is the SRO’s responsibility to ensure these statements are included in the Summary Statement.
5. After the initial round of discussion from the assigned reviewers, the floor will open for questions and comments. First, reviewers will have a chance to respond to each other (2 minutes). Then, other study section members can ask questions and make comments (3 minutes), leaving some time for general discussion in which any member may participate.
6. The discussion ends with comments about the protection of human subject procedures.
7. After discussion, a co-chair will again poll the assigned reviewers for the final overall impact scores. Scores may change based on discussion. This establishes the score range within which the entire review group would vote.
8. A study member may wish to “vote out of range”—that is, they wish to assign a score that is outside the current score range established by the reviewers. The study member must declare the assigned score and justification.
9. After scoring has been discussed, reviewers would have addressed any comments about the appropriateness of the budget for the scope of work (budgets not shared in this seminar). After this concludes, the group moves to the next application. Co-chairs should monitor the time and allow for approximately 30 minutes for each application.
10. Note that in an NIH study section review, the charge is to evaluate the applications on their scientific and technical merit. Review groups DO NOT FUND applications; Programs Do. Reviewers should not comment, or vote based on where the funding line may be or is thought to be.

# **Post Mock Study Section Procedures**

Please complete the online Evaluation that we will email to you. This will help us improve the study section experience each year.

You have agreed not to share grant materials and to destroy any material you have printed. While we have explicit permission to use the distributed grants, they contain privileged information and should not be divulged outside the group. This follows the NIH protocol on confidentiality of research applications. All applications being used have been submitted to the NIH, either in their current state as you see them or in a revised version.

# **Contact Information**

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