

Foreword

The process of preparing and submitting an application for an R01 award can be daunting and frustrating. Also, it is likely to consume MUCH more time than expected. I know, I've been right where you are sitting.

Whether it is the first time or the twentieth, there is much that is confusing about the rules and required formats of NIH's R01 grant application. Just because the process is now electronic does not mean that it is any less opaque. Here are just a few of the questions you may find yourself asking:

- What is the Project Summary versus the Project Narrative?
- What type of budget forms should be used and how are costs of the project accurately forecasted?
- If there are plans to use tissue samples from a colleague down the hall, but for a different purpose than they were collected, is this Human Subjects research?
- Do reviewers really read the resources and environment information?
- Is NIH really serious about page limits and font size?
- Can one suggest study sections that you want to review your application?
- Who can and should be contacted at NIH for help?
- What in the world is the difference between Significance and Impact?

Many of the above questions are clearly significant while some may seem trivial. But ALL are important aspects of preparing a successful grant application. The strict page limits and formats are meant to ensure fairness to all applicants.

But if everyone has to fit into the same box, how do you make your application stand out to reviewers in a positive way? How do you ensure that you effectively highlight the importance of your proposed project and your ability to carry it out without being repetitive to the point of being irritating?

The *NIH R01 Grant Expert Writing Skills: Everything You Need to Improve Your Scientific Research Funding Success* not only provides answers to these questions, but it also provides practical advice and effective strategies to help you prepare a more successful grant application. Particularly helpful are the examples provided throughout the manual from previously funded applications. Each example highlights an important section of the R01 application, such as Specific Aims, Project Summaries, Personal Statements for Biographical Sketches, and Budget Justifications.

You'll also receive information about what happens to your application once it enters the "black hole" of grants.gov and the review process. You'll learn how to interpret review summary statements, and important things to consider before resubmission. Overall, this manual helps you solve the adage of "you don't know what you don't know" about the process of crafting and submitting an NIH R01 application.

In recalling my early struggles in preparing grant applications, this manual would have been indescribably helpful by saving me countless hours and much angst. For example, creating a writing schedule is a simple idea, but would have been invaluable as I juggled applying for a grant with the many other demands on my time. The checklist is again a simple tool, but would have been extremely useful in managing the overall process and making sure that I had all the "t's crossed and i's dotted."

Based on my experiences over the decade I have served as a scientific review officer, this manual is an essential resource for avoiding common pitfalls that move your application to the bottom of a reviewer's stack. (You certainly don't want to annoy reviewers with misplaced information, typos, grammatical

errors, and overall poor writing!) This manual gives you practical guidance on how to provide the correct material in the correct sections and how to properly craft each section of an R01 application.

Remember, although the decision to award funding is based on recommendations of Program Officers to Institute Advisory Councils, the gateway is through peer review. Even the best research ideas and the soundest science can be tripped up in study sections. So, it is essential to follow the rules for formatting and content (applications DO get sent back without review if you don't!). You must write clearly and concisely, and find a spark that engages reviewers so that they will provide good scores and advocate for your research application. This manual provides practical tools to ensure that you accomplish these goals, as well as others.

Although I doubt that anyone would characterize the process of preparing an R01 application as enjoyable, this manual is fundamental to making the process understandable, manageable, and as effective as possible.



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