

This notice informs the biomedical research community of updates to application instructions and review language intended to enhance the reproducibility of research findings through increased scientific rigor and transparency. These updates will take effect for most* research grant applications (including small business and complex research grant applications) submitted for due dates on or after January 25, 2016. For research contracts, this policy will be effective for proposals received on/after January 25, 2016 and expected to result in contract awards in Fiscal Year 2017 and beyond.

Updates include:

- Revisions to application guide instructions for preparing your research strategy attachment
- Use of a new "Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources" attachment
- Additional rigor and transparency questions reviewers will be asked to consider when reviewing applications

These updates focus on four areas deemed important for enhancing rigor and transparency:

- 1) the scientific premise forming the basis of the proposed research,
- 2) rigorous experimental design for robust and unbiased results,
- 3) consideration of relevant biological variables, and
- 4) authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources.

The basic principles of rigor and transparency and the four areas of focus apply to the full spectrum of research, from basic to clinical. Investigators will need to consider how all four areas apply to their proposed research. Likewise, reviewers will assess whether these areas have been appropriately addressed by the applicant through revised language defining the peer review criteria.

*Notes & Exceptions:

- Research grant activity codes excluded from this policy include C06, G08, G11, G12, G13, G20, R13, S06, S10, S21, SB1, U13, U55, UB1, UC6, UC7, UG4, UH4, X02, and 333.
- Research Resource and Related grants or components (P30, P40, P41, P2C, R24, R28, U24, U41, U42, and U2C) may have slightly revised review language; please refer to the Funding Opportunity Announcement.
- Refer to NOT-OD-16-012 for updates to Career Development Award application instructions and review language.
- Fellowship and Training grant applications submitted for the May 25, 2016 due date and beyond will include new instructions and review criteria to address this policy. Details on these changes will be available by December 2015.

In addition to the new forms which aren't out yet, it said that starting with Jan 2016 submissions, scientific premise, transparency etc had to be addressed in the research strategy:

Where in grant applications should applicants address the four focus areas of the NIH policy on rigor and transparency?

Scientific premise, scientific rigor, and relevant biological variables such as sex should be addressed within the Research Strategy of research applications, as these elements are integral to the research plan. Since scientific premise will be reviewed and scored as part of the Significance review criterion for research grant applications, applicants should address premise as part of their corresponding Significance section in the Research Strategy. Scientific rigor and relevant biological variables will be reviewed and scored as part of the Approach review criterion.