

## NIH Peer Review Process

The NIH Peer Review Process is very intimidating. Take a deep breath and read the information below to learn a bit more about the reality of the process.

All NIH grants are judged by several **scored key criteria**:

- Significance – Importance of the problem, potential impact on the field
- Investigator – Training, experience, integration of the team
- Innovation – Originality and novelty of the concepts, challenge to dogma
- Approach - Experimental design, pitfalls and alternatives
- Environment – Institutional resources, uniqueness of subject populations

Additional Review Criteria. As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will evaluate the following additional items while determining scientific and technical merit and in providing an overall impact score, but will not give separate scores for these items.

- Protections for Human Subjects
- Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Children
- Vertebrate Animals
- Biohazards
- Resubmission
- Renewal
- Revision

Additional Review Considerations. As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will consider each of the following items, but will not give scores for these items and should not consider them in providing an overall impact score.

- Applications from Foreign Organizations
- Select Agent
- Resource Sharing Plans
- Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources
- Budget and Period Support

### NIH Scientific Review Group (SRG) Scoring and Evaluation

The NIH utilizes a 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) for all applications; the same scale is used for overall impact scores and for criterion scores.

Before the SRG meeting, each reviewer assigned to an application gives a separate score for each of (at least) five review criteria. In addition, each reviewer assigned to an application gives a preliminary overall impact score for that application. In many review meetings, the preliminary scores are used to determine which applications will be discussed in full at the meeting. For each application that is discussed at the meeting, a final impact score is given by each eligible committee member (without conflicts of interest) including the assigned reviewers. Each member's score reflects his/her evaluation of the overall impact that the project is likely to have on the research field(s) involved. Generally one scores of 1 and 2 get funded. There are MANY excellent proposals being reviewed at any time. Only 20% of applications are funded.

NIH Scoring Grid		
Score	Word Description	Strengths and Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Strong but numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Non-numeric scores: NR=Not recommended for further consideration (not discussed by SRG); DF=Deferred; AB=Abstention; CF=Conflict; NP=Not present; ND=Not Discussed

Watch a video of a NIH Scientific Peer Group Session:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBDxI6l4dOA&feature=youtu.be>

Watch a video of NIH Study Sections and Common Mistakes Seen on Applications:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3WQsC1S0TA>

Watch a video of NIH Tips for Applicants:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAOGtr0pM6Q>

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