

Memorandum

To: University Research Community

From: Roberto M. Gutierrez, Director of Pre-Award
Office of Sponsored Research Administration

Subj.: NIH Restructured Application Forms and Instructions for Submissions due on or after January 25, 2010

Date: October 23, 2009

The Office of Sponsored Research Administration would like to advise the university research community that the National Institutes of Health will have new restructured versions of the paper PHS 398 and electronic SF 424 (R&R) application packages and instructions which will be available for download by December 2009.

The newly revised instructions and forms will be made available in each Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for download by the NIH in December 2009 and the new forms will be required for all submissions due on or after January 25, 2010.

For the period of time between now and the beginning of February, applicants must carefully select which version of the FOA and application package they should be using. Anyone submitting an application for due dates before January 25, 2010 must use the application package and instructions provided with the archived version of the FOA.

The changes to the structure of the application forms and instructions for both paper submissions (PHS 398) and grants.gov electronic submissions (SF 424 R&R) are summarized below via NIH Notice Number: NOT-OD-09-149. The notice is also available for review at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-149.html>.

Key changes that will be forthcoming in the revised application forms and instructions include:

- Shortened Page Limits
The page limit for the new Research Strategy section (formerly known as the Research Plan) will be 6 or 12 pages.
- Research Plan
The three sections of the current Research Plan (Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies/Progress Report, and Research Design and Methods) will be consolidated into a new single section within the Research Plan entitled Research Strategy.

- Resources
The Facilities and Other Resources section will be changed to require a description of how the scientific environment will contribute to the probability of success of the project, unique features of the environment, and for Early Stage Investigators, the institutional investment in the success of the investigator.
- Biographical Sketch
A new Personal Statement will be incorporated as Part A, changing the parts formerly called A, B, and C to Parts B, C, and D. Applicants should limit the list of selected peer-reviewed publications to no more than 15.

The Office of Sponsored Research Administration will release an updated message once the restructured application forms and instructions are made available by the NIH for download.

If you have any questions about this notice from the NIH then please contact your Pre-Award representative (http://www.osra.fiu.edu/staff/preAward_assignments.html) at 305-348-2494 for further assistance.

Thank you.

Notice Number: NOT-OD-09-149

Update: The following update relating to this announcement has been issued:

- [October 8, 2009](#) - See Notice NOT-OD-10-002 Clarification on Timing and Page Limits for Restructured Application Forms and Instructions that are required for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2010.
- [September 28, 2009](#) - See Notice NOT-GM-09-030 Clarification of New Page Limits and Restructuring of Application Submissions.

Key Dates

Release Date: September 16, 2009

Issued by

National Institutes of Health (NIH), (<http://www.nih.gov>)

Purpose

This notice announces that new, restructured versions of the paper PHS 398 and electronic SF 424 (R&R) application packages and instructions will be available by December 2009.

Applicants must download and use the new application packages for submissions targeting due dates on or after January 25, 2010

(funding for fiscal year (FY) 2011 and beyond). Changes include significantly shorter page limits and restructured application packages. These changes will affect all competing applications submitted to NIH, as follows:

- all applications (including individual Career Awards) electronically submitted using application packages that combine the SF 424 (R&R) with PHS 398 components (e.g, PHS 398 Research Plan Component and PHS 398 Career Development Supplement Form);
- all electronically submitted Individual NRSA Fellowship applications using application packages that combine the SF 424 (R&R) with the PHS Fellowship Supplemental Form; and
- all applications using the paper PHS 398 application package.

Background

In June 2007, the NIH initiated a formal, agency-wide effort to review the peer review system (<http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/>). In December 2008, NIH announced an [updated timeline](#) for implementing changes resulting from this initiative.

One action resulting from the initiative, the use of enhanced review criteria, was implemented per this timeline for applications submitted for FY2010 funding. To align the structure and content of applications with review criteria, and to shorten the length of applications to fulfill another action from the initiative, NIH will soon implement a shortened and restructured application format for submissions for FY2011 funding (beginning with due dates on or after January 25, 2010).

Although shorter page limits were used for applications submitted in response to initiatives under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA; Recovery Act), and others, the new format (including shortened page limits) will apply to nearly all types of applications submitted to the NIH and will utilize new instructions and application forms.

Timing

All new or resubmission applications targeting due dates on or after January 25, 2010 (for FY2011 funding consideration) **must** use the new application forms and instructions (even if the initial submission followed the current application forms and instructions; see NIH resubmission policies at [NOT-OD-09-016](#) and [NOT-OD-09-003](#)).

Applications submitted using incorrect application forms (including applications that have an incorrect mix of old and new forms) will be delayed and may not be reviewed.

AIDS applications that are intended for review in the May 2010 council round and submitted by reviewers who are eligible for continuous submission (see [NOT-OD-08-026](#) and [NOT-OD-09-114](#)) will use the existing forms and instructions.

Between now and December 2009, NIH will publish new Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) without accompanying electronic application packages. By December 2009, NIH will post the new application packages in all active FOAs, with the exception of the following, which will be available in early 2010:

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

NIH will issue a Guide Notice when the new forms and instructions are available. New [parent announcements](#) will be issued at the same time that the new application packages become available. Additionally, all active FOAs will be updated. The FOA changes will be completed at the same time that the new application packages and instructions are posted.

APPLICANTS MUST RETURN TO THE FOA (OR THE REISSUED [PARENT](#) ANNOUNCEMENT) TO DOWNLOAD THE NEW APPLICATION FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR DUE DATES ON OR AFTER JANUARY 25, 2010.

The following table provides the final standard due dates for the current application format and the first due dates with the new format. The current version of the SF 424 (R&R) form is identified with the text “ADOBE-FORMS-A” in the competition ID field that is visible in the application header information and when downloading the application package from Grants.gov. The new SF 424 (R&R) form will be identified as “ADOBE_FORMS_B”. The new paper PHS 398 form will be dated June 2009.

Activity Code	Final Due Date for Current Forms	First Due Date for New Forms
P (Program Project and Center)	9/25/2009	1/25/2010
T (Training)	9/25/2009	1/25/2010
C06/UC6, R18/U18, R24/U24, R25, G07, G08, G11, G13, G20, D71/U2R, M01, S06, S11, S21, S22, SC1, SC2, SC3, U19, U45, U54, U56	9/25/2009	1/25/2010
R15	10/25/2009	2/25/2010
R01, U01	11/5/2009	2/5/2010
K (Career Development)	11/12/2009	2/12/2010
R03, R21, R33, R21/R33, R34, R36	11/16/2009	2/16/2010
R41, R42, R43, R44	12/5/2009	4/5/2010
F (Individual NRSA Fellowship)	12/8/2009	4/8/2010
R13/U13	12/12/2009	4/12/2010
F31 Diversity Fellowship	12/13/2009	4/13/2010
AIDS and AIDS-Related Applications (supersedes ALL dates shown above)	1/7/2010	5/7/2010

New Application Structure and Length

Shortened Page Limits. The page limit for the new Research Strategy section will be 6 or 12 pages, according to the chart below. One additional page will be allowed for Specific Aims. As always, if the FOA requires page limits that differ from the

application instructions, the FOA page limits should be followed. For resubmission and revision applications for most programs, the Introduction will be limited to one page.

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

For individual Career Development (K) applications, the Research Strategy includes Candidate Information, and will be limited to 12 pages.

The Program Plan for Institutional Career Development and Research Training (T) Awards, including K12, Ruth L. Kirschstein Institutional NRSA Applications, International Training Program Planning Grants and Grants in Epidemiology (D43 and D71), and Education Projects (R25) remains at 25 pages, or as indicated in specific FOAs. The Introduction to Resubmission Application for Training (T, D43, D71), R25 and K12 applications will be three pages.

Additional detail on changes to page limits for specific sections of the application, organized by activity code, may be found at the [Table of Page Limits](#).

Alignment of the Application with Peer Review Criteria. To coordinate with the enhanced peer review criteria, changes will be made to the following sections of the application forms and instructions: 1) Research Plan, 2) Resources, and 3) Biographical Sketch.

- Research Plan.** Three sections of the current Research Plan (Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies/Progress Report, and Research Design and Methods) will be consolidated into a new single section within the Research Plan entitled Research Strategy. The new Research Strategy section (a single PDF upload in the PHS 398 Research Plan Component of the SF 424 (R&R)), will be sub-divided into three parts: Significance, Innovation, and Approach. The Approach sub-section will include both Preliminary Studies for New Applications and Progress Report for Renewal/Revision Applications.

Current Research Plan (Section 5.5)	Restructured Research Plan (Section 5.5)
1. Introduction to Application (Resubmission or Revision Applications only)	1. Introduction to Application (Resubmission or Revision Applications only)
2. Specific Aims	2. Specific Aims
3. Background and Significance	3. Research Strategy

4. Preliminary Studies/Progress Report	a. Significance
5. Research Design and Methods	b. Innovation c. Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preliminary Studies for New Applications ● Progress Report for Renewal/Revision Applications
6. to 12.	4. to 10. (renumbered)
13. Select Agent Research	11. Select Agent Research (modified)
14. to 17.	12. to 15. (renumbered)

- **Resources.** The Facilities and Other Resources section will be changed to require a description of how the scientific environment will contribute to the probability of success of the project, unique features of the environment, and for Early Stage Investigators, the institutional investment in the success of the investigator (e.g. resources, classes, etc.). The Facilities and Other Resources section is part of the R&R Other Project Information in the SF 424 (R&R) application, and part of the Resources Format Page in the paper PHS 398 application.

- **Biographical Sketch**
 - A new Personal Statement will be incorporated as Part A, changing the parts formerly called A, B, and C to Parts B, C, and D.
 - Applicants should limit the list of selected peer-reviewed publications to no more than 15. These 15 publications should be chosen on the basis of recency, importance to the field, and relevance to the proposed research.

The Biographical Sketch changes are also implemented for the [PHS 2590](#) Noncompeting Continuation Progress Report ([Notice OD-09-139](#)), effective October 1, 2009. Although not immediately required in competing applications, institutions may begin to include a Personal Statement and 15 or fewer publications in Biographical Sketches (as described in this Policy Announcement) prior to January 25, 2010 due dates, if desired.

Notes

For more details, visit [Details of Application Changes](#).

Concurrent with the implementation of Enhancing Peer Review changes, NIH will also be transitioning to the [most recent version of the OMB-cleared application forms that include the changes required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act \(FFATA\)](#).

It is not appropriate to mix old and new paper application forms; such applications will be delayed and may not be reviewed. Please closely follow the instructions detailed in the application package.

Related Notices

[NOT-OD-09-023](#) “Enhancing Peer Review: The NIH Announces Updated Implementation Timeline”

[NOT-OD-09-025](#) “Enhancing Peer Review: The NIH Announces Enhanced Review Criteria for Evaluation of Research Applications Received for Potential FY2010 Funding”.

Inquiries

Questions should be directed to grantsinfo@od.nih.gov.

For more information on NIH’s Enhancing Peer Review effort, visit <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/>.