

Outline for Submission Process

- 1) Write initial proposal
 - Have associates (especially educated readers not in your field) read and critique
- 2) Cover letter – indicate what study section, what institute you prefer (keep in mind that most study sections deal with several institutes)
 - Don't request rather suggest (a request generally locks you in whether that is truly the best route or not, a suggestion offers flexibility)
 - If don't know then the SRA will determine which study section to send it too and you will be able to find out that info within 5 weeks
- 3) Interact and find out where it is - if you disagree, find out why proposal was sent to particular section. This is flexible and can be changed.
- 4) SRA oversees process and determines if problems with fit, etc. then accepts application into study section
- 5) Review is held and recommendations go to the program director who then decides whether or not to fund the project
- 6) Program directors decision is presented to the council who then decides on any adjustments and ultimately clears the project for funding
 - 2 steps:
 - 1) study sections
 - 2) council

Glaring errors and tips for being getting funding

Backtrack: 1st 5 weeks important to find out where it is, talk to people

- 1) choosing a preferred study section by number of reviewers you recognize not best way
 - what closest purview
 - if you disagree interact with SRA and see why
 - don't request section but suggest (locks you in without flexibility)
 - you have final say

Errors

- 1) follow instructions accurately, call with any questions – questions about the review call the SRA, other questions should be directed to the program directors or the recall office
- 2) trying to squeeze in extra material in 25 pages starts negative thinking, difficult to read
- 3) revised applications – don't take personal
- 4) if critique doesn't fit score the reviewer may have adjusted score but not the critique
- 5) when you resubmit write in intro what you have changed, what critiques you have taken or explain why you haven't addressed certain critiques

Scoring Process

Study sections generally score the 60 percentile and above
unscored – how do I get in scoring range?

- summary attachment, look at suggested changes and address in your resubmission
- if you feel that there wasn't someone with sufficient expertise on the study section you can request the addition of someone with appropriate expertise

Q&A

How do study sections gauge the proposed work and determine when it is too much and not feasible?

- look at past record, if no pubs on prior project maybe too much work load or may not be able to deliver on what is proposed
- relative to what you have done in the past
- is there a good support system (i.e., colleagues, environment)

How does a study section determine uncertainty concerning future direction?

- doesn't address unexpected difficulties or have a plan B for riskier research
- proposals need to find balance between innovative ideas and solid work to fall back on if exiting stuff falls through
- proposers should present this in such a way that it doesn't sound like they are going to do all the work but should make sure their priorities are clear

How do study sections view proposals from new investigators?

- special consideration is given to new investigators, data must be top notch but not expected to have amount of serious experience
- If you have a reasonable amount of pubs you can contact SRA to be a temporary reviewer to determine if a particular study section is a good fit for your work.

Other Important Points

COI – some investigators perceive that their proposal is denied because competitor on study section

- very rarely happens

If someone is working in the same exact field talk to SRA about concerns, at SRAs discretion, certain reviewers could leave room when your proposal is reviewed but in general reviewer in question might be only one that knows your work enough to advocate and they often do

Collaborations are well received and can be advantageous if it makes sense to collaborate with certain person (i.e., different expertise that fit well and complement each other), particular contributions are sufficiently described. Name dropping is easily spotted.

If you get critiqued on certain aim don't necessarily cut it out because sometimes reworking it will make your proposal really strong and cutting it out completely could weaken it.

Comments are meant to help strengthen proposals. They should be taken into account and addressed in resubmitted proposals but don't respond directly to specific reviewers since they may not be on next panel