Mock Study Section
NICHD Aspen Conference
August 26-29, 2009

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Outline

- Mock study section
  - Purpose
  - The review process
- Present the new review criteria
- Discuss new scoring scale
- Other issues
  - Conflict of interest
  - Confidentiality
Study Section Assignment

- The Center for Scientific Review assigns the applications to specific review groups, “Study Sections” based on the scientific content of the application.

- A Study Section includes around 20 members from the scientific community.

- Members are required to adhere to rules of confidentiality and conflict of interest.
Mock Study Section: Purpose

- To provide a real-life experience of the review process, and to help you prepare better applications
  - Three applications are distributed
    - R01, R03, and K23 (or K08)
    - Reviewer instructions provided
  - Mock study-section is structured and conducted similar to the real study section
Study Section Meeting Process

Who is present?
- Scientific review officer (SRO)
- Chair
- Members (regular and ad-hoc)
- Administrative assistant
- Program Officers as “visitors”

Meetings are closed to the general public
Study Section Meeting Agenda

- SRO calls the meeting to order and reminds about confidentiality, conflicts of interest, & scoring
- The Chair runs the meeting, and begin review of applications in a pre-determined order.
- Reviewers 1, 2, and 3 give their “initial scores,” or “levels of enthusiasm.”
- Reviewers 1, 2, and 3 summarize the study, provide salient points about the strengths and weaknesses
- Statistician’s critique sought
- Open discussion follows
Study Section Meeting: Additional Review Issues

- Human subject safety concerns
- Animal care/use concerns
- Gender and minority issues
- Are children included? If not, is it scientifically justified?
- Impact/Priority scores restated
- All members enter their impact score “confidentially.”
- Budgetary concerns?
  - NOT A REVIEW CRITERION
- Move on to the next application
Two Types of Scores: The Criteria Scores

- Criteria Scores are given for each review criterion by the 3 reviewers.
  - Significance (scale 1-9)
  - Investigator (scale 1-9)
  - Innovation (scale 1-9)
  - Approach (scale 1-9)
  - Environment (scale 1-9)

- The scores are included in the summary statement.
The Impact/Priority Score

- This is the most important score.
- All members give the Impact Score, confidentially, for each application.
- The SRO obtains the average, multiplies by 10 and includes the average score in the summary statement.
- The final score ranges from 10-90
- It is NOT an average of the criteria scores
- Impact score is used to generate percentile rankings and the Institute uses it to make funding decisions.
Impact/Priority Score is affected by the Strengths and Weaknesses

- What is the likely impact of the proposed research study on the overall topic area?

- Presence or absence of weaknesses:
  - How bad are weaknesses?
  - Can they be easily fixed?
  - If they cannot be fixed, how seriously will it affect the overall impact
# Overall Impact-Priority Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with some minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very strong with many minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths, but with some moderate weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths, but with at least one major weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths, and many major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is a “Weakness”?

- **Minor weakness**
  - Easily addressable and does not substantially lessen the impact

- **Moderate weakness**
  - Lessens the impact

- **Major Weakness**
  - Severely limits the impact
Overall Impact or Priority Score

- Approximate impact gauge:
  - 10 to 30 = high impact
  - 40 to 60 = moderate impact
  - 70 to 90 = low impact

- About 50% of the bottom-half are “not discussed” (ND)—they don’t get an impact score
Example of Scores in the Summary Statement

Criteria Score Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer #</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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Impact/Priority score: 59:
Scored Review Criteria for Research Grants and Career Development (K)

- Candidate
- Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring
- Research Plan
- Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
- Environment & Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
### Additional Review Criteria

(Not scored individually, but considered in overall impact/priority score)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research (R, DP, RC, P)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Agreement (U)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center (C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBIR/STTR (R41, R42, R43, R44)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Review Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Protections for Human Subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inclusion of Women, Minorities, &amp; Children</td>
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<td>- Vertebrate Animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Biohazards</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Resubmission Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Renewal Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Revision Applications</td>
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<th>Career Development (K)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inclusion of Women, Minorities &amp; Children in Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vertebrate Animals</td>
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<td>- Resubmission Applications</td>
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<td>- Renewal Applications/Progress Assessment</td>
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NIH is Not an ATM: Talk to the Program Officers before and after the award!
Useful Websites

  - See a mock study section video
  - Standing IRGs and their membership
  - New peer review items
- [Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool (RePORT)](http://report.nih.gov/index.aspx)
Study Section Review is a Peer Review Process
Have a Great Experience!

Thank You