



**Mock Study Section
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Tonse N. K. Raju, MD
Medical Officer
Pregnancy and Perinatology Branch, CDBPM
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child
Health and Human Development



Outline

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

What are “Study Sections”?

- Groups of preeminent scientists convened by the CSR to review grant applications.
- More than 20,000 scientists from around the country help the CSR and other NIH entities in reviewing ~80,000 applications each year.
- Specific study sections are formulated based on specific topic areas

Study Section Assignment

- The CSR assigns the applications to specific study sections based on the scientific content of the application and the review group's expertise.
- 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
 - ◆ We have distributed three applications
 - ◆ R01, R03, and K23 (or K08)
 - ◆ Provided instructions
- Mock study-section is structured and will be 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

- SRO: Calls the meeting to order
 - ◆ Reminder on confidentiality, conflicts of interest, & scoring issues
- The Chair: runs the meeting
- The three reviewers give their “initial impact score” or “initial level of enthusiasm.”
- Reviewer 1 summarizes, and presents the strengths and weaknesses of the study
 - ◆ Reviewers 2 and 3 present their take
- Statistician’s critique sought
- Open discussion

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?
 - ◆ Budget concerns are not scoring criteria
- 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

Score	Descriptor	Comments
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Exceptionally strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Very strong with many minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths, but with 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 many major weaknesses

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

Reviewer #	Significance	Investigator	Innovation	Approach	Environment
1	5	2	6	3	2
2	2	2	4	3	2
3	7	3	8	5	3

Impact/Priority score: 59:

Scored Review Criteria for Research Grants and Career Development (K)

Career Development (K)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Additional Review Criteria	Research (R, DP, RC, P) Cooperative Agreement (U) Center (C) SBIR/STTR (R43, R42, K43, K44)	Career Development (K)
<p>Additional Review Criteria</p> <p>(Not scored individually, but considered in overall impact/priority score)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protections for Human Subjects • Inclusion of Women, Minorities, & Children • Vertebrate Animals • Biohazards • Resubmission Applications • Renewal Applications • Revision Applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research • Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk • Inclusion of Women, Minorities & Children in Research • Vertebrate Animals • Biohazards • Resubmission Applications • Renewal Applications/Progress Assessment

**NIH is a Partner in Science
Not an ATM**

Talk to a Program Officers before you apply for a grant, or especially before you reapply for the same grant!

Talk to the PO after you receive a grant

Keep us updated about the progress, ground-breaking discoveries, publications and professional awards (i.e., the Nobel Prize) coming from the NIH-funded research



Useful Websites

- <http://cms.csr.nih.gov>
 - ◆ See a mock study section video
 - ◆ Standing IRGs and their membership
- <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/>
 - ◆ 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
