Fellowship review..... behind the scenes at the NIH (or AHA, etc.)

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Fellowships are training vehicles. Science is really important, but the “training potential” of your experience is just as important. Look now for upcoming opportunities!
Fellowship Applications...how to get started

• Look for opportunities in your area of research
• Some local/regional (NJCCCR, NJ Spinal Cord Institute, etc.)
• Some from professional societies
• **NSF, NIH, etc.
• Other agencies, AHA, etc.
• GradFund
So you’ve submitted your fellowship application. What happens next?

- Proposal gets assigned to a group based on subject matter
- Next assigned to a subgroup or subsection
- Scientific Review Officer (PhD) is tasked with organization of a “study section” or grant review panel
- He/she will assign applications to reviewers based on their expertise
Reviewers must be:

- Knowledgeable/subject expert
- Impartial, unemotional
- Fair
- Objective
- Accurate
- Critical, logical
- Reliable
- Able to write a helpful, readable review
- Able to assess “novelty”
Study Section Logistics

- Reviewers will have ~ 10-12 applications to read and write reviews
- Will have ~ 4-6 weeks to do so
- Will meet in person or via teleconference
- Each application has 3 reviewers: R1, R2, R3
- Applications are scored by all. Review panel does not determine fundability, only scoring
Only ~50% of applications will be “discussed.” Those applications with non-competitive scores will receive full written reviews, but will not be discussed in order to allow more time for discussion of the competitively scored applications.
# SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA
## Fellowship Applications (F30, F31, F32)

### REVIEW CRITERIA
(Provide Criterion Score for each)

1. Fellowship Applicant
2. Sponsors, Collaborators, & Consultants
3. Research Training Plan
4. Training Potential
5. Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

### ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA

Factored into overall Impact score *(Don’t get separate scores)*

1. Human Subjects
2. Vertebrate Animals
3. Biohazards
4. Resubmission (for A1 applications)

### Overall Impact

- Overall Impact score is NOT an average of Individual criterion scores.
- It is a separate assessment of the likelihood of the fellowship to promote candidate’s potential for, and commitment to, an independent scientific research career, in consideration of the scored and additional review criteria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERIT Assessment</th>
<th>IMPACT on candidate's research training and career development</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Overall research training VALUE of the application | HIGH  
No weaknesses or negligible weakness that will not affect training | 1 |
| | | 2 |
| | | 3 |
| | MEDIUM  
A good application with some minor weaknesses | 4 |
| | | 5 |
| | | 6 |
| | LOW  
Applications with moderate weakness | 7 |
| | | 8 |
| | | 9 |
Overall Impact Score Guidelines

Training Value and its Impact on applicant’s training and development

**Overall Impact Score Guidelines**

**Training Value and its Impact on applicant’s training and development**

**FELLOWSHIPS & CAREER AWARDS**

**Overall Impact:**
The likelihood that the proposed training (F) or career development (K) will enhance the candidate’s potential for a productive, independent scientific research career in a health-related field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impact</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5 6</td>
<td>7 8 9</td>
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**Evaluating Overall Impact**

Consider the 5 criteria (weighting based on reviewer’s judgment):

**Fs**
- Applicant
- Sponsor(s)
- Research Training Plan
- Training Potential
- Institutional Environment & Commitment

**Ks**
- Candidate
- Career Development Plan/Goals*
- Research Plan
- Mentor(s)**
- Environment & Institutional Commitment

and other score influences, e.g. human subjects, animal welfare, inclusion plans, and biohazards

*K05 and K24: Plan to Provide Mentoring
**K02: Consultants/Collaborators

5 is a good, medium-impact application. The entire scale (1-9) should always be considered.

**Example Evaluations:**
- **High Impact:**
  - e.g. Proposes training or career development of high or moderate value/benefit for the candidate who has high potential for developing into a productive, independent scientist. May have some or no weaknesses in the criteria.

- **Medium Impact:**
  - e.g. Proposes training or career development of moderate value/benefit for the candidate who shows moderate potential. May have some weaknesses in the criterion.

- **Low Impact:**
  - e.g. Proposes training or career development of low value/benefit for the candidate who shows low potential. May have some weaknesses in the criteria.

Weaknesses in the criteria reduce the overall impact to medium. Further development, but weaknesses in the criteria reduce the overall impact to medium.
Fellowship Review Focus

Summary

• The review should focus on the training VALUE of the application and its IMPACT on applicant’s scientific development
  ✓ the applicant's potential for an independent, scientific research career
  ✓ the applicant's need for the proposed training
  ✓ the sponsor’s training experience, funding, and commitment
  ✓ the level of integration of the Research and Training Plans to provide productive research training
  ✓ the quality of the research environment (Scientific programs, facilities)
  ✓ Overall Impact Score Decision: the potential of the application to promote scientific development and prepare the candidate for research independence
Questions?

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