Mock Study Section
Guidelines for Participants
April 19, 2018 | 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
ACTS Translational Science

ROLES

Reviewer: Critique and score assigned grant
Co-Chair: Will ensure a uniform and fair process of review
SRO: NIH employed professional Scientific Review Officer ensures policies and procedures are followed

MOCK STUDY SECTION GROUPS

1. There are seven study sections divided by grant type (2 R, 3 K, 2 F) with participants reviewing three applications per room.

2. Each group will review and discuss three applications (R, K, or F).

3. For each application, there will be a designated primary reviewer, secondary reviewer, tertiary reviewer, and two to four “discussants”.

4. There will be two co-chairs and one SRO per group.

REVIEWER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Review the following NIH guidelines prior to reviewing your grant. These documents can also be found in the appendix of this document.

   ✓ NIH Reviewer Orientation
   ✓ Review Criteria at a Glance - Master
   ✓ Scoring System and Procedure
   ✓ Guidelines for the Review of Human Subjects Section
   ✓ Budget Information (FYI: the budget has been removed from applications)
   ✓ NIH Peer Review Revealed Video

These documents can also be accessed at: http://grants.nih.gov/Grants/peer/reviewer_guidelines.htm
2. Access your grant application and assignment (an email will be sent with access information). Reviewers will be assigned the duty of primary, secondary, tertiary reviewer or discussant.

3. Critique and score the grant to which you have been assigned as a reviewer or discussant prior to the mock study section using the templates below. Tip: Start your review at the Career Development or Research Plan part of the application then review biosketches, etc.

Record and justify all five core review criteria and the overall impact/significance score based on the 9 point scale. Only the overall score is reported and discussed during the meeting. There will be no place to enter the impact score on the critique template, so include it in the text of your critique*. Note: This is not done in official sections, but is being implemented to simplify the process for our event.

- F Critique Template
- K Critique Template
- R Critique Template
- Critique template instructions

4. Print your completed critique template and bring it to the mock study section. You do not need to email your scores.

5. Reviewers should also read and mentally critique all other applications to be reviewed by their group.

6. Once the mock study section is completed, printed grant applications should be destroyed. While we have explicit permission to use the grants that have been distributed, they contain privileged information and should not be divulged outside the group. This follows NIH protocol on confidentiality of research applications. All applications being used have been submitted to the NIH, either in the current state as you see them, or in a revised version.

ROLE OF CO-CHAIRS

Co-chairs are faculty who have volunteered to lend their expertise to the Mock Study Section. Co-chairs act as moderators ensuring a uniform and fair process of review. They will guide a structured review process at the meeting that follows NIH study section protocol.
MOCK STUDY SECTION PROCEDURES

1. The meeting opens with opening comments from the co-chairs and SRO addressing the meeting process.

2. To begin the review of the first grant, the chair will ask those reviewers who have a conflict with the current application leave the room. Note: No reviewer is in conflict at this meeting.

3. A scoring sheet with the names of the grants is provided to study section members. The chair will ask the assigned reviewers to declare their initial overall impact score. All study section members should write down the score range on their score sheet.

4. Study section members will listen to critiques by the assigned reviewers, beginning with the Primary Reviewer, followed by the Secondary Reviewer, Tertiary Reviewer and “Discussants”. The Primary Reviewer will give a very brief summary of the project (2 minutes), before giving his or her critique (3-5 minutes). The secondary reviewer and discussants will then add additional information (3 min. each).

5. **Reviewers should not read their critique verbatim.** Rather, they should focus their critique on major concerns they feel may affect the priority score and points upon which there may be differences of opinion among reviewers. If comments are generated during the discussion that did not appear in written statements made by the assigned reviewers, it is the SRO’s responsibility to ensure these statements are written down so they can be included in the Summary Statement.

6. After the initial round of discussion from the assigned reviewers the floor will open for questions and comments. First, reviewers/discussants will have a chance to respond to each other (2-3 minutes). Then other study section members can ask questions and make comments (3 minutes), leaving some time for general discussion in which any member may participate.

7. Discussion ends with comments about protection of human subject procedures.

8. After discussion, a co-chair will again poll the assigned reviewers for the final overall impact scores. Scores may change based on discussion. This establishes the score range within which the entire review group will vote. Then the entire group will mark the score sheet with their individual scores which should be within the scoring range agreed upon.

9. A study member may wish to “vote out of range”—that is, they wish to assign a score that is outside the current score range established by the reviewers. The study
member must declare the assigned score and justification. This then establishes the new score range.

10. After scoring has been completed the reviewers are asked to address any comments about the appropriateness of the budget for the scope of work. After this concludes, the group moves to the next application. Co-chairs should monitor the time and allow for approximately 35 minutes for each application.

11. Note that in an NIH study section review the charge is to evaluate the applications on their scientific and technical merit. Review groups DO NOT FUND applications. Reviewers should not comment or vote on the basis of where the funding line may be or is thought to be.

POST MOCK STUDY SECTION PROCEDURES

1. Please complete the online Evaluation that we email to you. This will help us improve the study section experience each year.

2. You have agreed not to share grant materials and to destroy any material you have printed. While we have explicit permission to use the grants that have been distributed, they contain privileged information and should not be divulged outside the group. This follows NIH protocol on confidentiality of research applications. All applications being used have been submitted to the NIH, either in the current state as you see them, or in a revised version.

CONTACT US

Contact UMN CTSI-Ed at ctsieduc@umn.edu with questions and/or concerns. Good luck!

These guidelines were adapted from the University of Michigan CTSA.

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