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Memorandum

November 3, 2008

To: Deans, Chairs and Faculty Involved with NIH Research Activity

From: David P. Earwicker, Assistant Vice President, Research Administration & Contract Administration

Re: Policy Changes at the National Institutes of Health

The National Institutes of Health recently issued several notices regarding policy changes. The following items may be of particular interest to you and your research agenda.

Proposal Resubmission Policy

Beginning with original new applications (*i.e.*, never submitted) and competing renewal applications submitted on or after **January 25, 2009**, the NIH will accept only a single revision to the original application. Failure to receive funding after two submissions (*i.e.*, the original and the single revision) will mean that the applicant should substantially re-design the project rather than simply changing the application in response to previous reviews. It is expected that this policy will lead to NIH funding high quality applications earlier, with fewer resubmissions. For more info, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-003.html>.

Timeline for Enhancements of Peer Review

NIH has announced several reforms to the grant application and review process. Their aim is to make the process more transparent and ensure peer review is fair for all applicants. The changes include:

- Establishment of an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) designation for new investigators (within ten years of completing their terminal research degree). Starting in February 2009, traditional NIH research grant (R01s) applications from ESIs will be identified and the career stage of the applicant will be considered at the time of review and award. NIH hopes to directly encourage earlier application for NIH research grant support by providing an advantage for ESI's.
- A new criteria-based scoring process to be implemented in May 2009 in which the research plan will be more closely tied to review criteria. Reviewers will provide more detailed feedback through scores (on a scale of 1 to 7) and critiques for each of the criterion in a summary statement. The grant review criteria will include the significance, approach, innovation, the investigators and the scientific environment.
- Shortening the length of the research plan for research project grant (R01) applications from 25 pages to 12 pages beginning with January 2010 receipt dates. There are plans to shorten the length of other types of NIH grant applications as well.
- Consideration of separate percentiling of new and resubmitted applications.

For more on the changes to the peer review process, contact your Sponsored Research Officer at 278-7565 or visit <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/updates.html>.