

Tips for Planning, Preparing, and Submitting Applications for NIH Fellowships and Research Grants

1. Understand the specific **requirements** of the funding agency
2. Understand the **review criteria** to assess applications for possible funding

Research Grants:	Significance Investigator Innovation Approach Environment	Fellowships:	Applicant Sponsors Research Training Plan Training Potential Institutional Commitment
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3. Understand the **review procedure** used to assess applications for possible funding
4. Learn the **success rate** for the funding agents (NCI versus NHLBI versus NEI)
5. Learn as much as you can about the **composition of the application review panel** (Study Section). Determine the level of familiarity of the members with the topic of your application. Does the group consist of members who are highly specialized in the field?
6. Write your application in a way that **informed non-experts can understand** your **Specific Aims** and **Research Plan**.
7. Ensure that the **Abstract** is clear, logical, novel, and can capture the imagination of the review panel.
8. Pay particular attention to the clarity, logic, novelty, and feasibility of the **Research Plan** described in the **Specific Aims**.
9. Ask yourself **two key questions** where YES answers are needed for the **Research Plan** to be judged favorably:
 - a. Should the project be done? **Significance**
 - b. Can the project be done? **Feasibility**
10. Consider important **formatting** features of the application:
 - a. Do not fill the entire allotted space with text and figures. Leave **empty lines** between logical sections of text.
 - b. Ensure that the **figures are large enough** to understand without enlargement. Pay particular attention to the **font size of labels** and other text in figures.
 - c. Make sure that **figures have sufficient resolution** to allow for enlargement without pixilation.
11. Have your mentor and colleagues **proofread** your application before submission.