

	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
Application Due Dates	January 25 - May 7	May 25 - September 7	September 25 - January 7
Scientific Merit Review	June – July	October - November	February - March
Advisory Council Round	August or October *	January	May
Earliest Project Start Date	September or December *	April	July

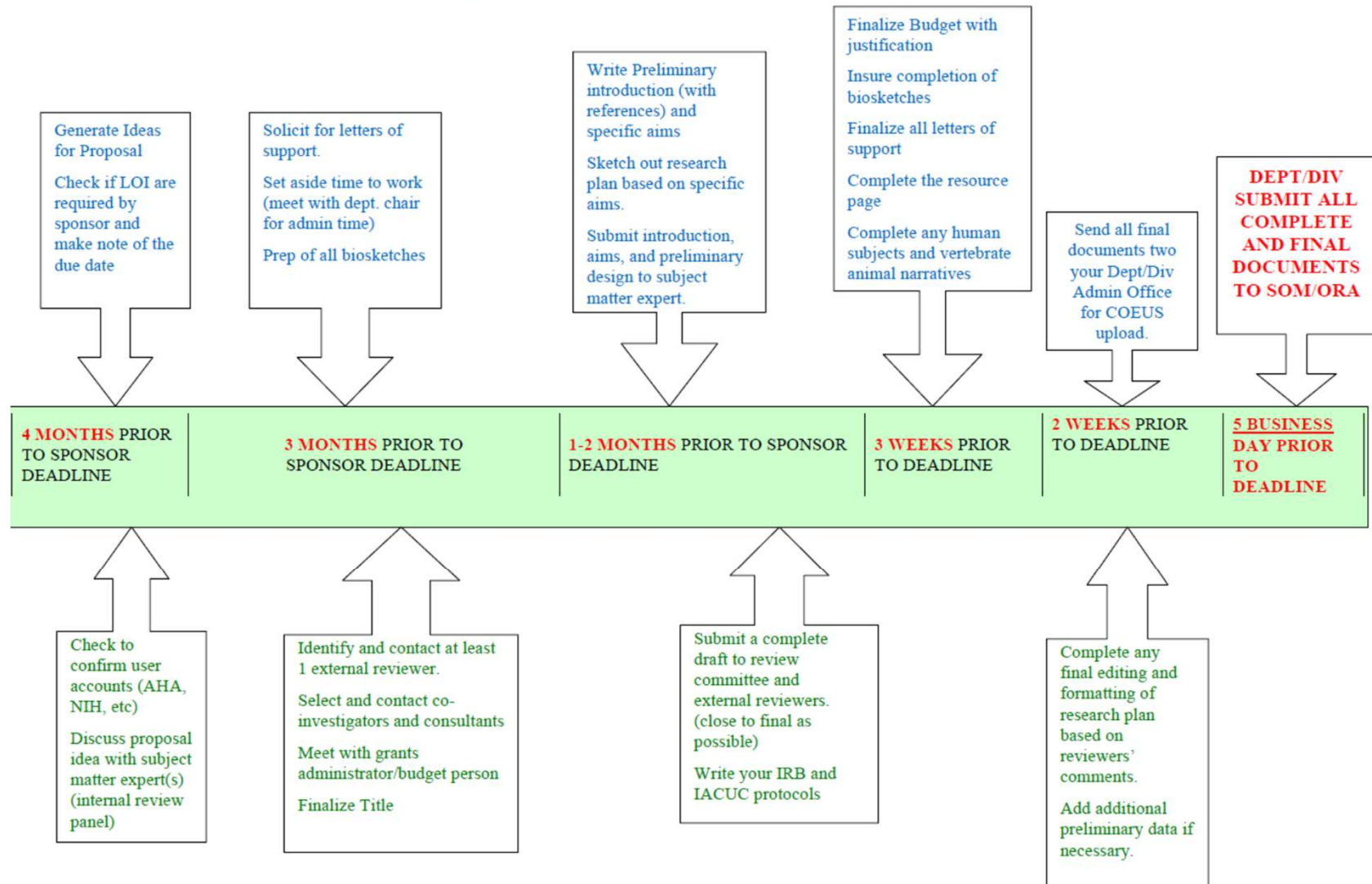
R01 <i>new</i>	Research Grants	February 5	June 5	October 5
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R01 <i>renewal, resubmission, revision</i>	Research Grants	March 5	July 5	November 5
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F Series Fellowships (including F31 Diversity – NOT-OD-17-029) <i>new, renewal, resubmission</i>	Individual National Research Service Awards (Standard) (see NRSA Training Page)	April 8	August 8	December 8
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When to submit: Hopkins Office of Research Admin

Recommended Grant Proposal Development and Submission Timeline



Then what?

- If no errors on submission will be assigned to an initial review group (IRG). This will be AUD (Auditory System) for many applications, but also SMI (sensory-motor integration) for vestibular, or BNVT (bio-engineering of neuroscience, vision and low-vision technologies) for prosthetics research?
- E.g. Recent AUD: 26 reviewers, 14 regular members, 8 *ad hoc* (or phone-in) reviewers. All must be funded/published, usually associate or full professor. Recent initiative specifies inclusion of 2-3 junior scientists.
- Distribution requirements: usually only one per institution, geographic spread, gender balance, BUT scientific expertise most of all (especially difficult for AUD that covers a very wide range of methodologies and questions).
- *HUGE and repeated emphasis on confidentiality and conflict of interest.* Sign statements before AND after meeting. COI results in non-participation (don't see application, leave room during review, do not see score *post hoc*). Confidentiality requires that NO discussion of applications takes place other than during the monitored review process itself (no cocktail hour chit-chat).
- COI includes: same institution, collaborators, previous mentor (5 years past?), co-authors. AND, writers of letters of support are COI, *as are Study Section members from the same institution!*

So, consider the relative value of a Letter of Support. If necessary for resources, expertise, OK, but if just to have a 'big name' added may exact a cost by cutting out your best reviewer.

At a Glance—Study Section Timeline (generic)

Four to six weeks before the study section meeting: Reviewers identify COIs for ALL applications. Applications uploaded to website. The SRO includes a list of the applications for which members are to serve as reviewers. Each reviewer has 8-10 assigned (as first, second or reader). Applications are scored 1 best to 9. A '5' is a good proposal, on par with work in the field. A score of 1-3 means that this proposal is better than most of the work being done in that field. A score of '1' is for a proposal that will substantially advance a field, break new ground, walk on water...

One week before the study section meeting: The primary and secondary reviewers and the reader provide written comments and preliminary scores. Opportunity for re-consideration or further research.

Two to three days before the study section meeting: Comments and scores are available for viewing in rank order. Top half to be discussed (about 40 of 70-80 total). Any reviewer can request a 'rescue'.

Critiques: **WRITE AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE**

DO

- Write in complete sentences (or at least informative clauses).
- Provide clear indication of positive or negative evaluation (i.e. simply stating what they will do is generally not helpful).
- Include some strengths, if at all possible.
- Make sure score matches the comments; If a score is ≥ 3 , list at least one weakness

DON'T

- Mention previous priority score and/or percentile.
- Include substantial duplicate content (or at least not cut and pasted) in the Overall Impact paragraph and bullet points.
- Pose questions in your critiques (if you must, include clarifying follow up content); generally instead frame points as statements.

At Study Section

- Two-day meetings (usually trying to end early enough on day 2 that another hotel night is avoided)
- ~40 grants will be reviewed (top-half of rank list, R01s and R21s).
- 15 minutes per review! So in theory 10 hours needed over the two days. In reality always takes longer (usually by working later on day 1).
- New investigators are discussed first (5-10?) so that these can be compared with one another (and not with established labs).
- Then established investigators in rank order.
- R21s reviewed after R01s finished (R21 scores are not included in running averages for percentiling)

Application Discussion (12-15 minutes each)

- Prior to discussion of any application (and naming of reviewers), **any member with a COI must leave the room.**
- **Rev 1** concisely introduces proposal content – some technical detail will likely be needed, but an aim by aim listing of all proposed experiments is not.
- **Rev 1** describes strengths and weaknesses in each of 5 core criteria, with emphases on elements that drove the Overall Impact score. Rev 1 should take ≤ 5 min, total.
- **Revs 2 and 3** present their critiques (a few minutes each, if that), with an emphasis on elements that differ from previous reviewers. If there is nothing new to add, “I agree” is sufficient.
- All members (in room) are invited to join the discussion (**please DO!**) and then vote on the final Overall Impact score.

What results in a positive review?

- The strongest scores result when the Reviewers can make it easy for the entire panel to understand the significance and potential impact of your proposal.
- So, write your proposal 'to tell a story'. A compelling written narrative gives your reviewer a better chance to clearly and concisely persuade the rest of the Study Section.
- Compelling preliminary evidence of feasibility (or really exciting discovery!) can make a big difference.
- Reviewer 1 usually the key (especially if respected regular member). So serendipity to some extent – hope to get an 'good' (i.e., experienced) reviewer (remember about Letters of Support!).
- Reviewer 2 or the Reader can influence the score, but rarely to significantly improve. Usually, a substantial discussion/disagreement among the Reviewers will result in a mixed score assignment by the entire panel.
- When complete the Chair summarizes the Discussion and asks for final scores from Reviewers. Then asks entire panel if anyone intends to score outside that range – show of hands. Almost always this is to give a poorer score – although the other is possible (I've not seen it yet).

Final Scoring

- At the meeting, score the applications not assigned to you by assessing the scientific merit and not by just “splitting the difference” between the assigned reviewers’ scores.
- Reaching consensus is not the objective and difference of opinion is welcome from both assigned reviewers and the rest of the panel.

Voting Outside the Range

- Non-assigned reviewers can vote outside the range set by the assigned reviewers’ final scores.
- Voting outside the range could be based on:
 - a scientific difference of opinion
 - different weighting of the review criteria
 - a perceived mismatch between the discussions and scores
- The dissent should be made transparent through participating in the discussion or providing a brief reason at the time of final scoring.
- Voting outside the range should not re-open the discussion nor should the out-of-range voter be required to write a justification.

After scoring complete, non-scoring issues are considered:

- Budget
- Resource sharing
- Select agents
- Authentication of resources, materials (e.g, antibodies, viruses, mouse lines)

After Study Section

- Final scores are compiled and ready to report the following Monday (usually)
- Electronic result emailed to applicants.
- Summary statement (written reviews) usually sent out within one month. any recommended budget changes are listed.
- Council meets ~ 3 months later and approves awards. Notice of grant award follows. Budget will include recommended cuts. Across-the-board 15% cut has been the practice for a few years.