In Fall 2015, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) announced several upcoming changes to the policies, forms and instructions for grant applications submitted after January 25, 2016. These changes are related to: 1) rigor and transparency in research (see below for additional information on this topic), 2) vertebrate animals, 3) inclusion reporting, 4) data safety monitoring, 5) research training, 6) appendices, 7) PHS assignment requests (additional info below), 8) font requirements, and 8) biographical sketch clarifications. Please note that some of these changes are effective as of January 25, 2016 and others are effective as of May 25, 2016. The link to the original notice, NOT-OD-16-004, can be found here http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-004.html.

One area of change that will be considered as part of the review criteria relates to Rigor and Transparency. This new focus of NIH is part of ongoing efforts at NIH to enhance reproducibility. Details and information related to addressing this area can be found in the links below.


2. An NIH website with guidance on Rigor and Reproducibility. This has additional information addressing this component. http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm

3. FAQs on Rigor and Reproducibility. This link will provide answers to some frequently asked questions. http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/faqs.htm

4. NINDS Transparency in Reporting Guidance. This document provides some guidance on rigor as pertains to clinical research. While NINDS is the focus, the content and guidance likely carries over to other types of studies.

5. Updated Application Instructions to Enhance Rigor and Reproducibility. This information from the Office of Extramural Research provides good insight as to what should be considered for these sections. https://www.nih.gov/research-training/rigor-reproducibility/updated-application-instructions-enhance-rigor-reproducibility

Another change that does not take effect until May 25, 2016 but could significantly impact the review of a proposal is a new form for requesting assignment of a proposal. Currently, if a proposer would like to suggest an institute for funding, a study section preference, a list of potential reviewers with conflicts, or a list of scientific expertise needed for review, these requests would be incorporated into the Cover Letter (which is optional). For submissions after May 25, 2016, this information will be provided on a new form (not yet available). This form will be optional, but it is important to note that NIH will no longer check the Cover Letter attachment for this information.

If you have any additional questions regarding any of these changes, please contact the Purdue Research Development team at proposalcoordinator@purdue.edu or pkirkham@purdue.edu (for Perry Kirkham).