National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

OMB# 0925-0627
Expiration Date: 04/30/2017

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

NIH, Project Clearance Branch, 6705 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7974, Bethesda, MD 20892-7974, ATTN: PRA (0925-0627).

Next

0%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Introduction

This survey of NIH Advisory Council/Board members is to help examine **NIH's peer review process** (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/continuous_review.htm). The information you provide will be useful in assessing recent changes in peer review policies and may be used to further improve the peer review process.

We are interested in the opinions of Advisory Council/Board members with different levels of experience with the NIH grants system. Even if you have limited experience reviewing and/or submitting NIH grant applications, **your opinions are very important to us**.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. You can stop at any point and continue at another time. There are no right or wrong answers, so please give the answer that best describes your opinion. While we would like you to answer all the questions in this survey, you may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to complete the survey, your responses will remain private under the Privacy Act. Your responses will **not** be linked to your name and will **not** be made known to NIH staff or grant applicants. They will not be used to assess the performance of individual NIH Institutes, Centers, or Scientific Review Groups. Aggregate responses will be used to guide NIH management in refining enhancements to the peer review process.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Next

0%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

SECTION A:

General Information about Your Experience
As An Advisory Council/Board Member

Q1 For this first question we are interested in the number of years you have served as a chartered Council/Board member. Please do not include time spent as a temporary member for a single meeting or working group.

How many **total years** have you served as a chartered member of one or more NIH National Advisory Councils/ Boards? (Total membership does not have to be continuous.)

- ○ less than 1 year
- ○ at least 1 year but less than 3 years
- ○ at least 3 years but less than 5 years
- ○ at least 5 years but less than 10 years
- ○ 10 or more years
- ○ not sure

Back Next

7%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q2 During the two most recent council rounds, did you review the content of summary statements and/or grant applications as part of your Advisory Council/Board deliberations? If you did not review either of these materials during the two most recent rounds, please select "neither of these".

Select all that apply

- [ ] I reviewed the content of summary statements
- [ ] I reviewed the content of grant applications
- [ ] Neither of these

If Q2 = 'I reviewed the content of summary statements' Skip to Q32

If Q2 does NOT = 'I reviewed the content of summary statements' skip to Introduction before Q13

Back Next

7%

SECTION B:

Documentation from Peer Review

Think about the **summary statements** you have reviewed in your role as an Advisory Council/Board member during the two most recent council rounds.

If you did not use summary statements in any of the activities described below during at least one council round, please select "Not applicable."

In general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Q3 The overall impact/priority score appears consistent with the information in the Resume and Summary of Discussion section.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable

Q4 The information contained in summary statement Resumes is helpful for making Advisory Council/Board recommendations.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable

Q5 The information contained in the critiques is helpful for making Advisory Council recommendations.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Please answer the following questions about the summary statements you have reviewed in your role as an Advisory Council/ Board member **during the most recent two council rounds**.

Q6 The bulleted comments reflect complete, well-composed thoughts.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

Back Next

20%

Q7 Generally speaking, the bulleted comments provided with the individual review criteria are helpful to me in understanding the scientific merit of the corresponding review criteria.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

Q8 Generally speaking, individual criterion scores are consistent with the strengths and weaknesses described in the critiques.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q9 The information contained in summary statements is useful for evaluating applications from foreign institutions.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable

Back Next

27%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Please answer the following questions about the summary statements you have reviewed in your role as an Advisory Council/Board Member **during the most recent two council rounds**.

Q10 The information contained in the critiques is useful for making recommendations about appeals based on errors of fact.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable

Back Next

30%

Q11 The information contained in the summary statements is useful for making recommendations about multi-component projects.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

Q12 During the most recent two council rounds, the number of ties among the overall impact/priority scores and percentile rankings for applications has NOT been a problem in making Advisory Council/Board recommendations.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

SECTION C:

Recent Policy Changes Affecting Peer Review

The NIH is introducing several new elements in the research grant application. Their purpose is to clarify the rigor and transparency of the science proposed, and to improve the quality of the information available to reviewers and NIH staff. Each element is listed below and additional details are available by following the hyperlinks.

The first three elements, relevant biological variables, scientific premise, and rigorous experimental design, will be considered in the scoring of Significance and Approach.

The fourth element, authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources, will be an additional review consideration that will not be scored individually and will not be considered in the overall impact score.

Q13 Please select two of the four elements below that you believe are most relevant to your own field of science. You will be offered follow-up questions related to the two elements you rate as most relevant.

- ☐ Relevant biological variables, such as sex, as they are factored in the research designs and analyses in vertebrate animal and human studies.
  If selected, ask Q14
- ☐ Scientific premise: consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of any published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of the application.
  If selected, ask Q19
- ☐ Rigorous Experimental Design: how the experimental design and methods proposed will achieve robust and unbiased results.
  If selected, ask Q23
- ☐ Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources: methods to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources used in the proposed studies.
  If selected, ask Q27

If Q13 = blank, skip to Introduction before Q31

Q13 Please select two of the four elements below that you believe are most relevant to your own field of science. You will be offered follow-up questions related to the two elements you rate as most relevant.

- [ ] Relevant biological variables, such as sex, as they are factored in the research designs and analyses in vertebrate animal and human studies.
- [ ] Scientific premise: consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of any published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of the application.

Scientific Rigor: The strict application of the scientific method to ensure robust and unbiased experimental design, methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of results. This includes full transparency in reporting experimental details so that others may reproduce and extend the findings.

- [ ] Rigorous Experimental Design: how the experimental design and methods proposed will achieve robust and unbiased results.

Key biological and/or chemical resources include but are not limited to cell lines, antibodies, and specialty chemicals that may differ from laboratory to laboratory or over time and whose qualities and/or qualifications could influence the research data. Standard laboratory reagents such as buffers and other common biologicals or chemicals not expected to vary are not considered to be key resources. Key biological and/or chemical resources are integral to the proposed research and do not need to be generated with NIH funds.

- [ ] Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources methods to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources used in the proposed studies.

Relevant biological variables, such as sex, as they are factored in the research designs and analyses in vertebrate animal and human studies

Regarding research in your field of science, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q14 Generally speaking, research studies in my field of science are conducted, analyzed, and reported in a way that helps us understand how biological variables, such as sex, influence the findings.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

Back Next

37%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q15 More attention to biological variables, such as sex, in designing experiments will improve the reproducibility of research findings in my field of science.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Back Next

40%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q16 More information about biological variables, such as sex, in the research design will improve my ability to review grant applications in my field of science.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I have not reviewed grant applications

Back Next

47%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q17 If voluntary training were offered on the topic of designing research studies to address the potential influence of biological variables, such as sex, I would encourage my students and laboratory personnel to participate.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable – I do not have students or lab personnel

Q18 Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the importance of biological variables such as sex to your field of science.

Back Next

50%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Scientific premise: consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of any published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application.

Regarding research in your field of science, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q19 Generally speaking, the published research in my field of science includes sufficient detail to ensure that methods and results can be reproduced.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

Back Next

53%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q20 More attention to the scientific premise of proposed research will improve my ability to review grant applications in my field of science.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I have not reviewed grant applications

Back Next

57%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q21 If voluntary training were offered on the topic of developing a strong scientific premise to support the design of new research studies, I would encourage my students and laboratory personnel to participate.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I do not have students or lab personnel

Q22 Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the relevance of the scientific premise to your field of science.

Back Next

60%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Rigorous Experimental Design: how the experimental design and methods proposed will achieve robust and unbiased results.

Regarding research in your field of science, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q23 More attention to rigorous experimental design will improve the reproducibility of research findings in my field of science.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

Back Next

60%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q24 Clarification of the rigor of the proposed experimental design will improve my ability to review grant applications in my field of science.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I have not reviewed grant applications

Back Next

60%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q25 If voluntary training were offered on the topic of conducting research using robust experimental designs, I would encourage my students and laboratory personnel to participate.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I do not have students or lab personnel

Q26 Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the relevance of rigorous experimental design to your field of science.

Back Next

60%

Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources: methods to be used to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources used in the proposed studies.

Information on authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources will be collected as an "other attachment" and will be peer reviewed as an "additional review consideration" that will not be scored individually and is not to be considered in the determination of the overall impact score.

Regarding research in your field of science, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q27 Generally speaking, most experiments in my field of science are conducted with key biological and/or chemical resources that have been appropriately authenticated or calibrated.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q28 Information about the plans for authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources, provided as an additional attachment, will improve my ability to review grant applications in my field of science.

Information on authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources will be collected as an "other attachment" and will be peer reviewed as an "additional review consideration" that will not be scored individually and is not to be considered in the determination of the overall impact score.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I have not reviewed grant applications

Back Next

53%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q29 If voluntary training were offered on the topic of authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources, I would encourage my students and laboratory personnel to participate.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Not applicable – I do not have students or lab personnel

Q30 Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the relevance of authenticating key biological and/or chemical resources to your field of science.

Back Next

57%

The next questions pertain to the change in the application submission policy in 2014.

Q31 In 2014, NIH announced a change to the application submission policy to allow applicants to resubmit a research idea as a new (A0) application following an unsuccessful resubmission (A1) application. (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-14-074.html#sthash.Eum9uk5y.dpuf).

- ○ Helped — **If Q31 = 'Helped' display Q31A**
- ○ Had an effect
- ○ Hindered — **If Q31 = 'Hindered' display Q31B**
- ○ Don't know

Q31A Please describe briefly how the new resubmission policy has helped NIH's peer review process.

Q31B Please describe briefly how the new resubmission policy has hindered NIH's peer review process.

Back Next

60%

SECTION D:

Overall Evaluation of the Peer Review System

Q32 How fair was the peer review process at NIH **in the two most recent council rounds?**

- ○ Very fair
- ○ Somewhat fair
- ○ Neither fair nor unfair
- ○ Somewhat unfair
- ○ Very unfair

Q33 How satisfied were you with the peer review process at NIH **in the two most recent council rounds?**

- ○ Very satisfied
- ○ Somewhat satisfied
- ○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ○ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ○ Very dissatisfied

Back Next

63%

SECTION E:

Questions about Your Professional Background and Prior Experience with NIH's Extramural Programs

---

Q34 For approximately how many NIH study section or meetings and Special Emphasis Panels have you served as a reviewer during your lifetime altogether?

- ○ Fewer than 3 times
- ○ 3 – 6 times
- ○ 7 – 15 times
- ○ 16 times or greater
- ○ Not Sure

Q35 Have you ever applied for an NIH grant as a PI, as one of multiple PDs/PIs, or as a candidate for an individual fellowship or career award?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not Sure

If Q35 does NOT = 'Yes', skip to Q37

Back Next

67%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q36 **In total**, **for how many years** have you received NIH funding as a PI, one of multiple PDs/PIs, or as a candidate for an individual fellowship or career award (**funding does not have to be continuous)**?

- Less than 1 year
- at least 1 year but less than 5 years
- at least 5 years but less than 10 years
- at least 10 years but less than 15 years
- at least 15 years but less than 20 years
- 20 or more years

Back Next

73%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Q37 What type of organization do you work for?

Select all that apply.

- ○ Institution of higher education (including a university foundation)
- ○ Hospital/medical center (including teaching hospitals)
- ○ Independent research foundation or other non-profit institution
- ○ Private sector/for-profit organization (including small businesses)
- ○ Federal, state, or local government agency
- ○ Other (Specify) _____

Back Next

73%

National Institutes of Health

NIH Advisory Council Survey

Thank you very much for completing the survey!

Q38 If you have any ideas for improving the peer review process at NIH, please enter your suggestions here:

Back Submit

97%