

NIH OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR (OD)

Attachment 4

Awardee Semi-Structured Interview

Collection of this information is authorized by The Public Health Service Act, Section 411 (42 USC 285a). Rights of study participants are protected by The Privacy Act of 1974. Participation is voluntary, and there are no penalties for not participating or withdrawing from the study at any time. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. The information collected in this study will be kept private to the extent provided by law. Names and other identifiers will not appear in any report of the study. Information provided will be combined for all study participants and reported as summaries. You are being contacted for an interview so that we can evaluate the Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) grant mechanism.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 45 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 (xxxx-xxxx).

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT
AWARD (AREA) EVALUATION
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____, and I am a Senior Study Director working for a private research company called Westat located in Rockville, Maryland. Westat has been hired by the NIH to conduct an independent assessment of the impact of the AREA award on research and educational outcomes. As a Principal Investigator who held an AREA award in xxxx, you can help us understand the successes and challenges of conducting research with a NIH R15.

Westat and NIH are grateful for your time and willingness to speak with us about your research and mentoring. Participation in this interview is voluntary; you may decide to end the interview at any time. The information you share will be kept confidential and will be de-identified before it is shared with any units within NIH. No information or opinions you provide will have any bearing on any current or future grant application you may make to NIH. With your permission, we would like to audio-record this interview so that we can ensure we capture all its contents. Do I have your permission to begin to record?

B. AREA Grant Identification:

1. According to my records, you held an AREA grant in xxxx for your project entitled [insert title here] at [insert institution of higher education here]. Is this correct? *[If PI has had more than one grant, ask about all grants.]*

C. Student Involvement and Mentorship of Students:

2. Did you have students working on your most recent/ current AREA project?
OR From your responses to the web survey, I see that x [undergraduate/graduate/professional] students worked on your project. Is that correct?
3. How did you recruit students to work on your project?
 - a. Did your university/college/school expect faculty to involve students with their research projects? Why or why not?
 - b. Were there already students working in your laboratory before you received the R15? How did student involvement change once you received the R15?
4. What was student involvement on your AREA project like?
 - a. What kinds of tasks did students do?
 - b. What were your expectations of student work on your project, and were your expectations met? Why or why not?
 - c. What kind of instruction and supervision did you provide to students?
 - d. In what skills and competencies did students need help?
 - e. What were the challenges involved in mentoring students on your project? How did you meet those challenges?

D. Student Outcomes:

5. What do you think students learned from their involvement in AREA-funded research?
6. Did students co-author papers with you? Did they present posters or papers at conferences?
7. Did you keep in contact with any of your students once they left the laboratory? What do you think was the impact of students' participation in AREA research on their career paths? Can you provide any examples?

E. PI's Research and Career:

8. At the time you made your application to the AREA program, what research contacts were the most important for you? That is, with whom were you collaborating, or planning to collaborate?

9. How did your AREA project fit with your other professional and academic goals?
10. In what ways was your research program supported by the AREA funding?
11. What kind of impact did the AREA award have on your career?
Probes:
What sort of effect did it have on your
 - research productivity
 - promotion and tenure
 - subsequent funding
 - other impacts?
 - Overall, what have you gained from having received an AREA grant?
 - How did the outcome compare with your expectations?

F. Research Environment:

12. What was the impact of winning this award on your department?
On your institution?
Probe:
 - Did it enable you to collaborate with others at your institution?
 - Did it encourage other researchers at your institution to apply for funding?
 - Did it encourage research productivity among other faculty?
13. What kind of support did you receive from your institution in preparing your grant application?
14. What kind of support did you receive from your institution during the period of the award and after?

G. Sustainability:

15. Do you think the grant had a positive impact on your research and mentoring beyond the year[s] you received it?
That is, after the grant period was over, were any positive changes you had made in terms of research productivity, student involvement, collaboration, etc. sustained?

H. For PIs who received awards before 2004:

16. Compared to xxxx, when you began your AREA project, how do you think the environment at your university/college/school has changed with regards to:
 - a. student participation in faculty research?

- b. the importance of research funding and productivity versus the importance of teaching and service obligations?
- c. the availability of resources for conducting research?

I. Suggestions for Improving Program

- 17. If you were going to suggest NIH change the AREA grant experience for future awardees, what change would you suggest?
- 18. Is there anything you would like NIH to know about how the AREA grant program is implemented?