

Preparing an Electronic Application to NIH – a Quick Reference Guide

In order to prepare a responsive electronic application to NIH, you will need to download and read the following items:

- The complete Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the program to which you are applying. FOAs are published in the NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts (<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>).
- The application package that corresponds to the program to which you are applying. To obtain this, visit the Grants.gov website (<http://www.grants.gov>) and search using the FOA number.
- The NIH Grants.gov Application Guide (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>).

The five most important things to keep in mind when preparing an application:

1. Identify and review the appropriate Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

Ask:

Is this FOA current?

Are applications being accepted at this time?

Does the Institute I am targeting accept applications through this FOA?

Have I downloaded the corresponding Grants.gov Pure Edge application package for this FOA?

2. Confirm that you and all investigators listed on your application as PI or Senior/Key Personnel are registered NIH eRA Commons users.

Ask:

Do I know my Commons user name?

Have I filled out or updated my NIH eRA Commons Personal Profile, including employment?

Are my Senior/Key Personnel also registered Commons users with up-to-date Person Profiles?

Have I entered a Commons username into the "Credential/Agency Login" fields on the Research Related Senior/Key Person form for each person named on my proposal? Failure to correctly complete this field is the most frequent cause of Commons validation errors.

3. Read the FOA carefully.

Ask:

Are there any instructions that deviate from the NIH SF 424 R&R Guide? Please pay careful attention to page limitations and cover letter instructions.

4. Convert all attachments, except subaward budgets, to Portable Document File (PDF) Format.

Ask:

Have I converted my attachments to PDF?

Have I named the files using letters, numbers and underscores only? No periods, spaces or special characters can be used in naming your files.

Have I uploaded the attachments into the Pure Edge application file?

5. Be aware of the deadline.

In order to allow time for correction and resubmission of your application, if needed, the OSP Proposal Development Assistant Director (AD) assigned to your school or department will submit your completed application via Grants.gov three (3) days before the NIH application deadline. NIH statistics indicate that most electronic applications must be submitted more than once before they are accepted by the Commons; therefore, your OSP AD must have sufficient time to review and submit your application before the federal deadline. **Five (5) business days before the NIH deadline, OSP must receive the following: (a) a completed electronic copy of your application (via the OSP server) and (b) a paper copy of your application consisting of:** (1) NIH application face page (SF 424 R&R), (2) Budget pages for all years of the project, (3) Budget justification, (4) Abstract or Statement of Work, (5) BU Proposal Summary Form signed by the PI and all appropriate university officials, (6) BU Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, and (7) BU Export Control Checklist.

Please contact Kathleen Foster (kfoster@bu.edu) or Eleanor Greene (ergreene@bu.edu) in the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) with questions about the NIH electronic submission process or to register as a Commons user.