



SF424 Application Format Requirements

Department Policy/Procedure

Campus: All

Approved: February 12, 2007

Department: All

Next Review: February 2009

Purpose

To ensure that applications submitted to federal sponsors are accepted for review and potential funding.

Population Covered

All Principal Investigators and research staff associated with Swedish Health Services intending to submit research proposals to NIH or other federal agencies.

Responsible Persons

Principle Investigator

Definitions

NIH: National Institutes of Health

PHS: Public Health Services

PA: Program Announcement

RFA: Request For Application

Supplemental Information

Page Limitations and Content Requirements Table

Content

This document provides formatting information for the SF424 application including attachments and other component requirements. Since this application is forwarded electronically to Grants.gov it is important to follow these instructions in order to reduce errors. Ultimately, all errors must be corrected before National Institutes of Health (NIH) will accept the application.

Steps

1. NIH and other PHS agencies require all text attachments to the PureEdge forms to be submitted as Portable Document Format “.pdf” files.
2. Attachments generated from PureEdge forms, such as the R&R (Research and Related) SubAward Budget Attachment Form, do not need to be converted to “.pdf”.

3. Applicants should prepare text attachments using any word processing program following the format requirements
[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Ver2.doc# 2.6 Format Specifications](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Ver2.doc#_2.6_Format_Specifications) and then convert those files to “.pdf” before attaching the files to the appropriate component in the application package. (The “.pdf” format is used to preserve document formatting.) It is recommended that, as much as possible, applicants avoid scanning text documents to produce the required “.pdfs.” Instead, NIH recommends producing the documents electronically using text or word-processing software and then converting documents to “.pdf”. Scanning paper documents, without the proper Optical Character Recognition (OCR) process, will hamper automated processing of your application for NIH analysis and reporting. Swedish Research Center recommends utilizing Adobe Acrobat, or Neevia Docuprint LT print driver for “.pdf” conversion (see policy: “Software for Online Federal Grant Applications” for direction and assistance in obtaining the required software).
4. Formatting information is provided below:
 - a. Font
 1. Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)
 2. Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch.
 3. Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
 - b. Page Margins
 1. Use *standard paper size (8 ½" x 11)*.
 2. Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages.
 - c. Page Formatting
 1. Reviewers will be reviewing applications as an electronic document and not a paper version. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use only a standard, single-column format for the text. Avoid using a two-column format since it can cause difficulties when reviewing the document electronically.
 2. Do not create or include any information in a header or footer of the attachments. A header will be system-generated that references the name of the PI. Page numbers for the footer will be system-generated in the complete application, with all pages sequentially numbered.
 - d. Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes
 1. You may use a smaller type size but it must be in a black font color, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement. Color can be used in figures; however, all text must be in a black font color, clear and legible.
 - e. Grantsmanship
 1. Use English and avoid jargon.
 2. If terms are not universally known, spell out the term the first time it is used and note the appropriate abbreviation in parentheses. The abbreviation may be used thereafter.

f. Separate Attachments

1. Separate attachments have been designed for the Research Plan sections to maximize automatic validations conducted by the eRA system. When the application is received by the agency, all of the Research Plan sections will be concatenated in the appropriate order so that reviewers and agency staff will see a single cohesive Research Plan.
2. While each section of the Research Plan needs to eventually be uploaded separately, applicants are encouraged to construct the Research Plan as a single document, separating sections into distinct PDF attachments just before uploading the files. In this way the applicant can better monitor formatting requirements such as page limits. When validating for page limits, the eRA Commons will not count the white space created by breaking the text into separate files for uploading.

g. Page Limits

1. Although many of the sections of this application are separate text “.pdf” or PureEdge attachments, page limitations referenced in these instructions and/or funding opportunity announcement must still be followed. Agency validations will include checks for page limits. Some accommodation will be made for sections that when combined must fit within a specified limitation. Note that while these computer validations will help minimize incomplete and/or non-compliant applications, they do not replace the validations conducted by NIH staff. Applications found not to comply with the requirements may lead to rejection of the application during agency validation or delay in the review process.
2. All applications and proposals for NIH and other PHS agency funding must be self-contained within specified page limitations. Unless otherwise specified in an NIH solicitation, Internet website addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review, because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites. Moreover, reviewers are cautioned that they should not directly access an Internet site as it could compromise their anonymity.
3. Observe the page number limitations given in the below table. Only in cases involving interdependent multiple subprojects (e.g., Program Projects and Multi-Center Clinical Trials) will the PHS accept applications that exceed the page number limitations. However, specific page number limits may apply to each subproject. For information pertaining to page number limits for such projects, contact the awarding institute to which the application may be assigned. The page number limitations may also be different for other specialized grant applications (e.g., R03 and R21 applications). Consult and follow the additional instructions for those applications.

Page Limitations and Content Requirements

Section	Page Limit	Content
<u>Introduction</u> - New applications - Resubmission applications - Revision applications	Not required/Not to be submitted 1-3 (check announcement for specific guidance) 1	See Instructions
<u>Research Plan</u> Sections 2-5 Sections 6 - 17	25* * Some exclusions for renewal applications none	Text including all figures, charts, tables, and diagrams.
<u>Biographical Sketches</u>	4	No more than four pages for each person listed as Senior/Key Persons.
<u>Appendix</u>	none	No more than 10 publications (including <i>accepted</i> manuscripts); photographs (include a copy in the Research Plan); questionnaires; and other materials that do not photocopy well.
<u>PAs and RFAs</u>	Page limitations specified in the PA and RFA announcement in the <i>NIH Guide</i> take precedence.	See specific instructions in PAs and RFAs published in the <i>NIH Guide</i> .

Expert Consultant

N/A

Author

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 Charles Buchanan, Grants and Contracts Analyst Lead

Regulatory Requirement

Grants.gov
 NIH

References

Application Guide SF424 (R&R) Version 2, July 5, 2006

Manual

SRC Internal Policy and Procedure Manual

Additional Computer Search Words/Terms

N/A

Addendum (Addenda, if plural)

N/A