Introduction to ASSIST

Office of Sponsored Programs
Administration
Introduction to ASSIST

What is ASSIST?

• Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking (ASSIST) – NIH’s online platform for the preparation and submission of applications.
• Nov 2012 – launched as a submission option for complex, multi-project grant programs.
• Dec 2015 – ASSIST became an option for submitting most competing grant programs though NIH (NOT-OD-16-042).
  • All single & multi-project, competing grant applications
  • Single-project administrative supplements
  • Single-project, post-award successor-in-interest (type 6) requests; and
  • Single-project, post-award change of institution (type 7) requests
Introduction to ASSIST

- How to access ASSIST
- How to navigate ASSIST
- How to edit ASSIST
- How to validate and submit
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How to access ASSIST

• Go to the “electronic Research Administration” page at NIH (era.nih.gov/)
• Select “ASSIST Log-In”
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How to access ASSIST

- Must have eRA Commons login to access ASSIST
- “Application Guide” and “ASSIST User Guide” available here
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How to access ASSIST

- You can initiate a new application with the Funding Opportunity Announcement number.
- You can search existing ASSIST-based applications already prepared at UofL.
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How to access ASSIST

- Searches by “Application Identifier” or “PI Name” are the most specific
- Searches by “Submission Status” are the most general
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How to access ASSIST

• PD/PIs, Admins can only search records for proposals in which they have access to view or edit.
• AO & SO can search all UofL records.
• Find proposal and click “Select”
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How to navigate ASSIST

• The “Actions” menu (left) control the overall proposal.
• The screen history tree (or ‘breadcrumb’ links) at the top allow you to backtrack to an earlier point in your ASSIST navigation.
• The tabs (middle) select individual form details.
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How to navigate ASSIST

Actions – ‘Manage Access’

• Allows the Signing Official (SO) to set access privileges for others.
• Levels of access that can be requested.
  • Edit vs. View Only
  • Entire application vs. specific component
  • Budget data vs. Non-Budget data
• Anyone with a eRA Commons login can be set up with access in ASSIST, even those outside UofL
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How to navigate ASSIST

Actions – ‘Add Optional Form’
• As with SF424, certain forms are optional and must be manually selected for use. Use “Add Optional Form”
• Select form from drop-down and the form’s tab will be added to the proposal.
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How to navigate ASSIST

Other Actions

• ‘Preview Application’ allows you to generate a full PDF version of the application
• ‘Validate Application’ allows you to check the entire application for errors or warnings.
• ‘Copy Application’ allows you to replicate a completed submission into an fresh application template.
How to navigate ASSIST

• For multi-project applications, the “Component Type” will allow you to select an individual project or core component within the proposal.
• Each component will have its own subset of forms.
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How to edit ASSIST

- Each form has an “edit” button, which will unlock the screen and allow for the completion of form fields.
- User must have been granted Edit access by Signing Official.
- Only one person can Edit a form at a time.
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How to edit ASSIST

- In “edit” mode, fields can be modified. Very strict formatting rules. (i.e. Zip + 4).
- White fields are write-in, blue fields are autocomplete.
- Attachments may be added or deleted. Must be in PDF.
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How to edit ASSIST

- When all edits are complete, user may...
  - “Save and Keep Lock” – saves updates but keeps the edit function locked to you.
  - “Save and Release Lock” – saves changes and leaves Edit mode.
  - “Cancel and Release Lock” – disregards all changes, leaves Edit mode.
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How to edit ASSIST

- When the form is saved, warnings and errors will be itemized.
- May continue working on forms, but cannot proceed to submission until all errors are resolved.
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How to validate and submit

- Once all forms are complete, the application must be validated. Click the “Validate Application” button.
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How to validate and submit

• Validation will outline all technical errors in the proposal.
• Validation may not reflect special instructions or variations as dictated by the FOA.
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How to validate and submit

- Once all errors are corrected and warnings reviewed, update the submission status.
- Change from “Work in Progress” to “Ready for Submission”; contact your OSPA Grants Management Specialist and submit signed Proposal Clearance Form to service account.
- No edits can be made! Must change back to “Work in Progress” to edit.
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How to validate and submit

For multi-project proposals…

- Each component must be validated individually…
  - Change component to “Complete” after finishing.
  - “Validate the component” and address issues.
  - Once validation clears, update component to “Final”.
- When all components are marked “Final”…
  - Change status of entire application to “All Components Final”.
  - Perform “Validate Application” and address issues.
  - Once validated, update application to “All Components Validated”.
  - When ready, contact your OSPA Grants Management Specialist and file your signed Proposal Clearance Form
- No edits can be made on any component or form unless application and component are both in “Work in Progress” status.
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How to validate and submit

• “Preview Application” will generate a full hard-copy version of the proposal in PDF format.
• Click “Generate Preview” to view most recent version. Does not auto-update; click to regenerate after any changes.
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Using ASSIST in the Future

• Check the Funding Opportunity Announcement and the NIH Application Guide for specific instructions on how to complete the application forms. Request assistance from assigned OSPA Grants Management Specialist as needed.

• Check the ASSIST User Guide for updates and changes which may have been implemented for accessing, managing, and submitting the forms.

• Technical issues should be submitted to the eRA Service Desk via phone or web ticket (preferred). Check ASSIST User Guide first.

• Future NIH submissions will be submitted through UofL’s iRIS online platform; ASSIST will only be allowed for multi-project submission.