

Proposed Guidelines for the “Dissertation Research Proposal”

(Year 3, December 1st deadline)

The Dissertation Research Proposal should follow the NIH Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award (F31) guidelines (see below). The student should work with their Dissertation Research Advisor/Mentor to develop the proposal and accompanying material.

Format:

1. Font: 11 points, Arial, single-spaced
2. Margins: 0.5 inch (top, bottom, left, right)

Overview of sections and page limits (based on the NIH F31 fellowship instructions described below in more detail):

1. Project summary/abstract: 1 page or less (no more than 30 lines of text)
2. NIH-style Fellowship biosketch: 5 pages
3. Specific Aims: 1 page
4. Research Strategy: 6 pages
 - Significance
 - Approach
 - Preliminary studies/data
5. Bibliography/References: no page limit
6. Student's background and goals for graduate training: 6 pages

Instructions for Dissertation Research Proposal (modified from NIH F31 Fellowship Instructions)

1. Project summary/abstract:

The project summary should be a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work and should be able to stand on its own (separate from the application). This section should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically literate reader. Avoid both descriptions of past accomplishments and the use of the first person. Please be concise."

2. NIH-style biosketch:

See attached blank and example of NIH Fellowship biosketch.

3. Specific Aims

State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will have on the research field(s) involved.

List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology).

4. Research Strategy

Organize the Research Strategy in the specified order and use the instructions provided below:

A. Significance

Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses.

Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.

Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

B. Approach

Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high risk aspects of the proposed work.

C. Preliminary Studies:

Include information on preliminary studies (including data collected by others in the lab), if any. Discuss the student's preliminary studies, data, and/or experience pertinent to this application.

5. Bibliography/References

No particular format is required, however, references should include the complete title, complete list of authors, year, volume # and page #s.

"When citing articles that fall under the Public Access Policy, were authored or co-authored by the applicant, and arose from NIH support, provide the NIH Manuscript Submission reference number (e.g., NIHMS97531) or the PubMed Central (PMC) reference number (e.g., PMCID234567) for each article. If the PMCID is not yet available because the Journal submits articles directly to PMC on behalf of their authors, indicate "PMC Journal – In Process." NIH maintains a [list of such journals](#).

Citations that are not covered by the Public Access Policy, but are publicly available in a free, online format may include URLs or PubMed ID (PMID) numbers along with the full reference. The references should be limited to relevant and current literature. While there is not a page limitation, it is important to be concise and to select only those literature references pertinent to the proposed research."

6. Student's background and goals for graduate training

Organize the Student's Background and Goals for Graduate Training section in the specified order and start each section with the appropriate heading - Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience, Training Goals and Objectives, and Activities Planned Under this Award.

A. Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience

Briefly summarize your past research experience (including undergraduate, graduate and other), results, and conclusions, and when appropriate describe how that experience relates to the proposed project. Do not list academic courses in this section.

B. Training Goals and Objectives

Describe your overall training goals for the duration of your project and how the proposed project will enable the attainment of these goals.

Identify the skills, theories, conceptual approaches, etc. to be learned or enhanced during the project.

Discuss how the proposed research will facilitate your transition to the next career stage.

C. Activities Planned Under this Award

The activities planned under this award should be individually tailored and well-integrated.

Describe, by year, the activities (research, coursework, professional development, etc.) you will be involved in during the project. Estimate the percentage of time to be devoted to each activity. The percentage should total 100 for each year.

Describe the research skills and techniques that you intend to learn during the award period.

Provide a timeline detailing the proposed research training, and professional development for the duration of the project.