Office of Research News & Notes

Funding Agency Updates

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA) Postdoctoral Stipends, Training Related Expenses, Institutional Allowance, and Tuition/Fees Effective for Fiscal Year 2017

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) announced adjusted stipend levels for FY 2017 (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017). All FY 2017 awards previously issued using FY 2016 stipend levels will be revised to adjust stipends to the FY 2017 level. Appointments to institutional training grants that have already been awarded in FY 2017 must be amended to reflect the FY 2017 stipend levels once the training grant award has been adjusted by the NIH. Amended appointments must be submitted through xTrain in the eRA Commons.

See NIH Notice NOT-OD-17-003 for more details and to see the FY17 stipend levels.

Revisions to NIH SF424 (R&R) Application Guides and Supplemental Instructions

The NIH updated its application guides and supplemental instructions based on applicant feedback. The style and layout of the instructions have been updated in addition to clarifications to Forms-D instructions.

To read more about the changes, see NIH Notice NOT-OD-17-023.

Updated Font Guidance for NIH and AHRQ Applications

For NIH and AHRQ applications submitted for due dates on or after January 25, 2017, text in PDF attachments must conform with the following requirements:

- **Text Color**: No restriction. Though not required, black or other high-contrast text colors are recommended since they print well and are legible to the largest audience.
- **Font size**: Must be 11 points or larger. Smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams and charts is acceptable, as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
- **Type density**: Must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch (including characters and spaces).
- **Line spacing**: Must be no more than six lines per vertical inch.

Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, and Palatino Linotype fonts are recommended, although other fonts (both serif and non-serif) are acceptable if they meet the above requirements.

Legibility is of paramount importance. Since some PDF converters may reduce font size, it is important to confirm that the final PDF document complies with the font requirements. Applications that include PDF attachments that do not conform to the minimum requirements listed above may be withdrawn from consideration.

See NIH Notice NOT-OD-17-030 for more details.

REMINDER: Elimination of Most Appendix Materials

To ensure fairness in peer review for all grant applicants, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are clarifying what is and is not allowed as Appendix material.

Allowable appendix materials
Beginning with applications submitted to the NIH, AHRQ, or NIOSH for due dates on or after January 25, 2017, the only allowable appendix materials are:

For applications proposing clinical trials:
- Clinical trial protocols
- Investigator's brochure from Investigational New Drug (IND), as appropriate

For all applications:
- Blank informed consent/assent forms
- Blank surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments
- FOA-specified items.

If appendix materials are required in the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), review criteria for that FOA will address those materials, and applications submitted without those appendix materials will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Note that applications will be withdrawn and not reviewed if they contain unallowable Appendix materials. There are reported instances of this happening to applications already.

For more details, please see NIH Notice NOT-OD-16-129.

University of Pittsburgh News

FY18 Central Research Development Fund (CRDF) Small Grants Program Expression of Interest

Full-time faculty members with appointments that include research are invited to apply to the CRDF Small Grants Program, which provides awards up to $16,000 to use as seed funding for high-quality research, scholarship, and creative endeavors in areas where external funding support is extremely limited.

Interested faculty are strongly encouraged to submit an expression of interest, which includes PI contact information, proposal working title, and a review committee assignment request, by Friday, January 13, 2017, using the University's Competition Space portal. Full proposals are due March 3, 2017.

For more information on the CRDF Small Grants Program and additional eligibility requirements, click here.

Office of Research News

Office of Research Website

Guidance on submitting progress reports through the Office of Research is now on the OR website. Check it out here: http://research.pitt.edu/gms-ProgressReports