

# Reviewer Guide: Simplified Review Framework for Research Project Grant Applications

**1. Chair announces application.** Conflicts are moved to virtual waiting area. Chair announces assigned reviewers. Assigned reviewers state preliminary overall impact scores.

**2. Assigned reviewers explain their scores.** Focus on major score-driving issues. Do not read your critiques.

## Reviewer 1 (3-4 minutes):

- Briefly summarize the application's goals (1-2 sentences). Do not restate aims.

### Factor 1 (Importance of the Research) — *Should it be done?*

- If the project is successfully completed, how will it (or will it not) advance the field?
- Evaluate the importance of the proposed research, not the field or disease.
- Factor 1 is the primary driver of overall impact. Differentiate good science from the very best.

### Factor 2 (Rigor and Feasibility) — *Can it be done well?*

- How well does the research plan support the ability to achieve the study goals?
- Evaluate at a high level, focusing on important issues rather than technical minutiae.
- [Address Inclusion plans and Sex as a Biological Variable (SABV) in the context of the scientific goals.]

### Factor 3 (Expertise and Resources) — *Are the expertise and resources in place to do it?*

- If there are *gaps* (specific to the project), explain how they affected the overall impact score.
- If expertise/resources are *appropriate*, do not mention Factor 3.

### Additional Review Criteria (If applicable)

- Protection of Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, Biohazards.

### Overall Impact

- Summarize how you arrived at your overall impact score (1 sentence).

## Reviewers 2 & 3 (2-3 minutes or less):

- Focus on *non-redundant* score-driving strengths/weaknesses, differences from other reviewers.
- Explain if you weighted the factors differently, even if you identified similar issues.
- "I have nothing to add" is perfectly acceptable.

**3. Open Discussion: Unassigned reviewers play an active role and cast an informed score.**

- Listen, ask questions, share different perspectives.
- Focus on the importance of the research and overall impact.
- If you hear a comment that doesn't relate to the review criteria, ask clarifying questions.
- *The goal is to reach clarity, not consensus.*

**4. Chair asks assigned reviewers to state final scores, setting the range.**

- If you wish to score outside the range, you must state the reason (if you didn't participate in the discussion) but not re-open discussion.

**5. Non-scoreable issues:** Budget; Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources (if applicable)

**6. Reviewers in conflict are brought back into the room.**