

# Writing an NIH Biosketch and Obtaining Letters of Recommendation

Grant Writing Basics: Predoctoral Applications  
MSTP:8514, Spring 2020  
The University of Iowa

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## Information on how fellowships are scored:

Funding Opportunity Title	Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Fellowship for Students at Institutions Without NIH- Funded Institutional Predoctoral Dual-Degree Training Programs (Parent F30)
Activity Code	F30 Individual Predoctoral NRSA for MD/PhD Fellowships
Announcement Type	Release of PA-18-671
Related Notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>January 22, 2019 Multi-Site File</li><li>December 28, 2018 NRSA Fields Project, Sign</li><li>July 22, 2018 Education, Sign</li><li>April 2, 2018</li><li>March 5, 2017</li><li>March 4, 2017</li><li>March 1, 2017</li></ul>
Funding Opportunity Announcement # (DA) Number	PA-19-192

### Section V. Application Review Information

#### 1. Criteria

Only the review criteria described below will be considered in the review process. Applications submitted to the NIH in support of the NIH mission are evaluated for scientific and technical merit through the NIH peer review system.

Criteria questions in the Clinical Trial text insert are in addition to, and do not replace, the standard boilerplate questions below.

For this particular announcement, note the following:

- A fellowship application has a research project that is integrated with the training plan. The review will emphasize the applicant's potential for a productive career; the applicant's need for the proposed training; and the degree to which the research project and training plan, the sponsor(s), and the environment will satisfy those needs.

#### Overall Impact/ Merit

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the applicant's potential for, and commitment to, a program of independent scientific research career in a health-related field, in consideration of the scored and additional review criteria.

A fellowship application has a research project that is integrated with the training plan. The review will emphasize the applicant's *potential* for a productive career, the applicant's *need* for the proposed training, and the degree to which the research project and training plan, the sponsor(s), and the environment *satisfy* those needs.

FOA: PA-18-671  
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/oa-files/PA-19-192.html>

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## Information on how fellowships are scored:

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### Scored Review Criteria:

1. Fellowship Applicant (*Biosketch*, Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training)
2. Sponsors, collaborators, and consultants (Sponsor and Co-Sponsor statements, Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training, Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants)
3. Research Training Plan (Research strategy, Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training, Sponsor and Co-Sponsor statements)
4. Training Potential (Research Strategy, Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training, Sponsor and Co-Sponsor statements)
5. Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training (Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training, Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training, Sponsor and Co-Sponsor statements)

Additional review criteria will not be scored but are considered by reviewers (see FOA for details)

FOA: PA-18-671  
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-18-671.html>

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## F30/F31 scored review criteria that can be addressed in the biosketch:

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### Fellowship applicant (additional criteria for F30):

1. Are the applicant's academic record and research experience of high quality?
2. Are the applicant's interests consistent with a career as a physician-scientist or other clinician-scientist?
3. Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent, productive contributor to biomedical, behavioral, or clinical science as a physician-scientist or other clinician-scientist?
4. Does the applicant demonstrate commitment to a career as a physician-scientist or other clinician-scientist?

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## Creating your biosketch:

**SciENcv**

**SciENcv: Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae**  
A researcher profile system for all individuals who apply for, receive or are associated with research investments from federal agencies. SciENcv is available in My NCBI.

**About SciENcv**  
Background Information  
SciENcv FAQs  
YouTube Video: SciENcv tutorial  
YouTube Video: Integrating with ORCID  
Report Changes to NIH Biosketch  
Provide Feedback

**Interfacing with SciENcv**  
SciENcv Data Documentation  
SciENcv Data Schemas  
**Click here to start!**

**News and Resources**  
SciENcv News  
SciENcv Presentations  
SciENcv Help  
My Bibliography Help

**Create a New Biosketch**

Biosketch name:  **A**

Format:  NIH Biosketch **B**  
 NSF Biosketch  
 IES Biosketch

Choose data source:  Start with a blank document **C**  
 Existing Biosketch:   
 External source:  **D**

Sharing:  Private **D**  
 Public

**Detailed instructions available:**  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK154494/>

**Additional tutorials available from NIH**  
 Tutorial: [Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae](#)  
 Webinar: [Create a Biosketch with SciENcv](#)

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## Creating your biosketch:

**Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples**

Biosketches are required in both competing applications and progress reports. Find instructions, blank format pages, and sample biosketches below. Try SciENcv, a tool supporting multiple research agencies, to help you develop your biosketch and automatically format it according to NIH requirements.

Form Name	Form Number	Description	How to Access	Instructions	Additional Information	Updated Date
Biographical Sketch Format Page (non-fellowship)		Prepare biographical sketches for applications and progress reports for non-fellowship applications and awards.	<b>Blank format page:</b> Non-fellowship Biosketch	<b>Instructions:</b> Non-fellowship Biosketch	<b>SAMPLE:</b> Non-fellowship biosketch  Try SciENcv to help you develop your biosketch and automatically format it according to NIH requirements.	September 2017
Biographical Sketch Format Page (fellowship)		Prepare biographical sketches for applications and progress reports for fellowship applications and awards.	<b>Blank format page:</b> Fellowship Biosketch	<b>Instructions:</b> Fellowship Biosketch	<b>SAMPLE:</b> Predoctoral Fellowship Biosketch  <b>SAMPLE:</b> Postdoctoral Fellowship Biosketch  Try SciENcv to help you develop your biosketch and automatically format it according to NIH requirements.	September 2017

*Forms and instructions also available [from NIH](#)*

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## Creating your biosketch:

### Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples

Biosketches are required in both competing applications and progress reports. Find instructions, blank format pages, and sample biosketches below. Try SciENcv, a tool supporting multiple research agencies, to help you develop your biosketch and automatically format it according to NIH requirements.

Form Name	Form Number	Description	How to Access	Instructions	Additional Information	Updated Date
Biographical Sketch Format Page (non-fellowship)		Prepare biographical sketches for applications and progress reports for non-fellowship applications and awards.	<a href="#">Blank format page: Non-fellowship Biosketch</a>	<a href="#">Instructions: Non-fellowship Biosketch</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Biographical Sketch Format Page (non-fellowship):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research grant (e.g., R01, R21...)</li> <li>Career development grants (K)</li> <li>Training grants (T)</li> <li>All other application types (<i>use also for Fellowship Sponsor/Co-Sponsors</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
Biographical Sketch Format Page (fellowship)		Prepare biographical sketches for applications and progress reports for fellowship applications and awards.	<a href="#">Blank format page: Fellowship Biosketch</a>	<a href="#">Instructions: Fellowship Biosketch</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Fellowship Application Biographical Sketch Format Page (fellowships):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual fellowships</li> <li>R36 dissertation grants</li> <li>diversity supplements</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

you develop your biosketch and automatically format it according to NIH requirements.

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## Creating your biosketch:

### Which Biosketch should I use?

- Depends **who** you are (educationally speaking) and **what** (funding opportunity speaking) you are applying for
- Complete the form for the particular grant application you are applying for (rather than what your status is now)
  - Today I'm a postdoctoral fellow and I'm applying to be Co-I on my mentor's NIH R01 grant → [use Standard Biosketch](#)
  - Today I'm a Postdoc, and I'm applying for a fellowship grant (F, [use Fellowship Applicant Biosketch Format Page](#))
- Instructions for Foundations and non-NIH funder might be different

EMORY

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

- Applicant information
- Personal statement – Section A
- Positions and honors – Section B
- Contributions to science – Section C
- Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D

OMB No. 0525-0001 and 0525-0002 (Rev. 08/17 Approved Through 09/30/2020)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the biographic person and their significant contributions.  
Follow this format for each person: **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORCID COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing; include professional training and residency training if applicable. Add/leave open as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement

B. Positions and Honors

C. Contributions to Science

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE

### **General:**

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

Instructions, blank forms, and examples: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

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## Potential benefits of changes to the biosketch:

- 1) Total length: now 5 pages instead of 4
- 2) "Contributions to Science" section replaces "Selected Peer Review" section
  - Describe up to 5 of your most important contributions to science, which allows:
    - An opportunity to describe historical background and indicate how findings are significant
    - Chance to outline how findings/prior work has influenced your field
    - Where you were involved in team science, allows you to state the specific role you played in the work.
    - Chance to highlight a broader set of contributions (non-publication research products can be cited).
  - Match each with up to 4 associated publications/research products
- 3) Provide URL to full list of published work in publicly available digital database

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

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- Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 09/17 Approved Through 03/31/2020)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors. Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement  
B. Positions and Honors  
C. Contributions to Science  
D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE

### General:

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

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## Pre-doctoral form and sample – applicant information:

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 09/17 Approved Through 03/31/2020)

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors. Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: Robertson-Chang, Leilani

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): RobertsonL

POSITION TITLE: Graduate Student Research Assistant

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	START DATE MM/YYYY	END DATE MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Swarthmore College	BA	08/2008	05/2012	Biology
UC San Diego	PHD	08/2012	05/2018	Molecular Biology

Make sure to include location of institutions

For trainees, list anticipated completion date

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

- Applicant information
- **Personal statement – Section A**
- Positions and honors – Section B
- Contributions to science – Section C
- Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D

OMB No. 0253-0001 and 0253-0002 (Rev. 08/17 Approved Through 09/01/2020)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the biographical sketch and biographical contributions.  
Follow this format for each section: **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ORCID COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing; include professional training and residency training if applicable. Address dates as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement  
B. Positions and Honors  
C. Contributions to Science  
D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_ COURSE TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

### **General:**

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

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## Instructions by section:

### **A. Personal Statement**

1. Briefly describe why you are well-suited for your role in the project described in this application. The relevant factors may include:
  - aspects of your training
  - previous experimental work
    - on this specific topic
    - on related topics
  - technical expertise
  - collaborators or scientific environment
  - past performance in this or related fields
2. Can include specific contributions to science that are not included in Section C. Do not present or expand on materials that should be described in other sections of the biosketch or application.
3. May describe impediments to past productivity

• *Include a statement about relevance to this particular grant*

*Use with caution, not all reviewers may be sympathetic*

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## Pre-doctoral form:

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### A. Personal Statement

4. Indicate if you have published or created research products under a different name
5. May identify up to *four* peer reviewed publications or research products that specifically highlight your experience and qualifications for this project.
  - Audio or video products
  - Conference proceedings (abstracts, posters, or other presentations)
  - Patents
  - Data and research materials
  - Databases
  - Educational aids or curricula
  - Instruments or equipment
  - Models
  - Protocols
  - Software or netware
  - Interim research products (have specific citation requirements)

*Lots of people don't take advantage of this*

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## Pre-doctoral form:

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### A. Personal Statement (**differences from general**)

6. R36 Applicants (PD/PI) only, include:
  - description of career goals and intended career trajectory
  - description of interest in specific areas of research designated in FOA.
7. Diversity Supplement Candidates only, include:
  - description of general scientific achievements and/or interests
  - specific research objectives and career goals
  - any source(s) of current funding.

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*Uses "my" and "I", and starts with long-term research interests*

## Section A (pre-doctoral) example:

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**A. → Personal Statement**

My long term research interests involve the development of a comprehensive understanding of key developmental pathways and how alterations in gene expression contribute to human disease. My academic training and research experience to date have provided me with an excellent background in molecular biology and microbiology. While in high school I was awarded an NIH Diversity Supplement award to work as a research technician for two summers in Dr. Indira Creative's lab at the University of Hawaii. As an undergraduate at Swarthmore College, I conducted research with Dr. Xavier Factor on the mechanisms of action of a new class of antibiotics. This resulted in a co-authorship publication, as well as an invitation to present a poster at the annual Antibiotica meeting in Denver, Colorado. For my graduate training at UC San Diego, I have moved into the fields of genetics and biochemistry by studying the regulation of transcription in yeast, under Dr. Tanti Auguri. Dr. Auguri is an internationally recognized leader in the field of yeast genetics and has an extensive record for training predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows. Along with giving me new conceptual and technical training, the proposed training plan outlines a set of career development activities and workshops – e.g. public speaking, literature analysis, biomedical ethics, and career options. For my initial project I am currently developing a novel protocol for the purification for components of large transcription complexes which I hope to submit as a first author publication in the next few months. As a native Hawaiian, I am the first in my family to graduate from college so I am excited to keep pushing forward with my education. Overall, I feel that my choice of sponsor, research project, and the training I will get from this fellowship will give me a solid foundation for my long-term goal to become an academic researcher.

a. Robertson-Chang L and Auguri, T. 2005. A tandem affinity purification tag approach allows for isolation of interacting proteins in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In preparation.

b. Robertson-Chang L and Auguri, T. A tandem affinity purification tag approach allows for isolation of interacting proteins in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Abstract for poster presentation, 2004 Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology Meeting, Seattle, Washington, September 2004.

*Choice of project/training*      *Background*

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*Uses "I" and starts with summary of all relevant aspects*

## Section A example:

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**A. Personal Statement**

I have the expertise, leadership, training, expertise and motivation necessary to successfully carry out the proposed research project. I have a broad background in psychology, with specific training and expertise in ethnographic and survey research and secondary data analysis on psychological aspects of drug addiction. My research includes neuropsychological changes associated with addiction. As PI or co-Investigator on several university- and NIH-funded grants, I laid the groundwork for the proposed research by developing effective measures of disability, depression, and other psychosocial factors relevant to the aging substance abuser, and by establishing strong ties with community providers that will make it possible to recruit and track participants over time as documented in the following publications. In addition, I successfully administered the projects (e.g. staffing, research protections, budget), collaborated with other researchers, and produced several peer-reviewed publications from each project. As a result of these previous experiences, I am aware of the importance of frequent communication among project members and of constructing a realistic research plan, timeline, and budget. The current application builds logically on my prior work. During 2005-2006 my career was disrupted due to family obligations. However, upon returning to the field I immediately resumed my research projects and collaborations and successfully competed for NIH support.

- Merryle, R.J. & Hunt, M.C. (2004). Independent living, physical disability and substance abuse among the elderly. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(4), 10-22.
- Hunt, M.C., Jensen, J.L. & Crenshaw, W. (2007). Substance abuse and mental health among community-dwelling elderly. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 24(9), 1124-1135.
- Hunt, M.C., Wiechelt, S.A. & Merryle, R. (2008). Predicting the substance-abuse treatment needs of an aging population. *American Journal of Public Health*, 45(2), 236-245. PMID: PMC9162292
- Hunt, M.C., Newlin, D.B. & Fishbein, D. (2009). Brain imaging in methamphetamine abusers across the life-span. *Gerontology*, 46(3), 122-145.

*Experience managing projects including collaborations*      *Investigator role and contribution*

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## Section A example:

*Takes opportunity to explain career disruption and recovery from it.*

### A. Personal Statement

I have the expertise, leadership, training, expertise and motivation necessary to successfully carry out the proposed research project. I have a broad background in psychology, with specific training and expertise in ethnographic and survey research and secondary data analysis on psychological aspects of drug addiction. My research includes neuropsychological changes associated with addiction. As PI or co-Investigator on several university- and NIH-funded grants, I laid the groundwork for the proposed research by developing effective measures of disability, depression, and other psychosocial factors relevant to the aging substance abuser, and by establishing strong ties with community providers that will make it possible to recruit and track participants over time as documented in the following publications. In addition, I successfully administered the projects (e.g. staffing, research protections, budget), collaborated with other researchers, and produced several peer-reviewed publications from each project. As a result of these previous experiences, I am aware of the importance of frequent communication among project members and of constructing a realistic research plan, timeline, and budget. The current application builds logically on my prior work. During 2005-2006 my career was disrupted due to family obligations. However, upon returning to the field I immediately resumed my research projects and collaborations and successfully competed for NIH support.

1. **Meryle**, R.J. & Hunt, M.C. (2004). Independent living, physical disability and substance abuse among the elderly. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(4), 10-22.
2. Hunt, M.C., Jensen, J.L. & Crenshaw, W. (2007). Substance abuse and mental health among community-dwelling elderly. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 24(9), 1124-1135.
3. Hunt, M.C., **Wiechel**, S.A. & **Meryle**, R. (2008). Predicting the substance-abuse treatment needs of an aging population. *American Journal of Public Health*, 45(2), 236-245. PMID: PMC9162292 Hunt, M.C., **Newlin**, D.B. & **Fishbein**, D. (2009). Brain imaging in methamphetamine abusers across the life-span. *Gerontology*, 46(3), 122-145.

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

- Applicant information
- Personal statement – Section A
- **Positions and honors – Section B**
- Contributions to science – Section C
- Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D

ERHS No. 1025-001 and 1025-002 (Rev. 0817 Approved Through 03/01/2021)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the following personal and other significant contributions.  
Follow the format for each section. DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ORCID OR COMMONS USER NAME (optional, e.g., agency login) \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing; include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement  
B. Positions and Honors  
C. Contributions to Science  
D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE

### General:

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

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## Pre-doctoral form:

### B. Positions and Honors

1. List in chronological order relevant previous positions, including: postdoctoral research training, employment after college, any military service.
  - High school students and undergraduates may include any previous positions.
  - Trainees can include current position (e.g., Graduate student researcher)
  - Clinicians should include information on internship, residency and specialty board certification (actual and anticipated with dates) in addition to other information requested. This information is used in reviewing the application and in determining the stipend level for Postdoctoral Fellowships.
2. State the Activity/Occupation: include start/end dates, field, name of institution/company, and the name of supervisor/employer.

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## Instructions by section:

### B. Positions and Honors

3. If not currently located at applicant organization, include projected position at the applicant organization as well.
4. List any honors. Include present membership on any Federal Government public advisory committee.

*Be neat – make it easier for reviewers to get a good overview!*

#### B. Positions and Honors

##### Positions and Employment

1998-2000 Fellow, Division of Intramural Research, National Institute of Drug Abuse, Bethesda, MD  
2000-2002 Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT

*Do NOT rely on program such as SciENCv to do a good job formatting.*

2001- Consultant, Coastal Psychological Services, San Francisco, CA  
2002-2005 Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO  
2007- Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

#### Other Experience and Professional Memberships

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## Section B (pre-doctoral) example:

### B. Positions and Honors

#### Positions and Employment

2007 - 2008 Lab Technician, University of Hawaii  
2012 - Graduate Student Research Assistant, UC San Diego

#### Other Experience and Professional Memberships

2007 - Member, Association for Women in Science  
2009 - Member, Sigma Xi

#### Honors

2007 - 2008 Diversity Supplement, National Institutes of Health  
2008 Scholarship, Daughters of Hawaii Society  
2008 - 2012 Scholarship, National Merit Scholarship Program  
2012 Paula F. Laufenberg award for best senior project in the Biology Department, Swarthmore College

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

- Applicant information
- Personal statement – Section A
- Positions and honors – Section B
- **Contributions to science – Section C**
- Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D

ERHS No. 1925-001 and 1925-002 (Rev. 08/17 Approved Through 03/31/2021)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the following personal and other significant contributions.  
Follow the format for each section. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
GSA/COMMONS USER NAME (optional, e.g., agency login) \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing; include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement  
B. Positions and Honors  
C. Contributions to Science  
D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE

#### **General:**

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

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Pre-doctoral instructions:

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**C. Contributions to Science...*predoctoral students and more advanced candidates only***

1. May list up to 5, each ≤ 0.5 p including figures and citations
2. Considering your level of experience, briefly describe your most significant contributions to science.
  - While all applicants *may* describe up to five contributions, **graduate students and postdoctorates are encouraged to consider highlighting two or three they consider most significant.**
  - For each contribution, indicate:
    - historical background that frames the scientific problem
    - the central finding(s)
    - the relevance of the finding(s) to science, technology, or public health
    - your specific role in the described work.

*Senior investigators: consider putting in order of relevance to grant (vs. historically)*

*Explain what the status quo is – help the reviewers appreciate the barriers your study overcomes.*

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Pre-doctoral instructions:

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**C. Contributions to Science...*predoctoral students and more advanced candidates only***

3. For each contribution, you may reference up to four peer-reviewed publications or other non-publication research products
  - Research papers, book chapters, reviews
  - Audio or video products
  - Conference proceedings (abstracts, posters, or other presentations)
  - Patents
  - Data and research materials
  - Databases
  - Educational aids or curricula
  - Instruments or equipment
  - Models
  - Protocols
  - Software or netware
  - Interim research products (have specific citation requirements)
4. Also provide a URL to a full list of your published work; link must be to a federal government website (e.g., My Bibliography).
 

*maintained by the US National Library of Medicine*

*Manuscripts listed as “pending publication” or “in preparation” should be included and identified (but not referenced)*

*Indicate if you previously used another name that is reflected in any of the citations.*

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## Example pre-doctoral section C:

### C. Contribution to Science

- High School Research:** I spent two summers doing research in the laboratory of Dr. Indra M. Creative at University of Hawaii, funded by a NIH Diversity Supplement award. Dr. Creative has developed several new anti-fungal drugs that might protect against skin infections. Over the course of two summers I set up in vitro cultures of skin cell lines and conducted a wide range of toxicity assays. We were excited to find that one of the new agents showed almost no toxicity, even at fairly high doses. Dr. Creative is now testing the drug in animals exposed to different types of fungal infections, including *Candida albicans*.
  - Footman B, Eisser JK, Robertson-Chang L, Creative IM. Testing XXH for toxicity in vitro. University of Hawaii Research Symposium; 2008 May; Manoa, HI.
- Undergraduate Research:** I was part of a project in the laboratory of Dr. Xavier Factor at Swarthmore College. Dr. Factor's laboratory studies the mechanisms of action of antibiotics. During my time in his lab I was looking at how a new antibiotic, Gen Y, is able to unravel bacterial DNA. My contributions to this work were included in a publication recently accepted in Cellular and Molecular Biology. The work was particularly exciting because it looks like the mechanism used by Factor Y might be completely novel, making it a potential candidate for treating patients infected with antibiotic resistant organisms. Dr. Factor was recently awarded a patent for this new drug.
  - Nieman PY, Robertson-Chang L, Factor X. Gen Y: a novel antibiotic with DNA unwinding abilities. Cellular and Molecular Biology. In press.
  - Robertson-Chang L, Factor X. Testing the ability of antibiotic Gen Y to kill Gram-negative bacteria. Antibiotica annual meeting; 2011 September; Denver, CO.
- Graduate Research:** My ongoing predoc research is focused on transcriptional gene regulation in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. I believe the results from my research will likely be highly relevant to human health as they will provide new details into the workings of complex biological systems, which will allow for further extrapolations into the development of certain diseases and their progression. I am currently developing a novel protocol for the purification of components of large transcription complexes which I hope to submit as a first author publication in the next few months.

In fellowship application, contributions can be broken down to:

Early Career, Graduate Career, Postdoctoral Career

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## Section C example:

### C. Contribution to Science

- My early publications directly addressed the fact that substance abuse is often overlooked in older adults. However, because many older adults were raised during an era of increased drug and alcohol use, there are reasons to believe that this will become an increasing issue as the population ages. These publications found that older adults appear in a variety of primary care settings or seek mental health providers to deal with emerging addiction problems. These publications document this emerging problem but guide primary care providers and geriatric mental health providers to recognize symptoms, assess the nature of the problem and apply the necessary interventions. By providing evidence and simple clinical approaches, this body of work has changed the standards of care for addicted older adults and will continue to provide assistance in relevant medical settings well into the future. I served as the primary investigator or co-investigator in all of these studies.
  - Goczynski, J., Shaft, B.M., Meryle, R., & Hunt, M.C. (2002). Community based participatory research with late-life addicts. *American Journal of Alcohol and Drug Abuse*, 15(3), 222-238.
  - Shaft, B.M., Hunt, M.C., Meryle, R., & Venturi, R. (2003). Policy implications of genetic transmission of alcohol and drug abuse in female nonusers. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 30(5), 46-58.
  - Hunt, M.C., Marks, A.E., Shaft, B.M., Meryle, R., & Jensen, J.L. (2004). Early-life family and community characteristics and late-life substance abuse. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 28(2), 26-37.
  - Hunt, M.C., Marks, A.E., Venturi, R., Crenshaw, W. & Ratonian, A. (2007). Community-based intervention strategies for reducing alcohol and drug abuse in the elderly. *Addiction*, 104(9), 1436-1606. PMID: PMC9000292

Key issue that was addressed.

Important, tangible outcomes.

How outcomes were achieved.

The role of this investigator.

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Section C example:

**C. Contribution to Science**

**2. Role of plasma membrane monoamine transporters response to psychostimulants**

During postdoctoral training in the Caron laboratory I was able to contribute (as co-author) to several important papers on monoamine transporters, which were based on novel mouse gene knockout models including, dopamine transporter, the norepinephrine transporter, and the vesicular monoamine transporter. These papers have been very influential in our understanding of the function of these transporters.

- Wang YM, Gainetdinov RR, Fumagalli F, Xu F, Jones SR, et al. Knockout of the vesicular monoamine transporter 2 gene results in neonatal death and supersensitivity to cocaine and amphetamine. *Neuron*. 1997 Dec;19(6):1285-96. PMID: [9427251](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9427251/).

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*Even better if accurate: "Demonstrated that ...transporters play role in..."*

*Explain what this contribution was – what did you do vs. labmates?*

*Ideally would provide some evidence for this.*

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Section C example:

**C. Contributions to Science**

3. Provide URL to a full list of your published work as found in a publicly available digital database (e.g. My Bibliography maintained by the US National Library of Medicine).

*Show URL in case link doesn't work.*

gradually begin to view treatment as an intrusion into normal life. Elderly narcotics users were shown in carefully constructed ethnographic studies to be especially responsive to tailored social support networks that allow them to eventually reduce their maintenance doses and move into other forms of therapy. These studies also demonstrate the policy and commercial implications associated with these findings.

- Hunt, M.C. & Jensen, J.L. (2003). Morbidity among elderly substance abusers. *Journal of the Geriatrics*, 60(4), 45-61.
- Hunt, M.C. & Pour, B. (2004). Methadone treatment and personal assessment. *Journal Drug Abuse*, 45(5), 15-26.
- Merryle, R. & Hunt, M.C. (2005). The use of various nicotine delivery systems by older nicotine addicts. *Journal of Ageing*, 54(1), 24-41. PMID: PMC9112304
- Hunt, M.C., Jensen, J.L. & Merryle, R. (2008). The aging addict: ethnographic profiles of the elderly drug user. NY, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

**Complete List of Published Work in MyBibliography:**  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/myncbi/collections/public/1PgT7IEFIAJBGMRDdWfMjWAOI/?sort=date&direction=ascending>

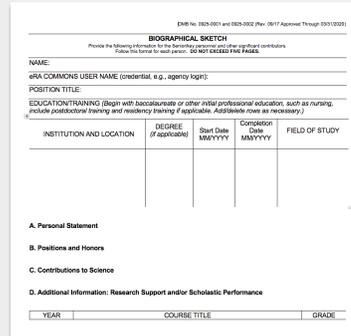
*URL must be to a Federal Government website (.gov suffix).*

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## Sections of an F30/F31 biosketch:

### Updated sections as per changes made in 2016

- Applicant information
- Personal statement – Section A
- Positions and honors – Section B
- Contributions to science – Section C
- **Research Support and/or Scholastic performance – Section D**



OMB No. 0253-0001 and 0253-0002 (Rev. 08/17 Approved Through 09/30/2020)

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the leading professional and scholastic contributions.  
Follow this format for each person: **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ORCID COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing; include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add dates over as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement  
B. Positions and Honors  
C. Contributions to Science  
D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE

### **General:**

Figures, tables (other than those included in the provided format pages), or graphics are **not allowed in the biosketch**. Do not embed or attach files (e.g. video, graphics, sound, data).

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## Pre- and post-doctoral instructions:

### **D. Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance**

#### Research Support

1. Applicants for pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and dissertation research grants, as well as diversity supplements, **do not** have to complete the Research Support section.
  - If you have Research Support, you may complete both sections
2. List ongoing research support
  - Include the grant number, funding agency, title, dates of support, the goal of the project, and your role
  - Do not include number of person months or costs
3. List support completed in the last 3 years
  - Provide a list of completed research projects that you want to draw attention to in the last 3 years, as above.

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Pre- and post-doctoral instructions:

**D. Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance**

Scholastic Performance

1. Using the chart provided, list by institution and year all undergraduate and graduate courses with grades.
2. In the space following the chart, explain any marking system if other than 1-100, A, B, C, D, F, or 0-4.0 if applicable. Show levels required for a passing grade.

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Example section D:

**D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance**

**Scholastic Performance**

YEAR	COURSE TITLE	GRADE
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE		
2008	Cellular and Molecular Biology	A
2008	Foundations of Chemical Principles	A
2009	Organismal and Population Biology	B
2009	Omics	B
2008	First Year Seminar: Nation and Migration	A
2009	Statistics, Probability, and Reliability	A
2009	Calculus I	B
2009	General Physics I	B
2009	Introductory Chemistry	A
2009	Organic Chemistry	B
2010	American Literature	B
2010	General Physics II	B
2010	Organic Chemistry II	B
2010	Microbial Pathogenesis and the Immune Response	A
2010	Introduction to Cognitive Science	A
2010	Biological Chemistry	B
2011	Anthropology of Childhood and the Family	A
2011	Disease, Culture, and Society in the Modern World	A
2011	Human Genetics	A
2011	Senior Project	A
2011	Bioinformatics	B
2012	Cell Biology	A
2012	Physics in Modern Medicine	A
2012	Genomics and Systems Biology	A
2012	Senior Project	A
UC SAN DIEGO		
2012	Seminar in Genetics	P
2013	Statistics for the Life Sciences	P
2013	Ethics in Biological Research	CRE
2014	Seminar in Physiology and Behavior	P

Except for the scientific ethics course, UC San Diego graduate courses are graded P (pass) or F (fail). Passing is C plus or better. The scientific ethics course is graded CRE (credit) or NC (no credit). Students must attend at least seven of the eight presentation/discussion sessions for credit.

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## Summary of tips for writing the “Contributions to Science” section well:

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- Talk about those most relevant to current project first
- Start each with header indicating what it’s about (or what you showed)
- Acceptable (maybe even expected) to have <5 contributions (especially if junior); make the ones you have meaningful
- Remember that you are not limited to traditional outcomes with traditional support, e.g. can cite:
  - audio or video products; patents; data and research materials; databases; educational aids or curricula; instruments or equipment; models; protocols; software or netware.
- Be clear about what your contribution was (don’t talk only about what the team did)
- Write in an engaging style to convey your excitement about your science, as in personal statement.

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## Tips for writing PS and Contributions well:

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- Write in an engaging, narrative style
  - Tell a story
  - Give it a logical beginning, middle and ending
  - Draw in and engage the reader
    - (don’t limit yourself to facts and figures and don’t make this just another description of scientific results; convey your excitement)
  - Use “I” and active voice
  - Be aspirational – express where you would like the science to go
- Cover all aspects that qualify you to study this problem, including:
  - Expertise/experience
  - Leadership skills
  - Established collaborations
- Take advantage of the opportunity to list most relevant publications

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## Tips for writing PS and Contributions well:

### Pick your Impactful Papers

- If you are an Established Investigator

Pick the ones that have changed the field  
Pick ones that show the continuity of your work  
Pick ones that show the progress of your work  
Pick ones that highlight key technology  
Pick ones that lead you into the next work

### Pick your Impactful Papers

- If you are a Young Investigator

Pick papers that show progression as a scientist  
Pick papers that indicate independence  
Pick papers that feature your impact  
Pick papers that highlight new technology  
Pick papers that lead you into the next work

### Tell YOUR story using those papers

- These papers should showcase your work
- Indicate special recognition the work received.
- Indicate where you were, why you were there and how the scientific environment influenced your work



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## Recommendations

- Each new grant proposal should prompt you to revise your biosketch, especially the Personal Statement (and possibly Contributions to Science), so that it speaks *directly* to this particular grant proposal
- Pay attention to aesthetics and layout – spacing, font, page break
  - Does your printed out biosketch look like the example?
  - Do you need to customize any subheaders to make a point – e.g., teaching or curriculum development
- Reviewers are looking for specific information in particular places – make it easy for the reviewer by following the rules and the formatting

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Additional words of wisdom:

### Handcrafted vs. mass produced

- Beer, sushi, and furniture.
- When such goods are hand crafted one can see the attention and care that has gone into them.
- Your biosketch is your scientific autobiography. If you do not take care in its crafting it will reflect negatively upon you.

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### If you are the PI of the grant....

- Even if you are a postdoctoral fellow, you need to read/review / edit the Personal Statement of all other contributors to this proposal
- WHY?
  - Because this is the PI's job
  - Each Personal Statement must reflect that writer's role on the project
- If someone is sponsoring / mentoring / collaborating with you, that should be mentioned in that person's Personal Statement

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### Humility vs. arrogance

- Extraordinary evidence for extraordinary claims
- The magnitude of your supposed accomplishment must align with your tangible contributions
- Self-aggrandizing will certainly backfire. Probably better to lean towards humility to increase likability factor

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*Make claims if you can back them up— and do back them up.*

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Additional words of wisdom:

### Associate Professors

- 3-4 Significant accomplishments should be used. If you have 5 you should probably be a Full professor.

### Assistant Professors

- If you have 5 significant accomplishments, congratulations, you should be awarded tenure any minute.
- However, it is more likely that you have had time to make 2 or 3 significant contributions. Better to have fewer well-documented examples than 4-5 less-documented.

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### Full Professors

- One would hope that Full Professors have 4-5 significant contribution backed by 4 strong papers.
- Full professors have had more time to lead initiatives. Including one contribution that involves programmatic development or national/international leadership is probably a good idea. I think it is better for more junior investigators to focus on research-oriented accomplishments

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## Reference Letters

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### General information

- Reference letters are required for your application to be reviewed!
  - They must be submitted by the application deadline
  - They must be submitted by the referee through eRA commons
  - You will be notified by email when letters are submitted, but they will remain confidential
- You must have 3, but no more than 5, reference letters
- Resubmission applications require referees to submit updated letters
- You must include names of referees in cover letter of the application

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## Reference Letters

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### Who to select as Referees

- Individuals who can speak to your training, accomplishments, career goals, and potential
  - Consider MSTP directors
  - Clerkship supervisors
  - Thesis Committee members
  - Undergraduate research advisor, if you did significant undergraduate research relatively recently
- Select 1 person outside your department to show outside support
- Sponsor and any co-sponsor **cannot** be a referee (they provide statements in the Sponsor/Co-sponsor sections of the application)

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## Reference Letters

### What information to provide your referees

- The date the application is due
- Your eRA commons User ID
- Your full name as it appears in eRA commons
- Your funding opportunity announcement number -> PA-19-192
- Biosketch, project title, and Specific Aims page
- Suggested areas of your background/abilities that you'd like them to address
- Formal instructions with suggested evaluation points, shown on next slide and available through:
  - NIH website - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/submission-process/reference-letters.htm>
  - MSTP Handbook P62-63

Pairs letter with the application

Current FOA # for standard F30 application

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## Reference Letters

### Instructions for Fellowship Applicant Referees

Name of Fellow (First & Last Name as shown in the eRA Commons): \_\_\_\_\_

Fellow's eRA Commons Username: \_\_\_\_\_

FOA Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The fellowship applicant is applying for an individual fellowship award. The purpose of this award is to provide support to promising applicants with the potential to become productive, independent investigators in scientific health-related research fields relevant to the missions of participating NIH Institutes and Centers, and AHRQ.

Please put the name of the fellowship applicant at the top of the letter. Also, be sure to include your name and title in the letter.

In two pages or less (PDF format), describe the qualities and potential of the fellowship applicant for the research training for which support is being requested (predoctoral, postdoctoral, or senior fellow). This should include your evaluation with special reference to:

- Research ability and potential to become an independent researcher
- Adequacy of scientific and technical background
- Written and verbal communication abilities including ability to organize scientific data
- Quality of research endeavors or publications to date, if applicable
- Perseverance in pursuing goals
- Evidence of originality
- Need for further research experience and training
- Familiarity with research literature

Referees may provide any additional, related comments that they believe will help reviewers evaluate the merit of the fellow's application.

#### Submitting Reference Letters

Letters must be submitted directly to the eRA Commons at:  
<https://public.era.nih.gov/commons/public/reference/submit/referenceletter.do?mode=new>.

Watch a demo on [Submitting Reference Letters through eRA Commons](#).

Reference Letters are due by the application receipt deadline date, but may be submitted any time after the FOA opens. Reference Letters can be submitted before the grant application submission, and will be held and later linked to the appropriate application once they are received at NIH.

You will be requested to enter the following information on-line at the time of submission:

#### Referee Information:

- Referee First Name (Required)
- Referee Last Name (Required)
- Referee MI Name (Not Required)
- Referee e-mail (Required)
- Referee Institution/Affiliation (Required)
- Referee Department (Required)

#### Fellowship Application Information:

- PD/PI (Fellowship applicant) Commons User ID (Required)
- PD/PI's Last Name, as it appears on the PI's Commons account (Required) (will be validated to ensure they match)
- Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number (Required and must match the number of the FOA under which the application is being submitted)
- Reference Letter Confirmation Number (Required only if resubmitting a letter; not required otherwise)
- Fellowship Letter of Reference – two pages maximum. Must be in PDF format. Letter can be printed, signed, and scanned to create the PDF, but do not add a "digital signature" to the document. Additional tips for creating PDF files can be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm>.

After you have submitted your Letter of Reference, both you and the applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt by e-mail. Your e-mail confirmation will include a Reference Letter Confirmation Number. The Confirmation Number will be required when resubmitting reference letters. Please print the confirmation e-mail for your records.

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## Reference Letters

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### Suggested timeline (according to MSTP handbook)

- 1 month before submission date -> formally request reference letter
- 2 weeks before submission date -> follow up with referees
  - You can monitor submission status through eRA commons account
  - You should receive confirmation when letters are uploaded

***YOU*** are responsible for ensuring the letters are submitted. Follow up with your referees prior to the due date if the letters have not been submitted.

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## Letters of support from collaborators, contributors, consultants

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### General information

- Letters of support are used to:
  - Demonstrate institutional commitment or resources
  - Collaboration or role in the project
  - Potential or current user of a resource or service proposed in the application
- Be sure to indicate the role (how/when) of collaborators, contributors, consultants **in your training plan**
- If an individual will play a larger role in your project, consider obtaining a letter of support and including them as a Key Persons (with biosketch)
- You are allowed 6 pages for letters of support
- You must include names of referees in cover letter of the application

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## Letters of Support from collaborators, contributors, consultants

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### Who to select

Collaborators/consultants who provide:

- Data
- Key resources
- Instruction on a technique or use of specialized equipment
- Analyses

Contributors, such as:

- Thesis committee members
- Clinical mentors
- Advisors

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## Letters of Support from collaborators, contributors, consultants

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### What information to provide

- Describe the type of support they will provide to the project
- Summarize any agreements you have in place that are in support of your project

### Suggested timeline:

- Ask for letters of support at least 1 month before grant deadline
- Consider drafting letters of support and providing them as a template when asking for letter
- Letters of support will be uploaded by you/your administrator with the rest of your grant application

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# Reference letters vs. Letters of support

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

NIH National Institutes of Health  
Office of Extramural Research

Extramural Nexus

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Posted on **September 11, 2019** by **NIH Staff**

## Reference Letters vs. Letters of Support: What's the Difference?

Reference letters and letters of support provide key information for reviewers and NIH staff. Check out the table below for an overview of when each letter is used, who writes them, and what should be included.

Reference Letters	Letters of Support
<p><b>When are they used?</b></p> <p>Used in Fellowships, mentored Career Development Awards, and other programs as requested</p>	<p>Used to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Institutional commitment or resources</li> <li>-Collaboration or role in the project</li> <li>-Potential or current user of a resource or service proposed in the application</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who writes them?</b></p> <p>References should be individuals not directly involved in the application, but who are familiar with the applicant's qualifications. The sponsor(s)/co-sponsor(s) cannot be counted toward the 3 required references.</p>	<p>Collaborators, key personnel, institution, and other significant contributors to the scientific development or execution of the project</p>
<p><b>What should be included?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Describe qualities and potential of candidate</li> <li>-Letters can be addressed to "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Reviewer"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Describe the type of support your collaborators will provide to the project</li> <li>-Summarize the agreements you have in place to support your project</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who submits them?</b></p> <p>A referee submits the letters through eRA Commons (no login needed). The letters are maintained separate from the corresponding application.</p>	<p>Applicant organization submits the letters of support as part of the application.</p>
<p><b>Who sees them?</b></p> <p>Only reviewers and select NIH staff</p>	<p>Anyone with access to view the application</p>
<p><b>Where are the instructions?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reference Letters page</li> <li>-Special instructions may also be found in funding opportunity announcements and notices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Application form instructions on the <a href="#">How to Apply - Application Guide</a> page.</li> <li>-Special instructions may also be found in funding opportunity announcements and notices (including <a href="#">Notices of Special Interest</a>)</li> </ul>