

ONS FOUNDATION RESEARCH GRANT

REVIEW and SCORING CRITERIA

(Adapted from NIH Review Criteria)

OVERALL IMPACT

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved in consideration of the following five scored review criteria, and additional review criteria. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.

SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the five review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit and give a separate score for each.

1. Significance - Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

2. Investigator(s) - Are the PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If Early Stage Investigators or New Investigators, or in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?

3. Innovation - Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

4. Approach - Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

5. Environment - Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA

As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will consider the following additional items in the determination of scientific and technical merit, but will not give separate scores for these items.

- Responses for Protections for Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, and Biohazards **are required for all applications**
- A response for Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children **is required** for applications proposing Human Subjects Research.

Protections for Human Subjects –Did the application describe how informed consent will be obtained and the steps taken to protect participants' rights or the welfare of animals? Did the application identify any potential risks associated with participation in the project?

Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children - Applicable Only for Human Subjects Research – Did the application address the inclusion of women, minorities and children in developing a research design appropriate to the scientific objectives of the study. Inclusion is required unless a clear and compelling

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rationale shows that inclusion is inappropriate with the respect to the health of the subjects or that inclusion is inappropriate for the purpose of the study. Did the application provide information on the composition of the proposed study population in terms of sex/gender and racial/ethnic group and provide a rationale for selection of such subjects in terms of the scientific objectives and proposed study design.

Vertebrate Animals – Did the application address the involvement of live vertebrate animals as part of the scientific assessment according to the following five points: 1) proposed use of the animals, and species, strains, ages, sex, and numbers to be used; 2) justifications for the use of animals and for the appropriateness of the species and numbers proposed; 3) adequacy of veterinary care; 4) procedures for limiting discomfort, distress, pain and injury to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research including the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs and/or comfortable restraining devices; and 5) methods of euthanasia and reason for selection if not consistent with the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia.

Budget and Period of Support – Is the budget and the requested period of support are fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed research. For more details, please see *Budget Information*.

IMPACT SCORE CRITERIA			
Impact	Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Medium	4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Minor Weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact

Moderate Weakness: A weakness that lessens impact

Major Weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact