

OVERVIEW: PART TWO

THE TEMPLATE FOR YOUR RESEARCH PLAN

Once you have completed all of the activities that are summarized in Part One, you will be positioned well to begin development of the Research Plan. It will consist of these sections for new applications (for renewal applications there would be an additional, “Progress Report” as the first sub-subsection under “Approach” – see page 99 for details):

- Specific Aims (limited to 1 page)
- Research Strategy (limited to 12 pages for R01, R15 & R34; 6 for R03 & R21)
- Significance*
- Innovation*
- Approach*
 - Each Specific Aim (same format for each):
 - Introductory Paragraph
 - Justification & Feasibility
 - Review of Relevant Literature
 - Preliminary Studies
 - Research Design
 - Expected Outcomes
 - Potential Problems & Alternative Approaches
- Timetable*
- Future Directions* (optional)

The developmental process should begin with the all-important *Specific Aims* section and the first and second subsections of the *Research Strategy* section, *Significance* and *Innovation*. These parts of your proposal have great importance in terms of both its writing and review. With respect to the former, they constitute the “template” that will be used to write the rest of the proposal. In terms of review, they introduce reviewers conceptually to everything that is important and exciting about your proposal, thereby “hooking” their interest and making them want to read the details that are provided in later sections.

Chapter Seven, “*Specific Aims* Section: Conceptual Framework for Creating a Bullet Outline,” addresses the conceptual approach that underlies formulation of the *Specific Aims* section and introduces you to the specific purpose for each of the components that collectively comprise this section. It will also direct you to a part of our website where you will find an interactive template that will help you develop the bullet outline that will facilitate the drafting of your *Specific Aims* section.

Chapter Eight, “Writing the *Specific Aims* Section,” will take you, step-by-step, through the development of text for your *Specific Aims* section. This will begin with expansion of the bullet outline generated by your response to chapter 7, which will then be refined to provide an integrated overview of everything that is important about your proposal.

Chapter Nine, “Significance and Innovation Subsections of the *Research Strategy* Section,” will focus on development of the parts of your proposal that are arguably the most important ones in the entire grant application. NIH places great importance on these two subsections, which is where reviewers get most of the information needed to score two of the five core-review criteria.

These are the parts of your application that will provide the “blueprint” – the template or master plan – for development of the rest of your Research Plan. If these sections are written well, the rest of the Research Plan, as well as other parts of the application, become relatively easy to conceive and write. Thus, we encourage you to make an investment in them that will maximize the positive impact that they can have on preparation of the rest of your proposal.