

NIH Grants.gov Tips September 28, 2007

Definitions

Error: Something that will prevent validation in ERA Commons of an application submitted via Grants.gov.

Warning: Something that will not prevent validation in ERA Commons of an application submitted via Grants.gov, but which ERA Commons nevertheless flags as a notice to be correct in future submissions. *ORSP will not correct and resubmit applications that receive warnings unless the corrections is of a substantive nature*

Problem: Issues that do not directly impact Grants.gov submission or ERA Commons validation, but nevertheless create difficulties.

ORSP Information

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Important "TO-DO's"

Font

Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)

File Names

When naming your files, do not use symbols or special characters (e.g. &, =). Any and all files attached to your Grants.gov application must be a PDF. ERA Commons won't accept any other file type

Page Margins

Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11).

Headers/Footers/Pagination, etc.

DO NOT USE HEADERS OR FOOTERS. No information should appear in the margins, including the PI's name and page numbers. Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages.

Active URL Links

Internet website addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review of the proposal. Reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites. And are cautioned not to access internet sites, as it could compromise their anonymity.

Publications

For publications that are publicly accessible, the URL or PMC submission identification numbers along with the full reference should be included as appropriate in the Bibliography and References cited section, the Progress Report Publication List section, and/or the Biographical Sketch section. Do not include the full text of such publications in the Appendix.

Applicants may submit up to 3 of the following types of publications. Any exceptions will be noted in specific FOAs.

Manuscripts and/or abstracts accepted for publication but not yet published.

Published manuscripts and/or abstracts only when a free, online, publicly available journal link is not available.

Patents materials directly relevant to the project.

NIH Grants.gov Tips September 28, 2007

Biosketches

Follow the guidelines for format and limit length to four pages: Do not include information unless requested.

Other Support

Do not submit information on Other Support with the application beyond that required in the biographical sketch. If this information is included at the time of application, processing may be delayed or the application may be returned to the applicant without review.

Personnel Justification

Attaching a personnel justification to the modular budget: Please list all personnel, including names, number of person months (not percentages) devoted to the project (indicate academic, calendar, and/or summer) and roles on the project. Do not provide individual salary information.

Appendix

Surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments, clinical protocols, and informed consent documents may be submitted in the Appendix as necessary. See the updated NIH policy on Appendix, effective 1/3/07 at <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-07-018.html>

Common Errors

The PI's ERA Commons account must designate a "preferred employment address." If there is no preferred address in the PI's ERA Commons account, the application will be in error and unavailable for validation.

To designate a preferred address the PI (or someone with PI delegated authority) must:

- Login to Commons
- Select "Personal Profile"
- Select "Employments"
- Click the "Edit" link on his/her current employment address
- Check the box at the bottom that designates this as the preferred address
- Click the "Submit" button

On the "Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile" page, there is a field called "Credential, e.g., agency login." In the PureEdge file, this is not flagged as a required field [yellow] as it is not a required field by other sponsors. As a result, "Check Package for Errors" in Grants.gov will not pick up the empty field as an error.

However, when the application gets to ERA Commons, they will be looking for the correct PI user name in the "Credential, e.g., agency login" field. Be sure to include the correct ERA Commons user name in that field. You must enter your user name in the exact same format as you would in ERA Commons.

Symbols or special characters (e.g. &, =) are not accepted as part of a file name. Any and all files attached to your Grants.gov application must be a PDF. ERA Commons won't accept any other file type.

File names for attached documents must not include spaces or special characters and the ".pdf" extension must appear. (Note: A lot of computers are set not to display the extensions, though the extensions are still there. The extension will appear in file name for the document once it's uploaded into the Grants.gov application.)

All required fields[yellow] must be completed, even when it makes no sense to do so. So, for example, should you have a performance site in Helsinki, Finland, you must still identify which of the fifty US states or five US territories and the zip code in which Helsinki resides. If the data is not relevant, enter NA.

Common Problems

The PI will receive an email from Grants.gov notifying him/her of errors in the application but the application will not appear in ERA Commons for a minimum of 24 hours after the email is sent.

NIH Grants.gov Tips September 28, 2007

The PI and/or ORSP will not be able to identify the errors and make corrections for at least a day following notification of the existence of those errors.

PIs and/or ORSP might not receive an email from ERA Commons with information about the status of the application, i.e. that the application arrived in ERA Commons and available for validation. PIs are strongly advised to be proactive and independently check ERA Commons for the availability of their application image.

ERA Commons is going to pull the email address for the official contact from the application, not the Grants.gov user name associated with the submission. Please note the official contact name as the grant specialist who will be submitting your application.

Start date for first budget year must be same as start date for proposed project start date

Check your math on this one

Ensure that the direct costs and the indirect costs (G + H) on Section F-K EQUAL the Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H) on the Cumulative Budget page. Only whole numbers should be used on the budget page, no decimals. Round to the nearest dollar.

Although direct costs are submitted in the modular budget format, in order to complete the base and F&A fields on the checklist you must also complete a detailed budget. It is recommended that a detailed budget be created using the RU Budget Template, starting with Budget Period for FY09.

Missing PD/PI Personnel entry on Detailed Budget Page

There must be a Personnel entry listed for the PD/PI on the Detailed Budget Page for budget year 1. [#1 of the Research & Related Budget – Section A & B (budget year 1)]. The name given for the PD/PI for the budget year must match the name given for the PD/PI on the Senior/Key Person form.

The NIH does not recognize or offer Co-PI as a selection for personnel requested on the project. If you want to designate a collaborator as a Co-PI for internal or informal purposes, select "Other" and in the detail field enter "Co-PI".

Common Warnings

ERA Commons will issue a warning if the PI name in the application doesn't exactly match the user name in ERA Commons, including titles. In other words, if Commons knows the PI as "Jane Doe" but the application identifies her as "Jane Q. Doe" or "Dr. Jane Doe" a warning will be issued.

Items 2-5 of the PHS398 Research Plan component are limited to 25 pages for R01 applications. There are instructions specifying page limits for other programs and funding mechanisms; consult the guidelines, PA and instructions. While each section of the Research Plan component needs to be inserted separately as a PDF attachment, applicants are encouraged to construct the Research Plan component as a single document, separating sections into distinct PDF attachments just before inserting the files. This approach will enable applicants to better monitor formatting requirements such as page limits. All attachments must be provided to NIH in PDF format, filenames must be included with no spaces or special characters, and a .pdf extension must be used.