Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Biosketches**

[I. General](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=alphaHeader4026)

[Expand/Collapse Questions]

[1. What biosketch format is used for NIH biosketches? UPDATED](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54244)

See [Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) for details on the required biosketch format, which has been updated effective for applications and Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPRs) submitted on or after May 25, 2021 ([NOT-OD-21-073](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-073.html)). The required format applies to all programs (e.g., research, training, fellowship) and all types of applications (e.g., new, resubmission, revision, renewal, progress reports).

[2. Did the updates to the Biosketch outlined in NOT-OD-21-073 change the page limit for the biosketch? NEW](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question56174)

No, the page limit for the biosketch remains 5 pages.

[3. Where can I find sample biosketches?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54245)

The [samples](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) provided are simply examples of compliant biosketches. Applicants must follow [application guide](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) instructions for pdf attachments (font, paper size, margins, etc.), as well as, the biosketch instructions themselves.

Biosketches created using SciENcv conform to all the application guide instructions and format requirements, though there are slight differences from the provided samples.

[4. The biosketch format announced in NOT-OD-21-073 no longer has ‘Research Support’ in section D. Can applicants still provide information on their ongoing and recently completed projects for reviewers to consider? NEW](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question56175)

While Section D: Research Support, has been removed from the biosketch format, applicants should provide details related to ongoing and recently completed projects that they want to draw attention to within the personal statement, Section A. This information is included in the updated [Biosketch Instructions](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm).

[5. For fellowship applications, Section D requires Scholastic Performance (i.e. undergrad and grad classes) to be included. Is that changing with the removal of Section D: Research Support? NEW](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question56176)

No, this is not changing. Fellowship applicants will continue to provide Scholastic Performance information in Section D of the Fellowship biosketch format page.

[6. Can I update a biosketch post-submission to include new articles just accepted for publication or non-traditional application materials not previously available? UPDATED](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54246)

No.  A new biosketch attachment is only allowed post-submission if it is related to a change in senior/key personnel due to the hiring, replacement, or loss of an investigator. When allowed, the new format must be used on/after May 25, 2021.   
  
Under some circumstances, news of a late-breaking article can be submitted following the guidelines in the Post-Submission Application Materials policy (see [NOT-OD-19-083](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-19-083.html)).

[II. SciENcv](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=alphaHeader4027)

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[1. Is there a tool that can help me prepare my biosketch in the NIH format? UPDATED](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54247)

The Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae ([SciENcv](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/)), which serves as an interagency system designed to create biosketches for multiple federal agencies, supports the NIH biosketch format. The format announced in [NOT-OD-21-073](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-073.html) will be available in late March 2021. Within SciENcv, you can easily transform an existing biosketch from one format to another (e.g. old NIH format to new NIH format, NIH format to NSF format).

[2. Is the use of SciENcv required?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54248)

Not at this time.

Although SciENcv can be used to create biosketches in the NIH format, applicants can also use other programs to create NIH formatted biosketches and convert them to PDF format on their own.

[III. Citations](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=alphaHeader4028)

[Expand/Collapse Questions]

[1. Are the DOI (Digital Object Identifier), PMID (PubMed reference number), and PMCID (PubMed Central reference number) required with each reference in the biosketch?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54249)

NIH does not require a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) or PMID (PubMed reference number) with each reference in the biosketch. However, NIH does require a PMCID or other evidence of compliance with the [public access policy](http://publicaccess.nih.gov/index.htm) for papers that [fall under](http://publicaccess.nih.gov/policy.htm#Applicability) the policy and are authored by the applicant or arise from an applicant’s NIH award. Please see <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/include-pmcid-citations.htm> for more details.   
  
NIH encourages applicants to use [SciENcv](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/) to generate their biosketches.  SciENcv quickly formats everything, including citations, according to NIH rules.

[2. Is it acceptable to use ‘et al’ in citations?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54250)

Applicants may use ‘et al’ in lieu of listing all authors in a citation.

[3. Is a specific format required for citing patents as a “non-publication research product” to support a contribution to science?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54293)

No. Most popular style guides include formats for patents and all formats are acceptable.

SciENcv uses a standard format used by the National Library of Medicine (see [Citing Medicine](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/)).

Example of NLM Citation:    
Williams, D, inventor; Axxion Group Corporation, assignee. Screw less clip mounted computer drive. United State patent US 6,885,550. 2005 Apr 26.

[4. Can the same citation be referenced multiple times in a single biosketch?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54298)

Yes.

[IV. Contributions to Science](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=alphaHeader4029)

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[1. What advice do you have for new scientists filling out their scientific contributions?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54251)

In general, reviewers base their expectations for contributions on the seniority of the person filling out the biosketch. A scientist with one publication may want to summarize the key finding of the paper and its importance in a short contribution. Scientists with no publications may wish to provide a contribution describing their efforts on other peoples’ papers and projects (e.g., I used this method, I conducted the literature review for this paper, I care for all the animals in this lab, etc.). If a new scientist has *no* actual research or thesis experience, they might just want to list one contribution about their training to date. You might want to consult with your colleagues who serve as reviewers in your area of science.

[2. Is a link to a full list of published work required in the new biosketch format?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54253)

No. A .gov link to a full list of published work is allowed, but not required.  
  
If users want to create this list and link quickly, we advise them to do so through My Bibliography (see <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/communications.htm> for more information). People can add papers to My Bibliography through PubMed very quickly by using the send function. Please see <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/my-bibliography-faq.htm#I.1.EnteringpublicationsintoMyBibliography> and its associated links for more information. To generate the URL to share, please see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53595/#mybibliography.Sharing_My_Bibliography_a>. 

[3. Does the PD/PI need to be an author on a publication used to reference a contribution to science in a NIH biosketch?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54255)

No, the publication does not need to be their own. It is up to the applicant to describe their contributions. Listing a key publication that builds on their work is one way of doing so.

[4. Can manuscripts still in the review process be included in the Personal Statement or Contributions to Science section of the biosketch?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54256)

Yes. The NIH encourages investigators to use interim research products, such as preprints, to speed the dissemination and enhance the rigor of their work. [See the Interim Research Product FAQs](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/interim_product_faqs.htm) for more information on how to cite this information.

[V. Biosketch Compliance](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=alphaHeader4030)

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[1. Do biosketches in NIH applications have a page limit?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54257)

Biosketches are limited to 5 pages. See [Table of Page Limits](http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/forms_page_limits.htm) for details and exceptions.

[2. What does it mean to be compliant with the new biosketch policy? UPDATED](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54259)

All biosketches included in applications submitted for due dates on/after May 25, 2021 must be formatted per the instructions in the [application guide](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm#inst) (and repeated in [online resources](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm#biosketch)), including:

* Completing each section, as applicable (A - Personal Statement; B – Positions, Scientific Appointments and Honors; C – Contributions to Science; D – Scholastic Performance)
* Including no more than 5 contributions to science with no more than 4 citations per contribution
* Ensuring that if you include the optional link to a full list of your published work in a site like [My Bibliography](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53595/) that the URL is .gov
* Refraining from including information, such as preliminary data, that belongs elsewhere in the application
* Following NIH guidance on font type, font size, paper size, and margins (See [Format Attachment](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm) instructions)
* Using PDF format for your biosketch attachment
* Limiting the length of your biosketch to 5 pages or less

During the transition to the new format announced in [NOT-OD-21-073](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-073.html), NIH will not withdraw applications that include the previous Biosketch format. Beginning with applications submitted on or after January 25, 2022, failure to follow the appropriate Biosketch format may cause NIH to withdraw your application from consideration.

[3. What application submission validations will eRA systems enforce for biosketches?](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/biosketches.htm?anchor=question54258)

eRA systems validate:

* Whether a biosketch is attached for each and every Sr/Key person listed in the application
* That each biosketch is less than or equal to 5 pages
* That your biosketch attachment is in PDF format

Failure to meet these conditions will result in an error preventing successful submission.  
  
All other aspects of biosketch compliance are manually checked post-submission.