

**GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES
FOR THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR NURSING RESEARCH**

2026

Each Council at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is required to establish operating procedures for the review of grant applications. These procedures must be in writing and are reviewed each year. The National Advisory Council for Nursing Research (NACNR) advises the Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) on research activities and policies. The NACNR provides the second-level peer review of all applications for research grants, training grants, and career development awards. The NACNR also provides advice to the NINR Director on a wide range of areas, including: concepts for research initiatives; policy and research priorities; and workgroup reports. For the second-level peer review, after reviewing applications assigned to NINR, the Council will vote on them as either en bloc or individual special actions. In addition, the Council may conduct expedited reviews upon the request of the NINR Director or staff. Finally, the Council has designated procedures to delegate selected authorities to NINR staff.

The operating procedures are represented in this document.

SECOND-LEVEL PEER REVIEW

Council members review an Electronic Council Book containing peer results for grant applications assigned to NINR for consideration for funding. Based on that review, the members recommend en bloc concurrence of peer review results during the closed session of the Council meeting.

Applications will be brought to the attention of Council that require special consideration. This will include:

1. Any application from a foreign institution for which an award may be made;
2. Any application from principal investigators who have support above the NIH-designated level from active NIH Research Project Grants (RPGs) in accordance with the NIH policy (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-22-049.html>) which requires Special Council Review;
3. Any application identified by NINR staff as requiring special consideration by Council;
4. Any application a council member would like to be brought up for discussion at the Council meeting.

The Council Executive Secretary will designate two Council members to review each application for special consideration. Materials for applications requiring special consideration will be made available in the NIH Electronic Council Book (ECB) at least two weeks prior to the council meeting and can be accessed by all members not in conflict with the application.

EXPEDITED REVIEW

Staff may request expedited electronic review for eligible applications. Select Council members will be asked to participate in the expedited review on behalf of the Council and will be notified of the applications under consideration. Expedited review may be designated for, but not limited to:

- Applications that require the availability of time-limited, unique resources;
- Applications that were administratively deferred or re-reviewed due to a successful appeal;
- Applications received in response to Request for Applications (RFAs).

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Director, National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), has delegated authority from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, to make awards for grants and cooperative agreements for applications that have been (1) assigned a priority rating after technical and scientific peer review and (2) given a favorable recommendation by the National Advisory Council for Nursing Research.

NINR staff analyze and review all applications, i.e., non-competing continuation and competing applications [new, competing continuation (renewal), or supplemental] before issuing a grant award. Special note is made of any items requiring adjustment of budget amounts or other terms and conditions. Staff will negotiate any identified adjustments to reduce the budget beyond the Scientific Review Group (SRG) recommended amount. The following actions do not require Council review or advice and need not be reported to the Council: change of institution, change of principal investigator, administrative supplements, awards for orderly phase-out or interim support, or additional support either to meet the increased cost of maintaining the level of research previously recommended, or to accommodate activities judged by staff to be within the scope of the previously peer reviewed research.

CONCEPT CLEARANCE

Concept clearance is the process by which ICs receive public advice on the merits of potential initiatives. A concept describes the basic purpose, scope, and objectives of a potential solicitation of grants and/or contracts. The concept may be developed into a variety of Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) or Requests for Proposals (RFPs).

Concepts originate from NINR staff and may have input from the scientific community, constituency organizations, or Congress. NINR staff prepare concept summaries for review by Council in open session. Council may recommend approval, modification, deferral, or disapproval of a concept. Approved concepts are the basis for programs initiated through FOAs and RFPs. However, there is no requirement for ICs to develop an approved concept into an FOA or RFP.