

Duke University School of Nursing - Center for Nursing Research

NAME: SOP - MOCK Research or Training Grant Proposal Review

EFFECTIVE DATE: Fall 2019

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY**:** July 30, 2019

APPROVAL AUTHORITY: Associate Dean for Research Development and Data Science, Associate Dean for Research Development and Regulatory Affairs

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**Guiding Principles/Purpose/Background/Overview**

The MOCK reviews within the Center for Nursing Research (CNR) are designed to simulate the NIH study section review process. The MOCK review process provides written and verbal feedback to DUSON faculty and PhD students that reflects how a study section will evaluate their grant application.

**Who is Eligible?**

* Any DUSON faculty member or DUHS nurse researcher who is submitting a research or training grant proposal for federal funding or a comparable research or training grant mechanism is eligible to participate in a MOCK review
* PhD students applying for federal or NGO training grants ; the student’s PhD dissertation chair must be notified prior to submitting an intent to submit form
* MOCK reviews are very strongly encouraged for any large grant submissions.

**MOCK Review Request Process**

An electronic MOCK Request form should be submitted to the CNR a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the grant due date. The request form is located on the CNR Sakai site: (<https://sakai.duke.edu/portal/site/66a5ed4d-4993-4ff7-a941-ec6925107890>)

* An early MOCK review allows for time to organize the review and provide feedback in time for changes to be made to the grant proposal before submission. The review will take place at least two-three weeks before the due date and earlier is recommended when possible.
* The MOCK review submission form will ask for reviewer suggestions and contact information. If the researcher cannot recommend individual reviewers, the Associate Dean for Research will organize the review panel.
* PhD students with help from their mentor will recommend reviewers. If there are other faculty attending, they may serve as additional reviewers.
* DUSON, Duke University and other outside reviewers may be requested; conference lines will be provided when needed.
* Individual requests for a paid, outside external reviewer may be made to the Associate Deans of Research.
* The CNR Program Coordinator will schedule the MOCK review and invite reviewers. A minimum of three reviewers are required to hold a MOCK review. The Associate Deans for Research may attend any session.
* Principal investigators should submit the following documents together as 1 word document file – Aims, Research plan, previous NIH review critiques including scores (revised applications, PDF acceptable as a separate document), and when applicable Training plan (K awards or NRSA apps) and Biosketches (required for training grants) ). PI’s will also submit the link to, or the actual FOA.
* Materials are due to the Program Coordinator on or 7 days prior to the MOCK review. If the deadline is not met, the mock review will be cancelled.
* The Program Coordinator will upload the MOCK review materials into Duke Box for reviewers to access.
* If time does not allow, the mock review may be done via email with written feedback only. This should be the exception.

**Suggested MOCK Review Format**

MOCK reviews are designed to simulate the NIH study section review process and thus we suggest a similar format be used; the format can be modified by the Chair of the MOCK Review Panel, if desired. In particular, reviewers may elect to not assign a score, but instead submit comments of strengths and weaknesses for each specific criteria. The Dissertation Committee Chair will chair PhD Student Mock reviews. Reviews will be scheduled for one hour.

* + The PI will present a five minute overview of the project.
  + The Chair will ask reviewer 1 to provide a concise overview of the project, highlight main points of the critique beginning with the overall impact and then address each of the other review criteria. Strengths and weakness should be emphasized. The first reviewer should complete their review in 10 minutes.
  + The Chair will ask each of the remaining reviewers (2-3) to offer complementary and non-redundant comments emphasizing issues that match their overall impact score. Each of the remaining reviewers will have 5 minutes for their review.
  + After all reviewers have presented their critiques, the Chair will facilitate a 10-15
  + minute discussion with the group.
  + Each reviewer will also complete a written summary using the NIH study section review criteria (see below). The summaries will be emailed to the researcher either before or after the MOCK review.

**Research Grant MOCK Review Evaluation Criteria**

The MOCK review will focus only on the following proposal sections since frequently the resources, human subjects, and budget sections are not ready in time for the MOCK review.

**Overall Impact**: *What is the likelihood of the research to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field?*

1. **Significance:** *If all the specific aims are achieved, what would the project contribute to this field and how significant/important is this contribution?*
2. **Investigators:** *Does the investigative team have the collective expertise to lead the project, do the work and interpret the results?*
3. **Innovation:** Does the application challenge or seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms? Are novel concepts/approaches/methods/instrumentation or interventions employed?
4. **Approach:**  Are the strategy, methods, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the aims?
5. **Environment:** *Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Is there evidence of institutional support?*

**Training Grant MOCK Review Evaluation Criteria**

**Overall Impact:** Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood that the fellowship will enhance the candidate’s potential for, and commitment to, a productive independent scientific research career in a health-related field, in consideration of the following scored and additional review criteria. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have a major impact.

**Applicant**: Are the applicant’s academic record and research experience of high quality? Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher? Does the applicant demonstrate commitment to a research career in the future?

**Sponsors, Collaborators, Consultants**: Are the sponsor(s’) research qualifications (including recent publications) and track record of mentoring individuals at a similar stage appropriate for the needs of the applicant? Is there evidence of a match between the research and clinical interests (if applicable) of the applicant and the sponsor(s)? Do(es) the sponsor(s) demonstrate an understanding of the applicant’s training needs as well as the ability and commitment to assist in meeting these needs? Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support the applicant’s proposed research project and training for the duration of the research component of the fellowship? If a team of sponsors is proposed, is the team structure well justified for the mentored training plan, and are the roles of the individual members appropriate and clearly defined? Are the qualifications of any collaborator(s) and/or consultant(s), including their complementary expertise and previous experience in fostering the training of fellows, appropriate for the proposed project?

**Research Training Plan:** Is the proposed research project of high scientific quality, and is it well integrated with the proposed research training plan? Based on the sponsor’s description of his/her active research program, is the applicant’s proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the sponsor’s funded research for the applicant’s career stage? Is the research project consistent with the applicant’s stage of research development? Is the proposed time- frame feasible to accomplish the proposed training?

**Training Potential**: Are the proposed research project and training plan likely to provide the applicant with the requisite individualized and mentored experiences in order to obtain appropriate skills for a research career? Does the training plan take advantage of the applicant’s strengths and address gaps in needed skills? Does the training plan document a clear need for, and value of, the proposed training? Does the proposed training have the potential to serve as a sound foundation that will clearly enhance the applicant’s ability to develop into a productive researcher?

**Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training**: Are the research facilities, resources (e.g., equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities (e.g. seminars, workshops, professional development opportunities) adequate and appropriate? Is the institutional environment for the applicant’s scientific development of high quality? Is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering the applicant’s mentored training?

**General guidance for addressing all sections of the written critique.**

* Avoid general comments and provide specific details.
* Provide sufficient context to orient comments (e.g. does the comment refer to a specific aim?)
* Make sure bullets have evaluative statements that indicate your assessment of a particular aspect of the application.
* Make sure that the text within each section is consistent with the score.
  + Scores of 1-3 should be supported by clearly articulated strengths.
  + Scores of 4-6 may have a balance of strengths and weaknesses.
  + Scores of 7-9 should be supported by clearly articulated weaknesses (or lack of strengths).
* Prioritize strengths and weaknesses by indicating if they are major (score-driving) or minor.
* The NIH Grant Application 9-point scale for both overall impact and individual review criteria will be used for our MOCK reviews (Table 1). Further description of the impact score is found in Table 2.

**Table 1. NIH Scoring Scale**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall Impact or Criterion Strength** | **Score** | **Descriptor** |
| **High** | **1** | **Exceptional** |
| **2** | **Outstanding** |
| **3** | **Excellent** |
| **Medium** | **4** | **Very Good** |
| **5** | **Good** |
| **6** | **Satisfactory** |
| **Low** | **7** | **Fair** |
| **8** | **Marginal** |
| **9** | **Poor** |

**Table 2: Score Guide for Overall Impact Scores **