

INTERNAL REVIEW OF OPERATING GRANTS AND SALARY AWARDS CENTRE DE RECHERCHE HOPITAL MAISONNEUVE-ROSEMONT

Goals of Internal Review

1. IMPROVE SCIENTIFIC CONTENT AND PRESENTATION.
2. Promote COLLEGIALLY AND COLLABORATION within the research center.
3. Provide PIs with invaluable EXPERIENCE IN REVIEWING grants which, in turn, helps improve their own grant writing.
4. Ensure that the grant is finished WELL BEFORE THE DEADLINE. In fact, this is one of the major advantages.
5. Create institutional TEAM SPIRIT.

Panel structure

Ideally the internal review panel will comprise two researchers working in the same field as the applicant, and at least one additional reviewer from outside the field, thus simulating the reality of a typical peer review panel. If adequate expertise lacks within the Research Center, external reviewers may be solicited. In the case of new investigators, the FRQS mentor will be included on the panel.

The process

Review meetings generally take at least 90 minutes. One of the three reviewers acts as Chair and initially invites comments from all reviewers. This part focuses on the summary, overall quality of the proposal, and global strengths/weaknesses. Subsequently, the three reviewers may discuss more specific issues. Finally, the reviewers provide the applicant with markedup copies which may highlight smaller details not discussed during the review itself.

Agenda

Not less than six weeks before the deadline, the mentorship committee must be notified by the applicant of his/her intention to submit. This is absolutely necessary to allow adequate time for panel member designation and scheduling of the meeting.

Not less than four weeks before the deadline, the panel members must receive the full application.

Not less than two weeks before the deadline, the meeting will take place.

Grants to be submitted

All SALARY AWARD applications must undergo internal review.

All OPERATING GRANTS (i) where the total budget exceeds \$100,000 and (ii) which are submitted by PIs that have not yet obtained their FRSQ Senior or equivalent, must undergo internal review.

All RESUBMISSIONS must undergo internal review, regardless of seniority.

Both FUNDAMENTAL AND CLINICAL grant applications are subject to these rules.

Paperwork

A simple form indicating that the internal review has been completed, and that the

committee is confident that the application will be ready for submission before the deadline, should be forwarded as soon as possible to the head of the mentorship committee. Such a form will be required before the Director approves the application.

In cases where the internal review committee judges an application to be substandard, the applicant should either delay submission until the following competition at his/her own discretion, or arrange to meet with the Committee Chairman and Center Director as soon as possible to discuss any alternative possibilities.

Conclusion

There is no adequate substitute for an internal peer review committee *meeting together with an applicant*. Having colleagues independently read a grant application, and then give feedback on an individual basis, is not nearly as effective. Firstly, individuals acting alone rarely review as conscientiously as when they are part of a group. Secondly, a constructive synergy develops among the reviewers that invariably improves the quality and richness of the feedback. Furthermore, contradictory feedback can sometimes be sorted out.

The idea and the description of this panel is an adaptation from a CIHR document, where very useful information on how to write grants can also be found:

http://www.cihirsc.gc.ca/e/documents/ig_guide_for_new_pis_e.pdf