

PEER REVIEW OF SoN GRANT APPLICATIONS

To promote a culture of scholarly excellence, mentorship, and collaboration, we require that all research grants planned by School of Nursing (SoN) principal investigators for amounts over \$20,000 per year undergo peer review before approval and submission. Peer review is mandatory for investigators who have not previously served as a Principal Investigator of an R01-level NIH grant or an equivalent grant from another funding agency (e.g., NSF, PCORI, DOD, CDC). It is also strongly encouraged for all investigators. The peer review requirement for investigators submitting K-series and other individual training grant applications can be fulfilled by the mentoring team; a faculty committee can also review these applications upon request.

PROCEDURE

Investigators must complete the online grant submission form to initiate a grant application. A representative from the Office of Financial Services will share this with the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship, who will contact the PI and discuss the nature of the grant (e.g., science, mechanism, team). The grant review will generally be conducted internally at the School of Nursing. However, peer review by an external group may also be acceptable, depending on the nature of the science. The Senior Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship will make this determination in collaboration with the study PI.

A senior faculty member will lead a review conducted by a group of three faculty reviewers at the SoN, using NIH criteria (or other criteria, as specified by the funding agency) and format.

The meeting will be open to other SoN faculty to facilitate as much feedback as possible, promote learning, and facilitate mentorship. The PI must attend the meeting. Collaborators are also encouraged to attend.

If the grant involves specialized content or methods requiring external reviewer expertise, the Senior Associate Dean for Research and the peer review committee chair will work with the PI and their team to identify experienced senior scientists as external reviewers who can participate in the peer review. Reviewers may be from UConn, UConn Health, or outside the university. This depends on the availability of external reviewers and funding to cover honoraria when needed. When honoraria are available, a representative from the Office of Financial Services will handle the arrangements. External reviewers will take part in the group review process whenever possible, but may also submit their reviews in writing.

Based on the volume of grants, time of the year (summer, holidays), and other contingencies (e.g., grant announcements with short lead times), it may not be possible to participate in the group-based review. We expect this to be rare. When it occurs, the chair of the peer review committee and the Senior Associate Dean for Research will identify reviewers and arrange for an asynchronous review. Careful planning and adherence to the SoN grant submission timeline are needed to minimize the occurrence of these events. Failure to plan sufficient lead time is not an acceptable reason to skip the external review.

The timing of the review will be incorporated into the timeline/schedule for grant submission, which will be prepared in collaboration with the Office of Financial Services and the Office of Research and Scholarship. Investigators should also take advantage of the consultation services available through the Office of the Vice President for Research, as indicated in the updated grant timeline.

To facilitate a successful review, the PI should submit a draft of the grant, including the specific aims, approach/research plan, the scientific team's biosketches, the notice of funding opportunity, and grant mechanism at least two weeks before the peer review date. For resubmissions, reviewer comments and responses to reviewers should be included. The materials should be as complete as possible; however, drafts are also acceptable. These materials should be submitted to the program manager of the Office of Research and Scholarship, who will distribute them to the review committee. The materials will also be shared with the other participants in the review. The reviewers and other participants in the meeting will be required to adhere to NIH principles of confidentiality and not share the materials or the ideas presented in the application beyond the review meeting discussion.

We expect faculty to plan their grant submissions to allow sufficient time for review and application updates before submission deadlines. This timeline is included in the research and scholarship/business office schedule for grant submission activities and the timeline for specific grants will be approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Research and the Assistant Dean of Finance and Administration.

The Senior Associate Dean for Research is available to all SoN faculty throughout the year to provide guidance related to peer review and other grant-related matters. The Office of Financial Services also provides advice on pre-award and post-award processes, and a representative from the UConn Office of the Vice President for Research is available for consultation.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

The purpose of the Review Meeting is to provide the Investigator with feedback from the Reviewers. Given that Investigators are not present during any official grant reviews, NIH or otherwise, their comments should be kept to a minimum and focus on any questions they may have or clarification of points asked for by Reviewers.

1. Primary and Secondary Reviewers will be assigned.
2. All will complete the appropriate review form.
3. The role of the Investigator is to **LISTEN** to the comments. They should respond (briefly) only if asked and there is a specific question requiring clarification.
4. During the meeting, the Primary Reviewer will provide their review first. The two Secondary Reviewers will add any additional comments. They do not need to provide their entire critique.
5. The review will then be open to comments by other faculty.
6. If time permits, the Investigator may then make any additional comments.
7. All three written critiques will be given to the Investigator and the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship.
8. The Chair of the Peer Review Committee and the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship are available to assist investigators in responding to the review comments in preparation for the grant submission.
9. **All review materials and discussions and the discussion results must be confidential and not shared with others outside of the review.**