

NIH Policy on Late Submission of Grant Applications

Notice Number: **NOT-OD-08-027** - (See Companion Notice [NOT-OD-08-026](#))

Key Dates

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Purpose

This notice is a companion to [NOTICE OD-08-026](#) that announces a new plan for continuous submission of certain types of applications from appointed members of NIH Study Sections. This notice consolidates information from previous notices ([OD-07-026](#) and [OD-06-086](#)) into one document.

On Time Submission

NIH expects that grant applications will be submitted on time. Standard dates are listed at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/submissionschedule.htm>.

- For applications that are required to use paper format these are submission or postmark dates, applications are on time if they are sent on these dates.
- For applications that are required to use electronic submission this requires successful submission to Grants.gov by 5 p.m. local time on the date indicated.
- For **both paper and electronic submissions**, when these dates fall on a weekend or holiday, they are extended to the next business day. However, Requests for Applications (RFAs) and Program Announcements with Special

Referral Considerations (PARs) with special receipt dates **always** must be **received (by Grants.gov for electronic applications and the Center for Scientific Review for paper applications)** on the dates designated in the announcement to be on time. This is clearly noted in the website above and in the text of each RFA/PAR.

Late Applications

The long standing NIH policy on late applications is stated in the application instructions (SF 424 R&R, PHS 398, PHS 416).

- Permission for a late submission is not granted in advance.
- In rare cases, late applications will be accepted but only when accompanied by a cover letter that details compelling reasons for the delay.
- While the reasons are sometimes personal in nature, an objective evaluation of their merit requires that some details be provided. It is not sufficient, for example, to state simply that there has been an unforeseen circumstance that delayed submission. Specific information about the timing and nature of the cause of the delay is necessary so that a decision can be made. Only the explanatory letter is needed; no other documentation is expected.

As noted in the schedule above, NIH utilizes a variety of submission dates for different grant mechanisms. NIH will consider accepting late applications based on the acceptability of the explanation and the processing time required for two different kinds of submission/receipt dates.

- **Regular Standard Submission/Receipt Dates:** January 25, February 5, February 12, February 16, February 25, March 5, March 12, March 16, May 25, June 5, June 12, June 16, June 25, July 5, July 12, July 16, September 25, October 5, October 12, October 16, October 25, November 5, November 12, November 16. To be considered applications must be **received** at the NIH within two weeks of the standard submission date.
- **Expedited Standard Submission/Receipt Dates:** April 5, April 8, April 12, April 13, May 7, August 5, August 8,

August 12, August 13, September 7, December 5, December 8, December 12, December 13, and January 7. To be considered applications must be **received** at the NIH within one week of the standard submission date.

- NIH will not consider accepting late applications for the **Special Receipt Dates for RFAs and PARs. This includes the special receipt dates (March 20, July 20, and November 20) for resubmission (formerly “amended”) applications that are part of the New Investigator Initiative (<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-07-083.html>).**
- NIH does not expect to accept any applications received beyond the window of consideration.

The windows of time for consideration of late applications have been carefully chosen so that the late applications can be processed with the cohort of on-time applications. In all cases, when the regular standard submission date or expedited submission date falls on a weekend or federal holiday and is extended to the next business day, the window of consideration for late applications will be calculated from that business day. **Note that the late window always ends in a receipt (not submission) date for both paper and electronic applications.**

Reasons for a Late Submission

NIH will consider all late applications received within the window of time specified above but will not automatically accept all of them. The reasons for the delay will be carefully considered by the Division of Receipt and Referral at the Center for Scientific Review and a decision made. In unusual cases the reasons provided will be considered by senior staff of CSR; Institutes/Centers will be consulted for applications that are their review responsibility. Applications submitted within the window with reasons that are not found to be acceptable will be not be assigned for review and funding consideration.

Late applications have been accepted for reasons such as: death of an immediate family member of the Principal Investigator, sudden acute severe illness of the Principal Investigator or immediate family member, temporary or ad hoc

service on a NIH extramural peer review group, service on a NIH Board of Scientific Counselors or Advisory Board/Council, or large scale natural disasters. For multiple PD/PI applications (OD-07-017) this would apply to any of the PD/PIs involved. The late application policy applies to submissions other than R01, R21, and R34 by appointed members of CSR and other NIH Study Sections as PD/PI(s). However, explanations are not additive – an application involving multiple PD/PIs with problems or multiple issues for a single PD/PI is still expected to be received within the appropriate window.

Examples of reasons that have **not** led to the acceptance of a late application are: heavy teaching or administrative responsibilities, relocation of laboratory, ongoing or non-severe health problems, personal events, or review service for participants other than a PD/PI, participation in review activities for other Federal agencies or private organizations, attendance at scientific meetings, or having a very busy schedule.

It is important to emphasize that these various examples are just that, examples. No NIH staff member whether in the Center for Scientific Review or any of the other Institutes/Centers has the authority to give permission in advance for a late application. Contacting the Division of Receipt and Referral or any other component of the NIH will not lead to either permission to submit late or an evaluation of the acceptability of the reasons for a delay.

Inquiries

Inquiries may be addressed to

Division of Receipt and Referral

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