

## NIH Policy on Late Submission of Grant Applications

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**Notice Number:** NOT-OD-11-035

### Key Dates

**Release Date:** January 13, 2011

### Issued by

National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#))

### Related Notices:

[NOT-OD-10-123](#)

### Purpose

This notice provides information on NIH policies related to the submission of grant applications. The notice consolidates policy from previous notices ([OD-08-027](#) and [OD-08-111](#)) on late submission of grant applications, updates the policy on late applications in relation to changes in other NIH policies, and includes additional guidance on application submission policies.

This notice specifically incorporates the policy eliminating the error correction window (effective January 25, 2011) for electronically submitted applications ([OD-10-123](#)).

### On Time Submission

#### Standard Due Dates

NIH expects that grant applications will be submitted on time. Standard due dates are listed at:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/submissionschedule.htm>.

- Applications that are required to use paper format are on time if they are sent by or on the standard due dates. Proof of on time submission is a dated receipt or postmark.
- Applications that are required to use electronic submission are on time if an error free application is successfully submitted to Grants.gov by 5 p.m. local time on the due date. (This means that a corrected application addressing any errors found by Grants.gov or NIH's eRA system must be submitted by 5 p.m. local time on the due date.)
- For both paper and electronic submissions, when due dates fall on a weekend or Federal holiday, they are extended to the next business day.

#### Special Receipt Dates

To be on time, grant applications submitted to Requests for Applications (RFAs) and Program Announcements with Special Referral Considerations (PARs) must be received by or on the date designated in the announcement.

- For electronic submission, on time submission is successful submission of an error free application to Grants.gov by 5 p.m. local time on the special receipt date indicated in the funding announcement.
- For paper applications, on time submission is **receipt** of the application by the Center for Scientific Review by the date designated in the funding announcement.

#### Late Applications

The long-standing NIH policy on late applications is stated in the [SF424 \(R&R\) and PHS 398](#) application instructions.

- Permission for a late submission is not granted in advance.
- In rare cases, late applications will be accepted only when accompanied by a cover letter that details compelling reasons for the delay.

- While the reasons for late submission are sometimes personal in nature, specific information about the timing and cause of the delay should be provided so an informed, objective decision can be made. Only the explanatory letter is needed; no other documentation is expected. This letter is available only to NIH staff who have a need to know (such as those with referral or review responsibilities); it is not available to reviewers or other staff.

### **Window of Consideration for Late Applications**

NIH will consider accepting late applications on a case-by-case basis for standard receipt dates based on the explanation provided. Note that the length of the late window is different for the standard vs. expedited submission/receipt dates as noted below due to differences in application processing time requirements.

#### **Regular Standard Submission/Receipt Dates:**

Applications for the following submission/receipt dates must be received at the NIH within two weeks of the standard date in order to be considered under the late policy: 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.

#### **Expedited Standard Submission/Receipt Dates:**

Applications for the following submission/receipt dates must be received at the NIH within one week of the standard date in order to be considered under the late policy: 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.

#### **Special Receipt Dates for RFAs and PARs:**

NIH will not consider accepting late applications for RFAs and PARs that have special receipt dates.

This includes the special receipt dates (March 20, July 20, and November 20) for resubmission 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 window of consideration for late applications has been carefully chosen so that late applications can be processed with the applications that were received on time. 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.

### **Reasons for a Late Submission**

NIH's Division of Receipt and Referral at the Center for Scientific Review will consider all late applications received within the late window but will not automatically accept all of them. Institutes/Centers will be consulted for applications that are their review responsibility. Applications submitted within the late window for reasons that are not found to be acceptable will be not be assigned for review or considered for funding.

Please be aware that any reasons for late submission must be in relation to the individual(s) with the PD/PI role on the application. For multiple PD/PI applications the reasons may apply to any or all the PD/PIs.

#### **Examples of Reasons that Might be Accepted**

Late applications have been accepted for reasons such as: death of an immediate family member of the PD/PI, sudden acute severe illness of the PD/PI or immediate family member, or large scale natural disasters.

Also, recent temporary or ad hoc service by a PD/PI that required a commitment of time that could have been used to prepare an application may be an acceptable reason (examples include: serving on an NIH extramural review group, NIH Board of

Scientific Counselors or an Advisory Board/Council).

For those PD/PIs who are eligible for continuous submission (appointed members of CSR and other NIH Study Sections, members of NIH Boards of Scientific Counselors, NIH Advisory Boards/Councils, members of Program Advisory Committees), or those currently designated as having substantial service ([OD-09-155](#) and [OD-10-090](#)) the late application policy includes submissions of activities other than R01, R21, and R34.

### Examples of Reasons that are NOT Acceptable

Examples of reasons that have **not** led to the acceptance of a late application include: failure to complete required registrations in advance of the due date, heavy teaching or administrative responsibilities, relocation of a laboratory, ongoing or non-severe health problems, personal events, 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.

For electronic submissions, correction of errors or addressing warnings after the due date is not considered a valid reason for a late submission. Applicants are encouraged to submit in advance of the due date to allow time to correct errors and/or address warnings identified in the NIH validation process.

### No Advance Permission Is Given for Late Applications

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 to the evaluation or approval of the reasons for a delay.

### Problems with Grants.gov or eRA Commons

Applicants must follow the directions provided at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/support.htm#guidelines> to report Grants.gov and eRA Commons system issues that threaten the timely submission of a grant application. NIH will investigate reports of [system issues](#) on a case-by-case basis. If the eRA Commons Help Desk confirms a system issue, the application will not be considered late as long as the submission process is completed in a timely manner. Note that problems with computer systems at the applicant organization, failure to follow instructions in the Application Guide or funding opportunity announcement, or failure to complete required registrations by the submission deadline are not considered system issues.

## Inquiries

Inquiries may be addressed to

Division of Receipt and Referral  
Center for Scientific Review  
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