

CURE Scientific Grant Review Guidelines

CURE'S MISSION

Our Mission is to cure epilepsy, transforming and saving millions of lives. We identify and fund cutting-edge research, challenging scientists worldwide to collaborate and innovate in pursuit of this goal. Our commitment is unrelenting.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

CURE promotes strong scientific research that advances the search for a cure for epilepsy, and addresses the goal of “no seizures, no side effects.” Specifically, we seek to fund studies that will transform epilepsy research and ultimately transform patient care. CURE funds research in the following priority areas: (1) the underlying causes of epilepsy, (2) the basic mechanisms of epileptogenesis, (3) investigations of the impact, natural history, and epidemiology; and (4) novel treatments which may impact progression of the disease. CURE specifically encourages studies that may not be currently fundable by other agencies because of their preliminary or unconventional nature. CURE also strongly encourages collaborative projects, especially those that are inclusive of investigators and expertise from fields outside of epilepsy. Preference is giving to proposals that address the severe, refractory epilepsies. Basic, translational, and clinical research are all valued and funded by CURE as they are relevant to our mission and the goals of the given grant mechanism.

GRANT REVIEW: STEP BY STEP GUIDE

STEP 1:

Once applications have been assigned, you will receive an auto-generated email from proposalCENTRAL with your assignment details. All critiques are entered in proposalCENTRAL. The email will also contain a link to proposalCENTRAL along with your login information.

STEP 2:

Read & agree to the confidentiality statement.

STEP 3:

View the titles and authors of your assigned applications (Assigned Applications Tab on your homepage).

STEP 4:

Determine if you have any conflicts of interests. If you identify a conflict, please check the box at the far left so that the CURE team is notified and can reassign. See additional details below on how conflicts are defined.

STEP 5:

Download application materials under “App Details” by choosing “All Attachments.” This will contain one PDF of all the materials in the proposal.

STEP 6:

Read all the application materials. Be sure to read the Award Guidelines for the specific mechanism you are reviewing so you are familiar with the outlined expectations (see Step 7 for guidelines location).

STEP 7:

On your homepage, click on “Your Critique” under “Submit Critique(s)” in order to enter your critique. On the critique page, you can find the Award Guidelines for that mechanism.

STEP 8:

Remember to save your critique both as you are typing and when you have finished.

Note - you can save critiques without submitting them so that you can continue to work and edit and come back at a later date.

STEP 9:

Once your critique is complete, you’ll need to submit (to lock) it from the homepage.

Note - you can still change your critique once you have submitted it. Revised critiques will be annotated to show that they have been revised (with the annotation ‘rev’).

STEP 10:

View other critiques (if desired). Please note that this isn’t an option until all reviewers for a given application have locked their critiques.

STEP 11:

View all applications (if desired) using the ‘All Applications’ tab on your homepage.

STEP 12:

Participate in discussion of your assigned critiques (if applicable/desired). See additional details on Threaded Discussion feature below.

STEP 13:

Participate in review panel teleconference.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – PLEASE CONFIRM WITHIN FIRST WEEK

Please review your assigned proposals within the first week of being assigned. If you have any conflicts of interest, please let us know so that we can handle all necessary reassignments well ahead of the critique deadline. Typically, we define conflicts as:

- Same institution
- Collaborators
- Former mentor/student
- Trained together in the same lab
- Some people also consider having published together a conflict
- Any other relationship that the reviewer believes puts them in conflict

CRITIQUE FORMATTING / INSTRUCTIONS:

Critiques are submitted in proposalCENTRAL. There are character limitations (15,000 characters max including spaces) but no strict formatting guidelines for the critiques.

Primary/Secondary Reviewers are asked - *“Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, including comments on innovation, feasibility, scientific merit, and the likelihood of this work transforming the field. Make sure to note if there is anything that particularly increases or dampens enthusiasm for support of this work. Please see the attached guidelines to assess how well the applicant addressed specific criteria.”*

Tertiary Reviewers are asked - *“To what extent, if successfully completed, do you think this research will transform epilepsy research?”*

Lay Reviewers assess the application from the standpoint of the patient. They are asked to address the following when assembling their critiques -

- *What is the potential impact of this work assuming it is successful?*
- *Is there anything that specifically excites me, or concerns me, about the work?*
- *Would I recommend this proposal for funding and why?*
- *What score would I give this proposal based on 1-9 scoring scale, with 1 being best score?*

All reviewers are also asked to provide a score based on a 1-9 scale, with 1 being the highest. Below is a scoring scale for your reference. Please use the full scoring range and score based on the qualitative characteristics of each number. You may assign the same score to more than one application.

Only Scientific Reviewers cast scores in proposalCENTRAL. Lay Reviewers include their scores in their written critiques.

1	Exceptional
2	Outstanding
3	Excellent
4	Very Good
5	Good
6	Satisfactory
7	Fair
8	Marginal
9	Poor

proposalCENTRAL THREADED DISCUSSION:

With the threaded discussion feature in proposalCENTRAL, you will be able to discuss your assigned applications with other reviewers on-line after you have submitted your critiques. This feature allows you to work out any differences of opinion on potentially fundable grants in advance so that presentation at the review panel teleconferences is in closer agreement. It can save discussion time at the meeting. Online discussion is especially helpful when the scoring range for an application is wide. We have set things up so that you will receive auto-generated alerts any time a comment has been submitted on one of your assigned applications and/or when scores vary by more than 3 points.

Threaded Discussion Steps:

> Once you have submitted your critique, you can click the “Other Critique” to either see discussion or to add a comment for other reviewers to see.

Conflict	Program Abbr	R	Applicant	Institution	Project Title	GM App ID	Abstract	App Details	Avg Score [Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting]	Critiques	Discuss*	Other Critiques
	SUDEP		Higgins, Liz	CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)	this is test	75280 pC ID	Abstract	App Details All Attachments		Secondary Reviewer Your Critique Submitted 5 Good	0/0	Other Critiques

> On the displayed page, you will add a comment in the text box and click the “Add New Message” button to display the text.

Reviewer	Role	Scores (click for critique)	Voter	Score		
Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting Print all Committee Critiques as DOC						
Chernyakov, S	Primary Reviewer	2 Outstanding	Test_CH_Discussion+Voting Committee Not Voted Chernyakov, S Dixon-Salazar, T Milder, J Conflicts Higgins, L			
Higgins, L	Secondary Reviewer	5 Good	Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting Committee Voted Chernyakov, S 2 Outstanding Higgins, L 5 Good Not Voted Dixon-Salazar, T Milder, J			
			Average: 0.00 N-1 Average: 0.00 Percentile: Maximum Score Variation: 3.00 Standard Deviation: 2.12			
<table style="width:100%; border:none;"> <tr> <td style="width:40%; border:none;"> <input type="button" value="Add New Message"/> </td> <td style="width:60%; border:none;"> <div style="border:1px solid gray; padding:2px;"> This is a sample of where you can add a new message that all reviewers who have submitted their critiques will be able to see. </div> </td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size:small; margin-top:5px;">To add to the discussion simply enter your comments to the right and press this button.</p>					<input type="button" value="Add New Message"/>	<div style="border:1px solid gray; padding:2px;"> This is a sample of where you can add a new message that all reviewers who have submitted their critiques will be able to see. </div>
<input type="button" value="Add New Message"/>	<div style="border:1px solid gray; padding:2px;"> This is a sample of where you can add a new message that all reviewers who have submitted their critiques will be able to see. </div>					

> Once you click the “Add New Message” button, the text will show on the same page:

<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Add New Message"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To add to the discussion simply enter your comments to the right and press this button.</p>			
Reviewer	Date/Time	Discussion	
Chemyakov, Stefanie <small>Test_CH_Discussion+Voting_Reviewer</small> <small>Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting_Primary_Reviewer</small>	5/13/2015 9:25:52 AM	Here is an example of a comment added by another reviewer.	
Higgins, Liz <small>Test_CH_Discussion+Voting_Administrator</small> <small>Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting_Secondary_Reviewer</small>	5/13/2015 9:21:52 AM	This is a sample of where you can add a new message that all reviewers who have submitted their critiques will be able to see.	
<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Add New Message"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To add to the discussion simply enter your comments to the right and press this button.</p>			
Reviewer	Date/Time	Discussion	
Higgins, Liz <small>Test_CH_Discussion+Voting_Administrator</small> <small>Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting_Secondary_Reviewer</small>	5/13/2015 9:21:52 AM	This is a sample of where you can add a new message that all reviewers who have submitted their critiques will be able to see.	

> When another reviewer logs in, and clicks the “Other Critiques” link, they will see your comment and can add one of their own. The reviewer will add it in the same text box. Once they click the “Add New Message” button, the comment will be displayed:

> Once discussion has been entered, there will also be a link for “Discuss” on the Reviewer’s interface. In this example, there is a 2/2. The first two represents the number of reviewers who have participated in the discussion. The second is the number of comments that have been logged.

Conflict	Program Abbr	R	Applicant	Institution	Project Title	GM App ID	Abstract	App Details	Avg Score [Test_SUDEP_Discussion+Voting]	Critiques	Discuss*	Other Critiques
	SUDEP		Higgins, Liz	CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)	this is test	75280 pC ID	Abstract	App Details All Attachments		Primary Reviewer Your Critique Submitted 3 Excellent	2/2	Other Critiques

REVIEW PANEL TELECONFERENCE – ONLINE VOTING:

Reviewer Steps:

1. Login to proposalCENTRAL
2. Click on “All Applications” tab

- Once discussion of a given application has ended, scientific reviewers assigned to that application will have the option to change their scores in proposalCENTRAL if their opinion of the proposed work has changed. Scientific reviewers that were not assigned to the application will also have the opportunity to cast a vote in proposalCENTRAL following the discussion.

To revise your vote or cast a new vote, simply select a score from the dropdown menu at the far right just as you do during the review process. Only the scientific reviewers use the scoring feature on our call. Lay Reviewers may change their scores, but new scores are tracked manually, not in proposalCENTRAL.

The screenshot shows the 'Assigned Applications' tab in proposalCENTRAL. At the top, there are tabs for 'Assigned Applications', 'All Applications', and 'Instructions'. Below the tabs, there is a dropdown menu for 'Select Another Committee:' set to 'Test Committee_Challenge_Discussion+Voting (Test_CH_Discussion+Voting)'. A 'Go' button is next to it. Below this, there are links for 'Menu', 'Edit Your Profile', 'Show Messages', 'Show Add/Remove Column List', and 'Show Advanced Sort/Filter'. A 'Download All Attachments for All Applications' link is on the right. A 'Remove Conflicts' button is present with a note: 'Note: Click this button to remove applications checked as Conflict. More Info.' Below this, a note states: 'Note: Grants that are resubmissions are marked with the letter "R".' The main table has columns: Conflict, Program Abbr, R, Applicant, Institution, Project Title, GM App ID, Abstract, App Details, Avg_Score [Test_CH_Discussion+Voting], Critiques, Other Critiques, and Save Vote(s). The 'Save Vote(s)' column is circled in red. The table contains three rows of applications, all from 'CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)' and 'Higgins, Liz'. The first row has a score of '1 Exceptional' and a 'Save Vote' button. The second and third rows have 'No Assigned Critique' and 'No Response' options.

Conflict	Program Abbr	R	Applicant	Institution	Project Title	GM App ID	Abstract	App Details	Avg_Score [Test_CH_Discussion+Voting]	Critiques	Other Critiques	Save Vote(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	CA		Higgins, Liz	CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)	This is a test	75369 pC ID	Abstract	App Details All Attachments		Primary Reviewer Your Critique Submitted Rev 1 Exceptional	Other Critiques	1 Exceptional Save Vote
<input type="checkbox"/>	POAE		Higgins, Liz	CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)	this is a test	75278 pC ID	Abstract	App Details All Attachments		No Assigned Critique	Other Critiques	No Response Save Vote
<input type="checkbox"/>	SUDEP		Higgins, Liz	CFF Care Center Columbia University (New York, NY)	this is test	75280 pC ID	Abstract	App Details All Attachments		No Assigned Critique	Other Critiques	No Response Save Vote

Remove Conflicts Note: Click this button to remove applications checked as Conflict. More Info.

- Once all votes have been cast, Liz will let call participants know when revised average scores have been calculated. Reviewers will then click "Rank" in the menu bar at top of application list to sort applications by average score.

CURE SCIENTIFIC REVIEWER FAQs

Q: What areas of research does CURE fund?

A: CURE's investigator-initiated grants program seeks to push the envelope and accelerate promising research leading to disease-modifying breakthroughs for people living with epilepsy. CURE prioritizes highly innovative, risky, paradigm-shifting projects that address CURE's mission to cure epilepsy, affirming our core belief that the only acceptable final goal is "no seizures, no side-effects."

CURE strongly encourages multidisciplinary, collaborative projects, especially those that include investigators and expertise from fields outside of epilepsy. The following 2017 priority areas reflect CURE's focus on advances that have the potential to truly transform and save lives. Prevention and disease modification/elimination are critical goals and consistent with our mission.

**CURE: Our mission is to cure epilepsy, transforming and saving millions of lives.
We identify and fund cutting-edge research, challenging scientists
worldwide to collaborate and innovate in pursuit of this goal.
Our commitment is unrelenting.**

- 2017 Priority areas
 - Transformative research to enhance our understanding of the cellular, molecular, genetic and systems-level mechanisms that lead to any of the epilepsies, facilitating the continued investigation of disease-modifying or preventative strategies
 - Innovative approaches that can prevent, modify and/or arrest the development of acquired epilepsy after head injury, stroke, tumor, viral infection, etc.
 - Research that will inform the development of novel therapies to prevent onset or halt the progression of the severe pediatric epilepsies
 - Research focused on new, effective treatments for the >30% of the epilepsy population who are pharmacoresistant
 - Novel research that furthers our understanding of the causes and ultimate elimination of SUDEP

Q: How should I review the grants assigned to me?

A: Review the full grant as it relates to CURE's mission, the specific details of the grant mechanism, and based on the questions asked of reviewers in the critique form on proposalCENTRAL.

Q: Should a study on a very rare form of epilepsy be ranked lower than others that have the potential to impact a larger pool of patients?

A: No. Proposals focused on rare forms of epilepsies are given equal consideration as those that are more common.

Q: How should I weigh grants that are immediately translatable versus those with more distant translational potential?

A: You should weigh each grant by the potential of the research to advance the search for a cure, and how well it addresses the ultimate goal of "no seizures, no side effects."

Q: Will CURE fund all the grants my panel recommends for funding?

A: CURE's goal is to fund the best science. When we enter a grant cycle, there is no specific number of proposals per category that we aim to fund. The grant review panel can recommend all, none, or some of the grants from their given category for funding. Final funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors.

Q: How does CURE address potential funding overlap of an applicant?

A: Some applicants will apply to multiple organizations with the same proposals but can only accept an award from one organization for that body of work. CURE verifies that there is no funding overlap before awarding.

Q: If a PI can get NIH funding for proposed research, should we give it a lower score?

A: No.

Q: Should I review the budget?

A: Yes. The budget is an important component of the research proposal. Review how much the applicant is asking for as well as how the money will be appropriated.

Q: After I submit the scores on my grants, can I see all the scores from others?

A: Yes, you are able to view submitted critiques and scores from other reviewers once your critiques have been locked.

Q: Is there a discussion period allowed online after my scores are submitted?

A: Yes, once your critiques are locked you can discuss your assigned applications with other reviewers online. The online discussion feature allows reviewers to work out any differences of opinion on potentially fundable grants in advance so that presentation at the review panel teleconferences is in closer agreement.

Q: Who attends the Review Panel Teleconference?

A: Participants in the Review Panel Teleconference include:

- *Review Panel (Scientists, Lay Reviewers)*
- *CURE's Research Team*
- *Observers from CURE's Board and/or Staff*

Q: What is the structure of the Review Panel Teleconference?

A: The Review Panel Teleconference occurs in this format:

- *Scientific Review Occurs First*
 - *Primary Reviewer will summarize grant and his/her critique*
 - *Secondary and Tertiary Reviewers will provide additional feedback as relevant*
- *Lay Review Follows*
 - *Lay Reviewer will share his/her thoughts or concerns. If Lay Reviewer cannot attend the call, a member of the Research Team will speak on his/her behalf.*
- *Discussion ensues. Reviewers asked if they would like to change their scores. If a reviewer changes his/her score, he/she will be asked to change the critique text as well so that the new score matches the review that is released to the applicant.*
- *At end of the call: each grant in the group will be compared with the others and given a final recommendation of fund/do not fund by the panel based on discussion, CURE's mission, and relevance to the mechanism.*

Q: What happens after the panel teleconference is over?

A: For reviewers who adjusted their scores during the panel discussion, we ask that critique summaries be revised accordingly so that the feedback provided to applicants is clear (blinded critique summaries are released to all applicants). The final recommendation by the panel is then sent to the Research Committee who makes a recommendation to the Board of Directors for funding.

Q: Do you correct for scoring range differences among reviewers?

A: Yes, reviewers have the opportunity to adjust their scores following the panel discussions on the review call.

Q: Does CURE send reviews and scores to applicants after awardees are announced?

A: Once CURE's Board of Directors has approved the funding recommendation, applicants are notified as to whether their proposal is among those that have been selected. At this time, critique summaries are released to applicants but reviewer and scoring details remain anonymous.