

Participating in a successful peer review panel

When evaluating proposals, you need to keep in mind the following overarching goals:

Intellectual Merit.

The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge. The following elements should be considered in the review of Intellectual Merit:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the Principal Investigator (PI) either at the home organization or through collaborations to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts.

The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes. The following elements should be considered in the review of Broader Impacts:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI either at the home organization or through collaborations to carry out the proposed activities?

When grading the proposal, indicate:

- Major strengths: what makes the proposal particularly compelling;
- Major weaknesses: what might compromise the execution of the proposed work;
- Minor strengths: points raised in the proposal that satisfied the review criteria;
- Minor weaknesses: points missing from the proposal that would satisfy the review criteria;
- Adjectival rating: E, E/VG, VG, VG/G, G, G/F, F, F/P, P

Relevant links:

https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18_1/pappg_3.jsp#IIIA

https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/

https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf18001