

Tips for a Strong Biosketch

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What is a biosketch?

A biosketch is a document designed to highlight your education, experience and expertise to show the reviewer you have the necessary skills to carry out the project defined in the proposal.

Who needs to complete a biosketch?

Biosketches are typically required for all individuals who are identified as senior/key personnel, unless stated otherwise in the program announcement.

**** Note: we highly recommend using SciENCv for building biosketches—see SciENCv section.**

Recommendations for a strong biosketch:

1. Follow the format guidance of the sponsor.
2. Highlight your relevant experience, education, and accomplishments in the subject area defined in the grant proposal. You should explicitly describe how your experience qualifies you for the role on this proposal, remember to share your relevant expertise, education and accomplishments. This should include your education, honors relevant accomplishments and significant products. It is important to allocate sufficient time to ensure your biosketch highlights your experience.
3. Do spend time on your personal statement to highlight how you are qualified for this role. Reviewers often use the biosketch personal statement to rate the PI on investigator review criteria. Make sure it speaks directly to your expertise and experience with regard to the specific proposal you are submitting; with so many other documents to complete for an application, this is often overlooked.
4. Include the date of promotion, as this speaks to your qualifications if this is in process.
5. Carefully choose which publications to cite that are relevant to the proposal.
6. Customize your biosketch for different grant applications.

What are the page limits?

NSF biosketch format

NSF is limited to 3 pages that include:

- » Professional preparation
- » Appointments in reverse chronological order
- » Products-up to 5 **closely related to the proposed project**
- » Up to 5 other significant products (do not need to be closely related)
- » Synergist activities- up to 5 distinct examples that demonstrate the broader impact of professional/ scholarly activities

Biosketch checklist:

- ☐ Personal statement is reflective of education and experience and specific to the project
- ☐ Contributions to science are relevant to this application and highlight the skills of the PI and team
- ☐ Included publications that highlight expertise and suitability for this project
- ☐ The biosketch is consistent with other parts of the application

NIH biosketch format

NIH is limited to 5 pages that include:

- » Education
- » Personal statement: include relevant experience and expertise and highlight your technical expertise, your collaborators and environment and examples of your past performance. You can cite up to 4 publications or research products in this section. **No hyperlinks or URLs allowed.**
- » Positions, Scientific Appointments and Honors- in reverse chronological order
- » Contributions to science- Maximum of 5 significant contributions- description for each not to exceed half a page and should describe central finding, influence of finding, your specific role on the project; no figures or tables allowed. No more than 4 publications can be cited for each contribution to science.
- » For predoctoral and post-doctoral grants biosketches should include Scholastic performance section- includes courses with grades and list the institutions.