

# Anatomy of a Biosketch

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# What is a Biosketch?

➤ A biosketch is a brief summary of your or someone else's professional/educational accomplishments, publications, and affiliations meant to highlight important aspects of your/their training, experience, and areas of interest.

## In simple terms:

- short sketch of a person's life
- an abbreviated curriculum vitae

# Review: NIH Biosketch Format

- See handout
- Main segments we will focus on today:
  - Personal Statement
  - Publications
  - Research Support

## *Why Biosketches Matter More*

- ▶ **Proposals are shorter.** No room in text to “brag” about person’s qualifications and accomplishments. If it’s important, be sure it’s in the biosketch.
- ▶ **Fewer publications.** Only 15 publications can be listed in biosketches. If it’s relevant to this proposal, be sure it’s listed.

## ***We'll discuss strategies for:***

- ▶ **New section, “Personal Statement”**
- ▶ **Publications – making the 15 count**
- ▶ **Research support**
- ▶ **Common issues in all of the above**

## ***New Section: “Personal Statement”***

- ▶ **Purpose:** to summarize a person’s background and qualifications for a project.
- ▶ **Do** emphasize unique accomplishments (*“I was one of three postdoctoral fellows who won the national XX Award”*).
- ▶ **For a PI, especially a new one: Do** explain how the person is ready to conduct this project successfully – past funding, pilot studies, previous training, etc.

# ***New Section: “Personal Statement”***

- ▶ **Do** describe each person’s role in this proposal.
- ▶ Example for a training grant: *“I will serve on Dr. X’s mentoring committee for this project, meet with him monthly, and provide specific guidance on Aim 3 of his project”*.
- ▶ Example for other proposals: *“I will carry out the XX assays described in Aim 2, assist in data interpretation, and be a coauthor on subsequent abstracts and manuscripts.”*

# *New Section: “Personal Statement”*

- ▶ Reviewers’ equation: Degree to which bios are customized = amount of person’s involvement in application
- ▶ **Don’t** make it too long, or reviewers won’t read it. The NIH biosketch sample is 21 lines long.

# *Most Frequent Issues in Biosketches*

- **Personal Statement**

- Missing altogether
- Vague and uninformative
- Person's expertise not mentioned
- Person's role not explicitly described

# *Most Frequent Issues in Biosketches*

- **Publications**

- Nothing at all in last few years
- Items not updated (“in press, 2010”)
- Papers not yet accepted
- Inconsistent citation style (when in doubt, use PubMed style)
- Out of order (should be oldest to newest)
- Exceeding the limitation of 15

# *Most Frequent Issues in Biosketches*

- **Research Support**

- Out of date (finished projects under “current”)
- Formatting (SF424 forms don’t use headers or footers; \$ should not be listed)
- Missing details (especially if PI is elsewhere)
- “Pending” included: this is no longer done
- Completed projects: list within last 3 years only

# *Overall Strategy for Biosketches*

- ▶ **Balance the details.** The biosketch should reflect the person's overall qualifications.
- ▶ So the “Personal Statement” should not crowd out the 15 publications, or the person's funding history, or important accomplishments (e.g. study section service)
- ▶ **Quality publications.** Choose the 15 carefully. Look for “high impact” journals, author listing (1<sup>st</sup> or last), and topics most pertinent to this proposal. Some should be recent, if possible.

# *FAQ's about Publications*

- ▶ **List abstracts?** Usually, no. Could do so for a trainee, to show work in progress, or a new research direction for a more senior investigator.
- ▶ **List “revised” or “submitted” papers? NO.** It’s “in press”, meaning final acceptance by the journal, or it’s out of the biosketch.
- ▶ **Include “open access” publications?** Avoid if possible; these are considered less rigorous. But include if there are few others to list.

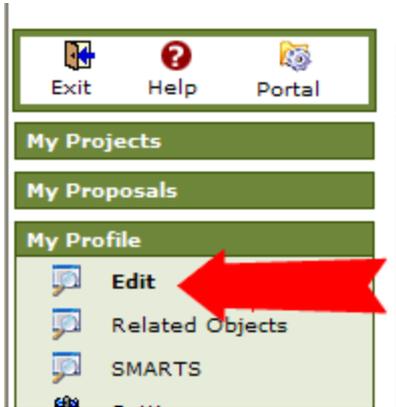
## *FAQ's about Publications*

- ▶ **Include book chapters?** Usually, no.
- ▶ **Are PMCID's required?** No, but... NIH requests them, and if they're missing it could slow their processing of an award.
- ▶ Bottom line: OR will remind the PI to include them in our proposal review, but that alone will not be a reason why a proposal isn't funded.

## *FAQ's about Research Support*

- ▶ **List industry-sponsored work?** Reviewers care most about NIH or comparable funding, so list those first. Can include industry-sponsored projects thereafter if they are especially pertinent.
- ▶ **List only if salary derived?** No; can list if there is effort but no salary, e.g. mentor role on a training program.

# Utilizing InfoEd as Biosketch Creation/Archival Tool



- InfoEd can be used as a biosketch archival tool
- InfoEd can create new biosketch templates from personal profile information



Existing Biosketches								Upload New
CVBio Name	Description	Original	Word	PDF	Replace	Edit	Delete	
BioSketch from 09-00091							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 09-00095							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 09-00147							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 09-00216							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 09-00218							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 09-00219							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 10-00336							<input type="checkbox"/>	
BioSketch from 12-00049							<input type="checkbox"/>	
test							<input type="checkbox"/>	

Biosketch Templates			NIH Template	Create New Personal Template
Template Name	Edit	Delete		
pick me for test of bios build		<input type="checkbox"/>		

# Other Types of Biosketches?

What we have discussed covers 90% of Sponsor format requirements; however...

There are others:

- Other NIH
  - Fellowship, Sponsor/Co Sponsor
- National Science Foundation
- American Heart Association

## *“Take-Home” Points*

- ▶ **The biosketch is a snapshot of the investigator’s qualifications.** Shorter text means that biosketches may contain details that appear nowhere else in the proposal.
- ▶ **Publications and research support** should always be checked for accuracy – they can change quickly.
- ▶ **Follow the format.** Make sure reviewers can find details they’re looking for.

# Questions?

Contact your Grant and Contract Administrator in the Office of Research

or

Karen Klein in the Research Support Core ([kklein@wakehealth.edu](mailto:kklein@wakehealth.edu))