

# Anatomy of a Biosketch

January 10, 2012

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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.

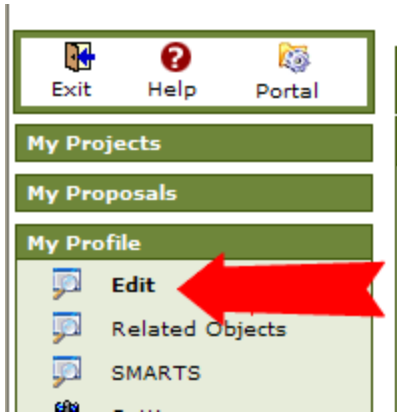
## ***FAQ's about Publications***

- ▶ **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

General  
Electronic Signature  
Advisees (0)  
Appointments  
Backups  
**Biosketch**  
Certifications  
Classification  
Collaborators (0)  
Courses Taught (0)  
Creative Activities (0)  
Custom Category (0)  
Delegates (1)  
Education (1)

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))