**NIH R15 General Guidelines**

**About**

The NIH R15 Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) emphasizes providing biomedical research experiences for primarily undergraduate students and enhancing the research environment at institutions that do not receive substantial funding (less than $6 million/year) from the NIH. MTSU is an AREA eligible institution.

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| General Information | |
| NOFO | [PAR-24-152](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-24-152.html) (expires May 8, 2027) |
| Standard Due Dates | [Link to standard due dates](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/due-dates-and-submission-policies/due-dates.htm): generally at the end of February, June, and October |
| Project Period | Up to 3 years |
| Budget Limit | Up to $375,000 in direct costs. Full indirects provided. Cost sharing not required. |
| Sample Applications | [Link to sample applications](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications) |

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| Formatting Information | |
| Document | PDF only with no headers or footers. |
| Font type | Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype are recommended. |
| Font size | Minimum 11 pt. Smaller font is acceptable in figures and graphs but must be legible when viewed at 100% zoom. |
| Margins | Minimum 0.5 inches on all sides. |
| Other formatting | [Link to additional formatting instructions.](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm) |

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| Required Proposal Documents | |
| Project Summary | (no more than 30 lines) Concise description of the importance, objectives, and methodology of the proposal suitable for public dissemination. |
| Project Narrative | (3 sentences) Description of the public health relevance of the proposal suitable for a lay audience. |
| Specific Aims | (1 page) A highly important document for all NIH proposals. Concisely state the importance, goals, and specific objectives (Aims) of the proposal. Describe expected outcomes and impact on the research field if successful. |
| Research Strategy | (12 pages) Should include the following headed sections;   1. Significance: Describe the importance of the problem being addressed, current barriers in the field, and how the proposed research addresses the problem/barriers. Describe how achievement of the proposed research will advance the research field. 2. Innovation: Depending on the nature of the proposed research, describe;    1. How the proposed research challenges existing paradigms in the field.    2. How the proposed concepts or methodologies are novel and advantageous over existing concepts or methodologies.    3. Any refinements, improvements, or new applications of existing concepts, methodologies, or instrumentation to advance an existing field. 3. Approach: This section will be the most detailed description of the proposed research strategy and methodology that will lead to successful completion of the proposed Aims. This section can be organized in different ways as preferred by the PI, but is often sectioned out by Aim with appropriate figures for easier reading. Should include the following information;    1. Preliminary Data: Not required for an R15, but successful proposals include preliminary results that support the proposed research.    2. Research Plan: Detailed discussion of the proposed research plan and methods, including appropriate controls and statistical analysis.    3. Potential Problems and Alternative Strategies: Identify likely places that the proposed methods may struggle or fail. Describe alternative strategies (methods and techniques) that would be used to circumvent or overcome these problems.    4. Expected Outcomes: Describe expected results from the proposed research. Could include milestones or “go-no-go” criteria.    5. Student Involvement: Since the R15 is focused on involving undergraduate students in biomedical research, it is beneficial to describe briefly how students will be involved in the proposed experiments. Clearly articulate what research will be done by undergraduates versus graduates. |
| Bibliography & References Cited | (no page limit) Complete listing of the references cited in the Research Strategy. |
| Biosketches | (5 pages per person) Required for each Senior/Key Personnel (PI or Co-PIs) and Other Significant Contributors. Should review [specific biosketch formatting requirements](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm). Can be prepared using [SciENcv](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/). Should include sections for personal statement, awards and honors, and contributions to science. Specific for the R15, describe previous mentoring of undergraduates in research within the personal statement and indicate which publications involved undergraduate authors. |
| Facilities and Other Resources | (no page limit) One of the most important documents for an AREA award because it details the impact the award will have on students and the institution. A detailed description of the following;   1. the institutional student profile (demographics, diversity, etc.), 2. unique characteristics of the institution that make it appropriate for an AREA award, 3. likely impact of the AREA award on the PI, institution, and students in pursuit of careers in biomedical research, 4. facilities (lab, computer, animal) and resources (equipment, supplies, space, time, funding) provided by the institution for the proposed research.   See NOFO for detailed description of what to include in this section. |
| Equipment | (no page limit) Provide a list of equipment pertinent to the proposed research along with its location and capabilities. |
| Budget | Requested budgets of $250,000 or less in direct costs use the Modular Budget form, requesting direct funds in $25,000 increments. Budgets greater than $250,000 require a detailed budget using the R&R Budget form. Budgets should be drafted by the PI, refined and approved by ORSP, and completed in NIH ASSIST by ORSP. Given the goal of the AREA award, inclusion of undergraduate student salaries is strongly encouraged. If undergraduate student salaries are not included, must indicate how students will be financially supported in the research. |
| Budget Justification | (no page limit) Detailed justification of the requested funds. If specific undergraduate researchers have been identified as participants in the proposed research, provide their name and academic level. |
| Data Management and Sharing Plan | Complete the [Data Management and Sharing Plan Format Page](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/data-management-and-sharing-plan-format-page). Describes the type of data that will be collected and how it will be preserved, accessed, and distributed. |
| Provost Letter | A letter from the Provost or similar official with institution-wide responsibility attesting that;   1. the institution has more undergraduate students than graduate students, 2. the institution has not received more than $6 million per year support from the NIH in 4 of the past 7 years, 3. the PI has a primary appointment at the institution. |
| Letters of Support | Technically optional but strongly encouraged. For junior faculty especially, a letter of support from their chair detailing their ability to mentor undergraduate researchers, the reassign time provided, etc. Can also solicit letters from collaborators or institution programs supporting the proposed research. |

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| If Applicable/Optional Proposal Documents | |
| Resource Sharing Plan | If developing any [model organisms or new research tools as defined by the NIH](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/resource-sharing-plan), describe the plan for sharing these resources. |
| Vertebrate Animals | Required if working with vertebrate animals. Describe proposed procedures involving animals, including species, strains, ages, sex, and total number to be used, justifications for the use of animals versus alternative models, interventions to minimize discomfort, distress, pain and injury, and justification for euthanasia method if not consistent with the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. |
| Protection of Human Subjects | Required if working with human subjects. Complete the Study Record form in ASSIST for each proposed study involving human subjects. |
| Select Agent Research | Required if working with a [federally designated Select Agent](https://www.selectagents.gov/sat/list.htm). |
| Multi-PI Leadership Plan | Required if multiple PIs (not Co-PIs) are indicated for the proposed research. Describe the rationale for a multi-PI approach, organization structure of the leadership team, and how communication, decision making, and conflict resolution will be handled. |
| Authentication of Key Biological And/Or Chemical Resources | Required if working with key biological or chemical agents. Briefly describe methods to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources used in the proposed studies. |
| Consortium | Required if issuing a subaward from the institution. Should be completed by the institution receiving the subaward. |
| Introduction to Resubmission | (1 page) Required if proposal is a resubmission. Should address reviewer concerns from original submission and specify how the proposal has been strengthened. |
| Progress Report Publication List | Required if proposal is a renewal. List the titles and complete references to all appropriate publications, manuscripts accepted for publication, patents, and other printed materials that have resulted from the project since it was last reviewed competitively. List the PubMed Central ID (PMCID) for each publication that was authored by the PI arising from NIH support. |