Writing a BioSketch

What is a BioSketch?

A BioSketch is a type of CV or resume that is requested by the NIH and other funders.

- o It is submitted with funding applications.
- o It provides a summary of your work, education, experience and expertise.
- o It has a set format and rules on what can and cannot be included.
- o It is used to decide if you are suitable to be funded, if are you good for your proposed role.
- o It should be edited to match the grant or scholarship that you are applying for.

Who needs a BioSketch?

Anyone who will be a senior/key or significant person in a grant funded project or scholarship.

- o It is all important people, not only the PI or Department Head.
- o It is for all key contributors, not only those at PhD or higher level.

Plan ahead – if you think you will be involved in a funding application in the future start writing your BioSketch in advance.

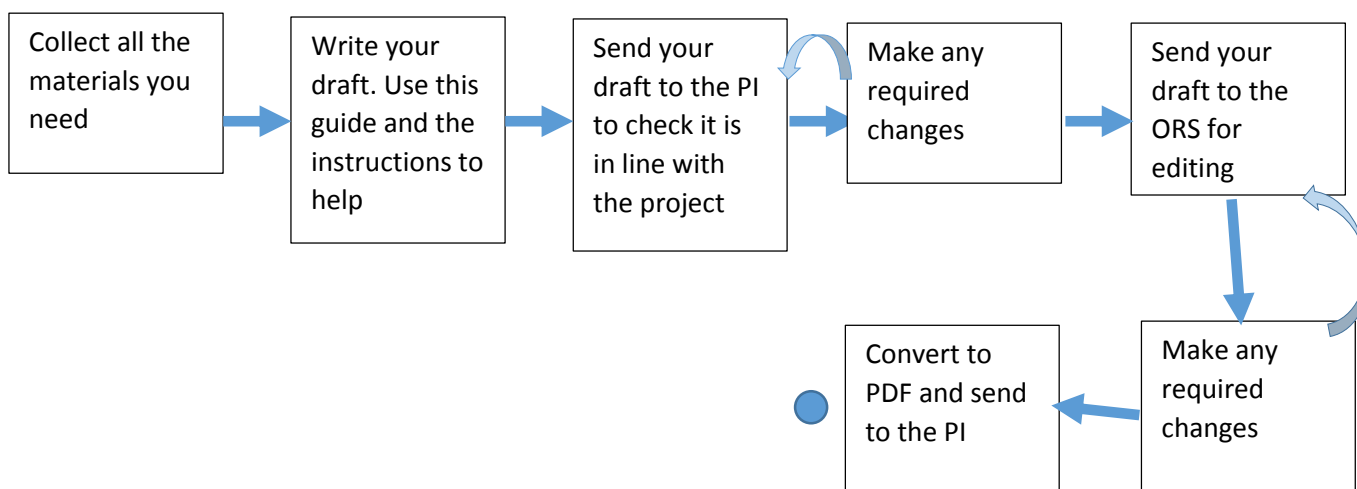**What does a good BioSketch look like?**

A good BioSketch will –

- o Follow the format exactly
- o Have all sections complete
- o Follow all the instructions
- o Show why you are a good choice for the funding
- o Be easy to read, with clear, accurate sentences
- o Have correct and accurate English
- o Be appropriate to the project or opportunity you are applying for

How to start?

Get all of the materials you need -

- o The correct version of the form – Revision 10/15 is approved until 31 Oct 2018. You can download it here - http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch-blankformat-Forms-D.docx
- o A copy of the instructions and example BioSketch. You can download them here – http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm
- o Your current CV
- o A list of your publications
- o A list of your research projects for the last 3 years
- o A description of your role in the proposed project OR a description of how the scholarship will help you

What are the stages?

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Collect all the    →    Write your        →    Send your         →    Make any          →    Send your
materials you           draft. Use this        draft to the PI        required               draft to the
need                    guide and the          to check it is         changes                ORS for
                        instructions to        in line with                                  editing
                        help                   the project
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●    Convert to        ←    Make any
     PDF and send           required
     to the PI              changes
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What to write?

Below is a description for each section of the BioSketch. It includes the rules plus also gives suggestions. While writing, remember the purpose of the BioSketch is to show how your experience, expertise and interests fit the project or scholarship.

There are four sections, and you must complete all of them.

Section A – Personal Statement

The purpose of this section is to explain why you are good for the project/scholarship. It is written in the first person- e.g. I managed… I completed…

Describe your –

* academic background
* training
* commitment
* previous work in a similar area
* technical expertise
* team skills, such as communication or leadership
* project management skills (if relevant to your role), such as budgeting, staffing or problem solving

● After the statement, list up to four of your publications or research products that are most relevant to the funding you are applying for. Do not list more than four, even if they are relevant. You will have to decide which are the most important to include.

Section B – Positions and Honors

There are 3 different lists –

* Positions and Employment
* Other Experience and Professional Memberships
* Honors

For each list give the information in time order, starting with the earliest and finishing with the most recent. For the dates, state only the year, the month is not needed.

Positions and Employment

* Include the job title, department (if there is one), institution or company, city and country. Only include positions since your last degree.

Other Experience and Professional Memberships

* Include relevant - memberships, positions on boards, positions on committees, peer reviewing , mentorships

Honors

* Include - awards or recognition from a university, awards from conferences or publications, competitive scholarships, other academic awards

Section C - Contribution to Science

This is the most difficult section. You need to describe your most significant work. The purpose of the section is to show your expertise and range of research areas.

* Depending on the length of your research career you will have a different number of "Contributions". The maximum is five but if you are a new researcher you may have only one. Each Contribution will contain a collection of similar and/or connected work.
* If you have no publications, you must still complete this section. You can describe your work on other people's studies and your training.

For each Contribution you must –

* Give important background information, such as the impact of a disease or a gap in understanding
* Describe the key findings
* Explain how the findings changed technology and/or public health
* State your role e.g. PI, data manager, statistician, laboratory manager, technician

* After each Contribution list up to four relevant peer-reviewed publications or other research products. The other products can include – guidelines, software, curricula, new protocols or procedures, and educational materials. You can repeat publications you listed in Section A.

* The maximum length for each Contribution is half a page.

Section C - Contribution to Science – Bibliography

- After all the Contributions you can give a link to a full list of your publications on a publicly available digital database that is on a US Federal Government site (i.e. it has .gov in the url). Make sure you use a database that doesn't require a password.

- NIH prefer researchers to use MyBibliography (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53595/) but a quick alternative is to copy the url of a PubMed search – e.g. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Nicholas+J+White

- Make sure you test the link before sending.

Section D- Research Support

Only include research projects from the last 3 years. Divide the information into two lists - Ongoing and Completed. Start each list with the work most relevant to the application.

For each project state –

* Grant reference number e.g. U19 AI-09-025 *or* Grant name e.g. Faculty Resources Grant
* PI name
* Dates of the project
* Title
* Brief description of the goal
* Your role

If you are applying for pre/postdoctoral fellowship or a dissertation research grant, you must also include "Scholastic Performance". Details on this are in the instructions document.

All Sections - Overall Rules

* The maximum length for a BioSketch is 5 pages.
* The page size must be Letter
* The font must be at least 11 points and black
* The font must be one of Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia
* It must be submitted as a PDF file

More info

FAQs - **http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/faq_biosketches.htm#4581**

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest other topics for our Learning Center please email mahidol.tropmed@gmail.com.

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