



Association for Academic Pathology

Promoting Excellence In Academic Pathology

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October 13, 2026
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20892

Re: Request for Information on Proposed Changes to Reporting Outcomes from NIH Peer Review (NOT-OD-26-088)

Submitted via <https://rfi.grants.nih.gov/?s=6a2b1c22c3cfda46e0badd2>

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Academic Pathology (AAPath) to express our concerns about the proposed change to the peer-review process for federal grants. AAPath is a non-profit society that serves as the voice of U.S. academic departments of Pathology. AAPath provides leadership and advocacy for the discipline of Pathology, and enables departments to meet demands of education, research, and clinical practice. Pathology departments at US medical schools examine cause and source of disease clinically and via experimental and translational research. Pathology is the 6th highest recipient of NIH grants out of 44 medical disciplines with ~\$840M in funding per Blue Ridge Institute ([ByDepartment_2025.xlsx](#)).

Though the proposed change would maintain peer-review and the current scoring system, we share the concerns of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and others regarding communicating the peer-review findings only through a three-category system (Most competitive, Competitive, Not discussed) for the following reasons:

- We agree with the AAMC that the three categories do not provide sufficient granularity to stratify grants for funding or to provide sufficient feedback to scientists submitting proposals. We support the AAMC's suggestion of a 5-category system (top 5%, 6-15, 16-25, 26-50, and >50; [Microsoft Word - AAMCResponse_NIHReportingOutcomesPeerReview_final](#)).
- Scores should be released to those submitting with comments to ensure full transparency and engender trust in the process, and to facilitate improvements for future resubmissions. Feedback is important to a full-circle quality improvement loop and is especially meaningful to early-career investigators who are building their skills and careers. Providing scores therefore benefits the growth of the scientific workforce, and influences quality of science and future discoveries that will improve health.
- Appropriate use of scores, including methods of categorization and transparency of scoring with the scientific community, is important to peer-reviewers. We are concerned that the most talented and knowledgeable individuals will be reluctant to participate in a process where their expert opinion is not adequately valued and utilized, and that this will negatively impact the quality of reviews and ultimately the quality of science and discovery and new knowledge that will advance health.

We appreciate the NIH's interest in improving the peer-review process and the opportunity to provide comments toward this improvement. We encourage the NIH to monitor findings

from any changes which are implemented to allow continued refinement and ensure that improvement that meets the expectation of the general public and the scientific community is accomplished.

Sincerely,

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