

SUGGESTIONS TO COMPOSE YOUR SPECIFIC AIMS PAGE

According to recent announcements from the NIH concerning Fellowship award applications, Specific Aims should list the broad, long-term objectives and the goal of the specific research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.

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Below is an excerpt from “Quick Guide for Grant Applications” posted on the NCI website: <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/extra/extdocs/gntapp.pdf>

Research Plan Part I: Specific Aims

Purpose: The purpose of the specific aims is to describe concisely and realistically the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact of the proposed research will exert on the research fields involved.

Recommended Length: The recommended length of the specific aims is one page.

Content: The specific aims should cover:

- broad, long-term goals;
- the specific objectives and hypotheses to be tested;
- summarize expected outcomes; and
- describe impact on the research field.

Suggestions:

1. Generally, the Specific Aims section should begin with a brief narrative describing the long-term goals or objectives of the research project and the hypothesis to be tested. This is followed by a numbered list of the Aims.
2. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.
3. Make sure your specific objectives or hypothesis are clearly stated, are testable, and adequately supported by citations and preliminary data. Be sure to explain how the results to be obtained will be used to test the hypothesis.
4. Be as brief and specific as possible. For clarity, each aim should consist of only one sentence. Use a brief paragraph under each aim if detail is needed. Most successful applications have 2-4 specific aims.
5. Don't be overly ambitious. A small, focused project is generally better received than a diffuse, multifaceted project.
6. Be certain that all aims are related. Have someone read them for clarity and cohesiveness.
7. Focus on aims where you have good supporting preliminary data and scientific expertise.
8. Include a brief statement of the overall impact of the research studies.
9. This is the most important page of the entire application since it may be the only section the unassigned reviewers read to understand approach, impact, and innovation.