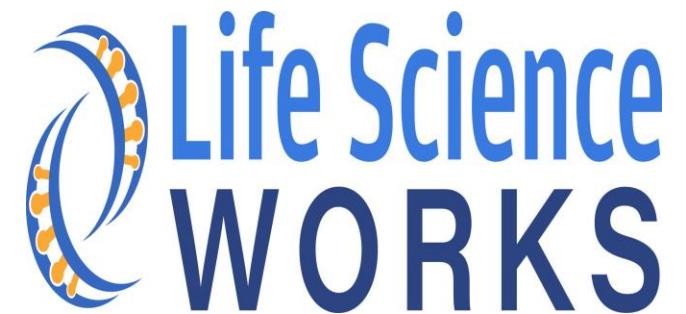


Module:
Developing an Impactful Biosketch



NIH Common Forms Timeline Update

- Enforcement delayed
- Leniency extended through May 2026
- Non-compliant applications will not be withdrawn during leniency

Source: NOT-OD-26-033, February 6, 2026

Why NIH Made This Change

- High volume of technical issues
- SciENcv system latency
- Account merger backlogs
- Significant burden on research community

Updated Timeline

- Original deadline: January 25, 2026
- New leniency period: Through May 2026
- Warnings only during leniency
- Errors enforced after leniency ends



What Applicants & Institutions Should Do

- Begin using Common Forms when feasible
- NIH will accept legacy Biosketch & Other Support formats
- Update internal systems and procedures
- Prepare for mandatory use after May 2026

What to Expect Next

- NIH Guide Notice expected Spring 2026
- Will announce when warnings become errors
- Continued monitoring by NIH, eRA, and SciENcv

NIH Biosketch for SBIR PIs

- Purpose
- Why reviewers care



What the NIH Biosketch Is

- Narrative document not CV or resume
- Tells reviewers why you are qualified
- Read closely by reviewers

Affects:

- Investigator Score
- Overall Impact

Can this person do what they are proposing? – This is a narrative argument for why you are the right person to do the work

Required Sections

- Name & Education/Training
- Personal Statement
- Positions, Scientific Appointments & Honors
- Contributions to Science

Two sections require the most effort:

- Personal statement
- Contributions to science

Formatting Rules

- 5 pages max
- NIH template required
- No images
- No hyperlinks except publications
- PDF only
- Font and margin rules essential

Formatting errors are not cosmetic. They signal inexperience.

Personal Statement Purpose

- Each application gets a tailored statement
- Explains why you are suited for the project
- Ties current relevant expertise to the application
- It is to add context not an autobiography
- May tie your work to other key personnel

Targeted explanation of how your background matches this specific project

Strong vs Weak Personal Statement

Include:

- Relevant expertise
- Prior accomplishments related to the current application
- Role on the project and any experience in similar roles
- Address gaps

Why should a reviewer trust you with this work?

Writing Personal Statement

- Expertise
- Role
- Team fit



Write 2-3 sentences about the specific expertise you bring to the project.

Contributions to Science: Purpose

- Demonstrates impact
- Shows progression as a leader
- Not a publication dump
- Contributions take many forms

This is not, "How many publications or posters?"

This IS, "What has your work changed?"

Contribution Structure

- Short Narrative (1/2 page max)
- Describe the contribution
- Why did the contribution matter
- Good idea to explain the context of the contribution
- 4 pubs max

Each contribution is a mini story: problem – your work – impact

Writing Strong Contributions to Science

Best Practices:

- Focus on Influence, not chronology
- Group related work is important
- Explain significance in plain language

Weak: I published several papers on protein structure

Strong: My work established a new method for determining protein conformational changes in live cells, enabling downstream drug-target validation used by multiple groups.

Prohibited & Discouraged Inclusions

- No grant dollars
- No pending apps
- No websites
- No figures or tables
- No self-evaluation language “highly impactful”

Including prohibited content signals either carelessness or lack of familiarity with NIH rules

Common Mistakes

- Generic personal statements
- CV style
- Overlapping contributions
- Common comment: “*No clear role described*”

Clarity beats prestige

SBIR-Specific Tips

- Emphasize execution over prestige
- Explicitly connect your background to the product
- Show you can drive a project, not just participate
- Address gaps proactively in the personal statement
- Use plain language, not jargon

SBIR-Specific Tips

- Frame contributions around tools, methods and platforms
- Demonstrate iterative development expertise
- Include commercialization-relevant achievements
- Make your role in the company clear
- Highlight prior SBIR or translational funding

Final Checklist

- Tailored Personal Statement
- Clear role defined
- Impact-focused Contributions
- Correct Formatting



The goal is not to impress but convince.