Guidance: National Institutes of Health (NIH) Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPRs)

Responsible Office: Sponsored Programs Administration

Responsible Officer (title only): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

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Purpose

To help Principal Investigators (PIs) submit timely and accurate progress reports for programs sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Reason for this Guidance

The NIH requires PIs to submit Annual, Interim, and Final Research Performance Progress Reports ([RPPRs](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rppr/)) to document accomplishments and compliance with award terms. PIs complete the NIH RPPR in the [eRA Commons](https://era.nih.gov/) and Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) submits the report as the Signing/Business Official.

There is no RPPR format available to download; even so, these reports require extensive programmatic and compliance information and have various eRA Commons systems requirements. This guidance offers a well-defined process to help PIs and SPA prepare and submit these complex reports.

Guidance

This guidance has been modified from [NIH Grants &Funding Research Performance Progress Reports](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/rppr/index.htm). Awards may have different requirements than noted in the general NIH guidance.

NIH RPPRs typically include the following main features:

* PIs are responsible for knowing the reporting requirements for their individual award.
* PIs must complete the report in the eRA Commons and submit it to the Signing/Business Official (SPA) at **least ten (10) business days** before the deadline to ensure an accurate and timely submission.
* The SPA Award Acceptance Team is responsible for reviewing and submitting the RPPR on behalf of the PI.
* Each progress report will be assigned to a SPA Award Coordinator (a member of the Award Acceptance Team) who will work directly with the PI to obtain the AOR signature or submit the report

With sufficient lead time, the SPA Award Acceptance Team is available to assist PIs or their departments with any questions they may have about these reports.

To submit a question, PIs should send an email to awards@niu.edu with the heading “NIH RPPR Assistance” and provide the grant (44) or InfoEd number (##-###) and report due date. The PI will be connected to their Award Coordinator or another SPA staff within twenty-four (24) business hours.

PIs are encouraged to contact SPA as early as possible.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

* The PI is responsible for entering information into the RPPR section in eRA Commons.
* The PI will route the RPPR in eRA Commons to the Signing Official when it is ready for submission.
	+ The NIU Signing Official for NIH RPPRs is Sarah Senechalle, SPA Assistant Director.
* The SPA Award Acceptance Team will review the RPPR against NIH and internal policies and procedures.
	+ The SPA Award Coordinator (a member of the Award Acceptance Team) will contact the PI with any questions they may have.
	+ If the PI will be in the field or otherwise unavailable, PIs are encouraged to provide a contact who can answer any budget or programmatic questions (e.g., change in effort or other support) that may arise during SPA’s review.
* The Award Coordinator will strive to review and return the report to the PI within five (5) business days of receipt when the full deadline is met. This goal of this timeline is to provide the PI and SPA time to work through any reporting questions or system issues that may arise.
* SPA will submit the RPPR to the NIH in eRA Commons as the Signing Official on behalf of the PI.

**Types of RPPRs**

* **Annual RPPR** – The Annual RPPR is used to describe a grant’s scientific progress, identify significant changes, report on personnel, and describe plans for the subsequent budget period. Occasionally, an Institute may require an Annual RPPR even if the project is in a no cost extension.
* **Final RPPR** – The Final RPPR is used as part of the grant closeout process to submit project outcomes.
* **Interim RPPR** – The interim RPPR is used when a competing renewal (Type 2 application) has been submitted. If the competing renewal is not funded, the Interim RPPR will serve as the Final RPPR for the project and no other report is required. If the renewal application is funded, the Interim RPPR will serve as the annual RPPR for the final year of the previous competitive segment.

**Submitting the RPPR**

SPA will not submit the RPPR unless all sections of the report follow NIH guidelines and internal policies and procedures. PIs are strongly encouraged to check their draft RPPR for errors and correct them before submitting the report to the Signing Office/SPA for review and submission. This will avoid delays caused by system glitches or incomplete information. PIs can access the Annual and Interim RPPR links through the eRA Commons Status tab under ‘Available Actions’.

**RPPR Due Dates**

Annual RPPR:

* Streamlined Non-Competing Award Process (SNAP) RPPRs are due approximately 45 days before the next budget period start date.
* Non-SNAP RPPRs are due approximately 60 days before the next budget period start date.
* Multi-year funded (MYF) RPPRs are due annually on or before the anniversary of the budget/project period start date of the award. *Generally, R15 AREA awards are MYF awards.*

Interim and Final RPPR:

* The Interim RPPR link will appear one day after the project segment end date, but before it has moved to closeout. The Final RPPR link will become available through the closeout module once the grant is eligible for closeout.
* These reports are due within 120 days from the period of performance end date for the competitive segment.

**Information Needed to Complete the RPPR**

The following information is needed for most RPPRs and is intended as a general guide for the level of detail required for these reports. Requirements may be different depending for your individual award, always consult your NIH Notice of Award (NOA) and the [NIH RPPR Instruction Guide](https://grants.nih.gov/sites/default/files/rppr_instruction_guide.pdf) to determine the exact items needed for your specific project’s RPPR.

* An eRA Commons username for the project director/principal investigator and all scientific staff reported on the RPPR (including graduate students and post docs)
* An eRA Commons username and delegate access if the PI is delegating access to a department administrator to help complete the report

Individuals requiring a Commons account should contact awards@niu.edu with the subject line “eRA Commons Account Request” to request eRA Commons usernames for staff mentioned in the RPPR (grad students, postdocs, and PIs). **Allow for at least three (3) business days for account set up**. SPA will let the PI know when the account(s) are set up.

* **Accomplishments:** NIH requires up to two pages of accomplishments exclusive of graphs and charts.
* **Participants:** Names and effort of all personnel that have worked at least one person-month on the project during the reporting period, regardless of the source of compensation. The PD/PI’s effort must be listed regardless if it was less than one-person month. As a reminder, all PD/PIs on NIH awards must have measurable effort.

To calculate person months, multiple the % of grant effort by the type of appointment. For example, 10% effort \* 9-month academic year appointment = .90 person months.

 See NIH [**What is a “Person Month” & How Do I Calculate It?**](https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2017/03/31/what-is-a-person-month-how-do-i-calculate-it/)

* **Changes in ‘Other Support’**: If there have been changes in active Other Support of Senior/Key personnel since the last reporting period, an updated Other Support page is required.

Changes include termination of a previously active grant or activation of a pending grant. Any changes from the previous reporting period must clearly annotate the changes from the previous submission (please note this is not needed for a Final RPPR).

See separate [SPA Guidance Research Disclosures and Other Support](https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/funding/resources/index.shtml)

* **Changes in Level of Effort**: It must be reported if there will be, in the next budget period, either a reduction of 25% or more in the level of effort from that approved by the agency for the PD/PI(s) or other Senior/Key personnel designated *in the NIH Notice of Award,* or a reduction in level of effort below the minimum amount of effort required by the Notice of Award. Two examples of effort adjustments and calculating their percentages follow.

Example 1: A PI indicates 30% effort commitment on a funded proposal. After the award is made the PI wishes to reduce their effort to 25%.

Change Calculation: (30% - 25%) ÷ 30% = 16.6% change in effort (Notification is NOT necessary).

Example 2: A Co-PI indicates 20% effort commitment on a funded proposal. After the award is made the Co-PI wishes to reduce their effort to 10%.

Change Calculation: (20% - 10%) ÷ 20% = 50% change in effort (Notification IS necessary.)

Note: the 25% reduction threshold is cumulative and may be reached over multiple successive reductions.

**Unobligated Balance/Carryover greater than 25%**: Any anticipated estimated unobligated balance (including prior year carryover) greater than 25% of the current year’s total NIH approved budget must be reported along with a reason for the balance.

Contact your SPA Grants and Contracts Associate (GCA) for your unobligated balance when completing the report. The SPA Award Acceptance Team will confirm the balance with the GCA prior to submitting the report.

* **Publications and Inventions:** Publications (compliant with [NIH Public Access policy](https://publicaccess.nih.gov/)), conference papers, presentations, website(s) or other Internet site(s), reportable technologies or techniques or inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses should be listed on the RPPR.
* **Training and Professional Development:** Describe any opportunities for training and professional development on the project.
* **New Senior/Key Personnel:** For any new Senior or Key personnel joining the project during the reporting period, a biosketch and other support for each new Senior/Key person is required.

See separate[**SPA Guidance for Research Disclosures and Other Support**](https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/funding/resources/index.shtml)

* Changes in any human, animal, biohazard, select agent research, or foreign components, as applicable. SPA will confirm that necessary protocols are in place.

See separate [RIPS Foreign Influence](https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/compliance/integrity/foreign-influence/index.shtml) page for more information about NIH foreign components (click the Agency Requirements drop down and scroll to National Institutes of Health NIH)