

**AAI Response to the NIH Request for Information: Input on Proposed  
Modifications of the Biographical Sketch Used in NIH Grant Applications**  
(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-115.html>)

June 28, 2012

**NIH Question 1**

*Please identify any critical issues associated with the proposed change in the NIH Biographical Sketch and whether you think the change will permit researchers to better describe their scientific capabilities and accomplishments.*

**AAI Response:** The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), the largest professional association of immunologists in the world, representing more than 7,400 basic and clinical immunologists, appreciates this opportunity to submit comments to the NIH Working Group reviewing proposed modifications to the NIH Biographical Sketch (Biosketch).

AAI believes that NIH should eliminate the suggested 15 publication limit on the four page Biosketch. Applicants should be permitted to list as many publications as they feel necessary to support their application, provided they do not exceed the four page limit. This policy is also problematic for reviewers who may need a more thorough publication record to properly assess an application. This modification would preclude the need for reviewers to conduct a literature search on the investigator and his/her collaborators to see what and where they publish.

AAI does not believe that it is necessary for NIH to add a narrative section to highlight an investigator's scientific contributions to the Biosketch. The preexisting Personal Statement section of the Biosketch already permits investigators to highlight their most significant scientific contributions.

NIH should also consider whether it is necessary for investigators to include a Biosketch customized for each grant application. This policy has added considerably to the burden of applicants, and is especially burdensome to researchers who collaborate.

**NIH Question 2**

*Please identify the most important issues identified in the response above.*

**AAI Response:** AAI believes that the most important step NIH can take regarding the Biosketch is to eliminate the suggested limit on publications. Although we understand that this is just a suggestion, many researchers are hesitant to exceed listing more than 15 publications. In many cases this limit impedes their ability to highlight significant scientific contributions. AAI believes that there should be no suggested limit as long as the Biosketch does not exceed four pages.