

What is merit review and what is its role in **NIH-funded** research?



Each year, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awards more than 80% of its budget in extramural research grants following a competitive review process. Underpinning this process is a robust system of merit review, whereby volunteer panels of independent scientific experts or “peer reviewers” rigorously evaluate and recommend proposals strong enough to merit federal funding.

Merit review has been a cornerstone of federally funded scientific research in the United States for more than **75 YEARS** because it provides for:



Review of grant applications by **scientists who are experts in their fields** and bound by strict conflict-of-interest rules



Grant **decisions based on scientific merit** and their potential to significantly advance knowledge



Allocation of taxpayer resources to the **highest quality and most scientifically promising** proposals



The avoidance of decisions based on politics or personal bias

WHY THIS MATTERS

According to the NIH, merit review helps ensure that funding proposals

“receive fair, independent, expert, and timely scientific reviews — free from inappropriate influences — so that NIH can fund the most promising research.”

From NIH.gov “About NIH Peer Review”

Maintaining America’s scientific excellence depends on the continued prioritization of expert scientific merit review over political decision-making.