

Procedures for Semel Pre-submission Review of mentored grants

Updated August 25, 2026

1. A pre-submission review is expected for all new submissions and resubmissions of mentored grants.
2. Pre-submission review of mentored grants should be done to improve the quality of the submission and to justify the institutional letter of support. In some cases, the applicant may have already undergone an alternative review process. For example, the CTSI KL2 Program, CTSI Integrating Special Populations, or the Neuroscience Grant Review Initiative are good alternatives that would not require a separate Semel review. If written feedback from these other reviews is available, it should be provided to departmental leadership. Note, most grant-writing bootcamps are probably insufficient to assess the quality of the submission.
3. It is expected that mentors will be closely involved in the pre-submission review process. One goal of the pre-submission review is to ensure that the mentor(s) are aware of their role in the proposal and are responsible for drafting a letter of institutional support for the departmental leadership's signature. In addition, the pre-submission review is expected to include faculty outside the mentorship and consultant team. The applicant will recommend non-mentor faculty with content expertise to assist with the review.
4. Even if a pre-submission scientific review is not necessary (because it is handled through a different mechanism), it is still important for the applicant to follow departmental procedures (e.g., obtain the letter of institutional support, clarify the mentors' roles, etc.).
5. The pre-submission review process should be briefly described in the letter of institutional support.
6. The applicant will request the review at least 8 weeks before the external deadline. The request can be made through OROS or directly to the co-chairs of the Next Generation Success Implementation Committee (Emily Ricketts, and Sung-Jae Lee). The goal will be to conduct the review 4-6 weeks before the external deadline to allow time for modifications.
7. A chair for the review will be identified who will assemble the reviewers, with a goal of having 3-5 reviewers per application (ideally including a mentor). The

chair will circulate the pre-submission checklist to the reviewers prior to the review.

8. At least one week before the review, applicants will provide drafts of the following sections: 1) Specific Aims, 2) Research plan, 3) Candidate Information and Goals for Career Development, 4) NIH biosketch, and 5) if available, Mentor and Consultant Letters.
9. The structure of the review meeting will be a brief (< 10 min) slide overview of the proposal by the candidate, discussion of the research plan, discussion of the training plan, and then a wrap-up. The meeting should last one hour.
10. The reviewers do not need to provide a written review. However, it is encouraged that they send any tracked changes or notes / comments that they made on the materials directly to the candidate.
11. After the review, the chair of the committee will circulate the checklist to the reviewers for any final edits. The checklist will be emailed to the applicant and departmental leadership (Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, and Associate Director of Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior), and archived by OROS in UCLA Health Sciences Box.
12. In the event of resubmission, we will work to re-assemble the same team of initial reviewers to conduct a review of the revised materials during a one-hour virtual meeting. Applicants should also submit their Introduction to the Revised Application and Summary Statement.