| Overall Impact or Criterion Strength | Score | Descriptor |
|---|---|---|
| High | 1 | Exceptional |
| | 2 | Outstanding |
| | 3 | Excellent |
| Medium | 4 | Very Good |
| | 5 | Good |
| | 6 | Satisfactory |
| Low | 7 | Fair |
| | 8 | Marginal |
| | 9 | Poor |
| Other Designations for Final Outcome | | |
| AB | Abstention | |
| CF | Conflict of Interest | |
| DF | Deferred | |
| ND | Not Discussed | |
| NP | Not Present | |
| NR | Not Recommended for Further Consideration | |

See specific guidance for Research Applications and Training Applications.

# Additional Scoring Guidance for Research Applications

The NIH scoring system was designed to encourage reliable scoring of applications. Reviewers or study sections who assign high ratings to all applications diminish their ability to communicate the scientific impact of an individual application. Therefore, reviewers who carefully consider the rating guidance below can improve the reliability of their scores as well as their ability to communicate the scientific impact of the applications reviewed.

The chart below was developed to encourage reviewers to consider strengths as well as weaknesses when evaluating applications for research grants and cooperative agreements.

**Overall Impact:**
**The likelihood for a project to exert a <u>sustained</u>, <u>powerful</u> influence on research field(s) involved**

| Overall Impact | High | Medium | Low |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Score** | 1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9 |

**Evaluating Overall Impact:**
Consider the 5 criteria: significance, investigator, innovation, approach, environment (weighted based on reviewer's judgment) and other score influences, e.g. human subjects, animal welfare, inclusion plans, and biohazards

**e.g. Applications are addressing a problem of <u>high</u> importance/interest in the field. May have some or no weaknesses.**

**e.g. Applications may be addressing a problem of <u>high</u> importance in the field, but weaknesses in the criteria bring down the overall impact to medium.**

**e.g. Applications may be addressing a problem of <u>moderate</u> importance in the field, with some or no weaknesses**

**e.g. Applications may be addressing a problem of <u>moderate</u>/<u>high</u> importance in the field, but weaknesses in the criteria bring down the overall impact to low.**

**e.g. Applications may be addressing a problem of <u>low</u> or <u>no</u> importance in the field, with some or no weaknesses.**

**5 is a good medium-impact application, and the entire scale (1-9) should always be considered.**