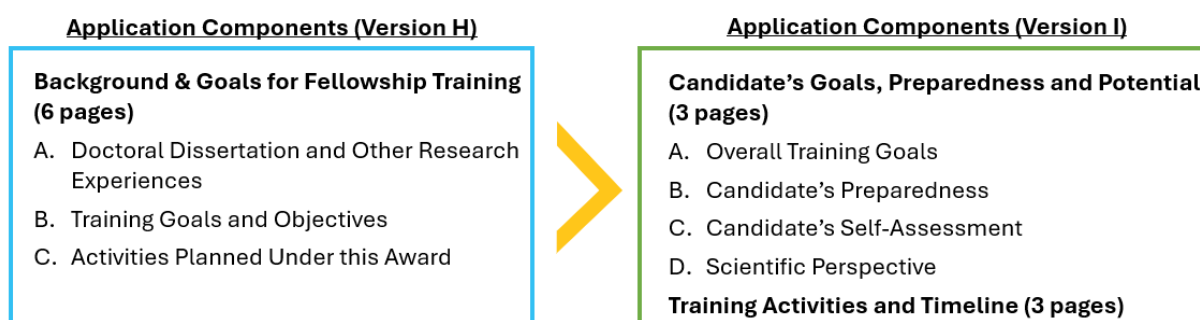


CHANGES TO THE NIH NRSA APPLICATION COMPONENTS

NIH has made [significant changes to their fellowship application and review process](#) which applies to submissions on and after August 8th, 2025. For detailed information about the application changes, visit [Changes to Fellowship Applications](#) in the NIH Grants & Funding website and the new [SF424 Fellowship Instructions \(Version I\)](#). *This handout is intended to help applicants (1) adapt their old format submission into the new format for resubmission or (2) more effectively utilize old format sample applications in writing a new format application.* The most substantial changes affect the previous "Background and Goals for Fellowship Training" (version H), which can be repurposed and refined into the new documents "Candidate's Goals, Preparedness and Potential" and "Training Activities and Timeline" (version I).



Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential (3 pages)

The "Candidate's Goals, Preparedness and Potential" document helps reviewers assess your preparedness to conduct the proposed work—prior relevant experience—and your training potential—adequate assessment of training needs and their potential impact on your career goals. This new requirement mainly replaces sections A and B of the "Background and Goals for Fellowship Training".

A. Overall Training Goals

- a. Previously found in the first paragraph of section B. Training Goals and Objectives.
- b. Describe the goals of the proposed training plan and your long-term career goals in biomedical research. Indicate how the fellowship goals align with your long-term goals and how the training goals better prepare you to transition to the next career stage.

B. Candidate's Preparedness

- a. Previously found in A. Doctoral Dissertation and Other Research Experiences.
- b. Describe relevant educational, scientific, and professional experiences (i.e., coursework, research experiences, conference attendance, internships, and employment) and how they have contributed to your scientific development and prepared you to successfully complete the proposed work.

C. Candidate's Self-Assessment

- a. In this document, you will highlight your competency and trainability. You want to show you have a strong scientific foundation (relevant skills) that will help you successfully complete the proposed work, but you still have areas to develop (trainability).
- b. Information previously contained in "B. Training Goals and Objectives".

- c. Define 2-4 relevant skills, abilities, traits or attitudes you *already possess* that are likely to contribute to achieving the research training.
- d. Identify 2-4 specific areas you *will develop* during the fellowship to attain the stated research training and career goals previously defined in “A. Overall Training Goals” section.

D. Scientific Perspective

- a. This section is considered a new section, although applicants were previously expected to describe the significance and impact of the proposed work in the last paragraph of their Specific Aims page and the “Significance” section (now “Scientific Foundation and Rationale”) of their Research Strategy.
- b. This section allows you to showcase your ability to think critically and express yourself as a scientist. Therefore, discuss the significance of this field and the impact of the proposed work. In other words, why is it important and how will it advance the field?
- c. Next, you want to show versatility and your ability to think critically beyond your proposed work by explaining a broader, unresolved scientific question in the chosen scientific field, the importance of the problem, and the ways biomedical research might advance the scientific field. There is no equivalent in version H.

Training Activities and Timeline (3 pages)

- a. Following the revisions, this document is what remains of the training plan as previously delineated in version H.
- b. List by year training activities you will be involved in (i.e., research, coursework, seminars, lab meetings, workshops, clinical activities, mentoring, professional development, etc.) and the % of time each will require (can be a table).
 - i. Can include when each Aim, course, professional development activity, and training activity will be accomplished.
- c. Explain how these activities address the training gaps and areas of development defined in the “Self-Assessment” section.
- d. Give specific examples of how these activities will help you transition to the next stage in your career. Describe unique opportunities tailored to your career trajectory; these should go beyond standard degree requirements.
- e. Describe how your sponsor(s), collaborators, and training environment are well-suited for the training plan. This fulfills previous requirement for “Selection of Sponsor and Institution”.
- f. F30 Applicants: Outline exactly when you will take medical courses and how you will split up your time (make sure it is reasonable).
- g. Discuss how the proposed research and training activities will help you gain those specific skills during your training—remember that this is a *training* fellowship!

Here, we have summarized the most substantial changes to the application, but there are additional changes not included in this document. We strongly recommend that you carefully review the [new instructions \(version I\)](#) to thoroughly understand the changes.