Guidelines for UMAPIT Proposal Reviewers

The following guidelines outline the process, timeline, and expectations for reviewing a grant proposal draft through the UMAPIT program. This faculty-initiated program allows faculty and professional staff who are new to grant writing to obtain substantive and timely written feedback from U Maine faculty with expertise in grant writing and reviewing. UMAPIT provides a structure that facilitates sharing of expertise and mentoring to improve grant writing skills and funding success. You have been selected as a reviewer because you know what makes a good proposal. We appreciate your leadership in serving on the review panel!

1. If you are contacted to review a grant proposal draft through the UMAPIT program, please respond within 24 hours to either accept or decline to serve as a reviewer. You may decline for any reason. However, to ensure that an alternative reviewer is found and the proposal is reviewed in a timely fashion, we will need to know if you cannot perform the review. Reviewers might be from the same unit or discipline as the PI, or they may be from other disciplines. The topic of the research project and the funding agency will be the guiding factors in identifying appropriate people to review the proposal.

2. If you agree to review a proposal for UMAPIT, you will need to email your written feedback directly to the PI within seven (7) days. To ensure adequate time for reading and review, PIs must submit their proposal to UMAPIT no less than 3 weeks before the funding agency deadline. After that, reviewers have one week to provide feedback. Please copy janet.fairman@maine.edu when you email your comments to the PI. We will collect the written feedback as part of the evaluation of UMAPIT.

3. The UMAPIT program will accept up to eight proposals each year on a first come, first served basis, based on submission of the proposal and required forms. Proposals with a minimum budget of $75,000 per year will be considered for review through UMAPIT. It is possible that you will not be asked to review a proposal or that you might be asked more than once. Again, you may decline to review any proposal. Information and forms for the UMAPIT program can be found at: http://umaine.edu/orsp/award-process/pre-award/proposal-preparation/umapit/
4. Faculty or professional staff may submit pre-proposals, full proposals, or resubmissions to UMAPIT for review and feedback. Pre-proposals will naturally be considerably shorter than full proposals. No matter which type of proposal is submitted, the expectation is that it should be as near finished as possible and NOT a rough or incomplete draft. We encourage PIs to have a colleague in their own department read the proposal before it is submitted to the UMAPIT program. If you receive a proposal that was hastily prepared or incomplete, please notify the coordinator, janet.fairman@maine.edu. We will endeavor to reject any proposals that are not yet ready for substantive review.

5. The reviewers will focus on the following elements: logical organization of the proposal, clarity and writing style, a convincing rationale for why the research needs to be done and significance, and a reasonable research plan or methods. Reviewers are asked to provide both general and specific feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, and suggestions for strengthening the proposal. Feedback should be substantive and provided in a written narrative. We recommend that reviewers consult the funding agency’s guidelines for reviewers, and they may wish to look at the RFP. These documents will be provided to reviewers along with the proposal. UMAPIT reviewers are NOT responsible for making sure the PI has addressed required elements in the RFP, nor commenting on the scientific content of the proposal. We anticipate that the time involved in reviewing a full proposal may be one day, and reviewing a pre-proposal may be half a day.

6. After the PI receives your written comments on the proposal, he/she may wish to contact you directly for clarification or guidance. Having the opportunity to talk with the reviewers or meet face to face can be a real benefit to the PI. However, reviewers are not required to provide additional time for their feedback-- it is encouraged but optional.

7. After you have provided your feedback to the PI, we ask that you complete and submit the “UMAPIT Survey for Reviewers”. This is a very short survey to provide some basic information and feedback so that we can evaluate this pilot program and make improvements. The survey can be found at the UMAPIT web link: http://umaine.edu/orsp/award-process/pre-award/proposal-preparation/umapit/

/umapit guidelines for reviewers

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