# NIH NRSA F31 Application Checklist

Check the current NRSA F31 announcements and notices (PA-21-051) for any updates before continuing with this checklist. The application instructions can be found here. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-g/fellowship-forms-g.pdf>

Must use Forms Version H.

General Requirements:

* Font: Black, 11 point and Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype or Georgia typeface
* Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch and no more than six lines per inch
* Margins: at least 1/2 inch margins with no headers or footers
* No page numbers

Please read the application instructions carefully, and also refer to any supplemental instructions provided by the NIH Institute for which you will be applying.

Discuss the application with your PI and department grant administrator to determine internal departmental work flow. Your departmental grant administrator will do the actual uploading of documents in the AURA SF424 and liaise with URA. Plan well ahead of time. Preparation for submission of an NRSA application can take 3-5 months, or more.

* Talk to the NIH institute Program Officer months in advance of applying.
* Read the Program Announcement – you can skim parts of it, but there is required information you need to know. An initial review may only take 30-60 min.
* Look at a number of previously funded F30/F31/32s, ideally see the comments they received.
* Propose very specific activities, this exact summer class, this exact course (e.g. MGCB 31326 ) – being specific makes it seem more real.
* Say you meet frequently with the PI – weekly if possible.
* Pay very close attention the ethics requirements, use their exact language. The PO can discuss this with you.
* Every page should spell out the training goals. Figure out a few (3-5?) goals and keep hammering at them in every section. You must be 100% clear on the training goals as reviewers may not read every part carefully so redundancy about key points is good.

Some classic common review criticisms are noted below. Avoid them.

* Over ambitious. If you are an over achiever, then you need to tone things WAY down. Propose only 25-50% of what you actually plan to do in that time. Comments rarely say a proposal is ‘under ambitious’ but almost all are called ‘overambitious’.
* Not clear training goals. See above and be sure you are not doing techniques you’ve already done as a UG or tech.
* Not enough experience by PI. If your PI has less than 5 completed PhD trainees get a more senior co-advisor and make it seem like they will really be involved (monthly meetings, ongoing collaboration w your PI)

The components below should be submitted (“routed”) for internal review (after review by PI) 10 - 7 days prior to the NIH deadline to your department grant administrator. Feel free to work with the grant administrator early and often with processing questions. Many components can be drafts at the time of routing and these are noted below. For final submission, send all files by 10 am to allow time for pdf conversion, uploading, and review of the final full grant.

# F31 Components:

1. AURA Activities- Both you as the fellow and your primary sponsor must login to AURA Grants [(http://aura.uchicago.edu/,](http://aura.uchicago.edu/) red button), access the funding proposal and complete two activities located in the green bar on the left hand side. The items are the FP Declaration and the NIH/NRSA Assurance. (Your grant administrator will set you up with an account and an ID number to do this).
2. Financial Conflict of Interest- As a fellowship applicant, you are required to complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure with the university as well as complete training in financial conflicts of interest. (Your grant administrator will also give you instructions on how to complete this).
3. Protocols- Please indicate the types of regulatory protocols (IRB, IACUC, IBC, etc.) that your proposed work would require. If using existing protocols, please provide protocol numbers and approval dates if available.
4. Budget- The F31 budget is very simple, you confirm the following two things: a. Will you be requesting tuition? (Often yes). b. The period of support requested. Ask OGPA to review budget for accuracy.
5. Descriptive Title- NIH limit is 200 characters including spaces. Title should be final to route.
6. Letters of Reference- You must have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 letters of reference submitted on your behalf directly via eCommons. (See F31 Referee Instructions for details, F.110.F7). Your sponsor(s) cannot provide these letters.
7. Cover Letter- Fellowship applications are required to include a cover letter. This letter must include the application title, title of FOA, names, degrees, and affiliations of those who you asked to submit the letters of reference. Note specific instructions in section F.200.F31. Can be draft for routing.
8. Human Subject Section- must check yes or no. If yes, note sections F230 and F500 for human subject use. Should be final for routing
9. Vertebrate Animals- must check yes or no. If yes, note sections F230 and F430 for live vertebrate animal use. Should be final for routing.
10. Proprietary/privileged information- must check yes or no. Should be final for routing.
11. Environmental questions – must be answered. Should be final for routing.
12. Project Summary/Abstract- Technical summary of the proposed research, 30 line limit. Can be draft for routing.
13. Project Narrative- Lay summary of the work, 3 sentence limit. Can be draft for routing.
14. References Cited- no page limit. Can be draft for routing.
15. Facilities and Resources- Can be draft for routing.
16. Major Equipment- Can be draft for routing. This component is optional.
17. Performance Site- describe lab environment on UC Campus.
18. Biosketches- Required for you as the applicant and your sponsors. Five (5) page limit per biosketch and the fellow has a special format. Use the format template for the [Fellowship Biosketch](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch-blank-fellowship-format-rev-10-2021.docx). Additional helpful information and a sample Fellowship Bio can be found at this link: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm> Section F430.
19. Applicant’s Background and Goals for Fellowship Training- 6 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
20. Specific Aims- 1 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
21. Research Strategy- 6 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
22. Respective Contributions- 1 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
23. Selection of Sponsor and Institution- 1 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
24. Responsible Conduct of Research- 1 page limit. Can be draft for routing.
25. Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements- 6 page limit. Can be draft for routing. Consists of the following sections:
    1. Research Support Available
    2. Sponsor’s/Co-Sponsor’s Previous Fellows/Trainees
    3. Training Plan, Environment, Research Facilities
    4. Number of Fellows/Trainees to be Supervised During the Fellowship
    5. Applicant’s Qualifications and Potential for a Research Career
26. Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training- 2 page limit. Can be draft for routing.

Uploaded as Other Attachment- Please name this attachment “Additional Educational Information.” Per the parent F31, we are to provide an attachment under “Other Attachments” that provides:

1. Describe the graduate program in which the applicant is enrolled, e.g. the structure of the program, required milestones and their usual timing (number of courses, any teaching commitments, qualifying exams, etc.), and the average time to degree over the past 10 years.
2. Describe the progress/status of the F31 applicant in relation to the program’s time line.
3. Describe the frequency and method by which the program formally monitors and evaluates a student’s progress. This information is typically provided by the director of the graduate program or the department chair. Include the name of the individual providing this information at the end of the description.
4. Select Agent Research- if applicable. Should be final for routing.
5. Resource Sharing Plan- UChicago boilerplate can be found online.

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