How Does the IMAT Review Process Work?

- Two-stage review process
- Review Staff (SRAs) sets up peer-review panels to evaluate scientific and technical merit, avoiding conflicts-of interest
- Applications are evaluated and scored, then given a rank order (no per-centiling)
- Second stage of review is the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB)

What Is Different About IMAT Review?

- IMAT applicants respond to three specific sets of FOAs, reviewed (currently) in three different panels:

  -Innovative Technologies
  -Application of Emerging Technologies
  -Sample Prep

- IMAT employs multiple award mechanisms with often quite different application requirements

- Quantitative Milestones play a key part in the evaluation of most of the applications (award mechanisms R21; SBIR/STTR)

- Product Development Plan (PDP) required for R33 and Phase II

What Role do Milestones Play in IMAT Review?

- IMAT applications are intended to be technology-driven, rather than hypothesis-driven
- Quality and applicability of Milestones is a specific review criterion in addition to the standard set (Significance, Appproach, Innovation, Investigator, Environment)
- While Specific Aims define the path you intend to follow to your destination, Milestones provide a way of determining whether you got there!

What Constitutes an Appropriate Milestone?

- The essential feature of an acceptable Milestone is that it gives a quantitative measure of what a successful outcome will be

- **Not** an appropriate Milestone:
  "I will characterize/compare/analyze _____."

- **Is** an appropriate Milestone:
  -Detection of one cancer cell in 10^6 normal blood cells.
  -Detection of substance "x" at a concentration of 1 pmol/mL in serum.
  -Cost of new technology is 10 percent that of the current technology.
  -Identification of one mutated gene in the presence of 10^3 normal genes.

- Milestones must lay out a clear basis for the evaluation of Phase II applications by Program Staff

How are IMAT Review Panels Different?

- Evaluating wide range of science and technologies
- Diverse group of reviewers with very different specialties
- Pre-review orientation teleconferences prepare reviewers for IMAT review process
- Preliminary data not required for IMAT applications (unlike R01s)
- Free discussions often involving varying viewpoints
- Learning occurs

Why Should *I* Want to Be a Member of an IMAT Review Panel?

- Learn first-hand how the review process works
- Meet new friends in fields different from your own: cross-pollinate your ideas, network
- Learn about new and emerging areas of science from “the experts”
- Altruism-who would you want reviewing your IMAT application?

What does an IMAT Reviewer have to do?

- Look through Abstracts/Descriptions and identify review capabilities that may lead to assignment as Primary or Secondary Reviewer
- Receive mail-out package with assignments and other important documents
- Participate in pre-review orientation teleconference with Program and Review Staff for description of IMAT Program and Review procedures
- Prepare and post critiques along with preliminary scores in IAR
- Examine other reviewers' critiques (and re-assess position)
- Attend Review Meeting and discuss applications; post final scores on scoring sheet (Staff then enters them in IAR)

Why are Program and Review Distinct?

- Congressionally-mandated separation exists
- Other agencies (e.g., NSF, CFF) have different models
- Set up to avoid the appearance of conflict between preferences (or involvement if PPG) of Program Staff, and a fair and impartial review process
- Up to the point when the review meeting is held, applicants may appropriately contact Review Staff with questions etc.

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