



ASTS Research Grant Application Review Criteria

Updated February 2019

1. Provide individual Scores for Significance, Approach, Innovation, Investigator, Environment, and Overall Impact. The overall impact score should not be an average of the individual scores.
2. In the comments section please add the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. These comments will be used by the committee with the reported scores while ranking the proposals. These comments will not be shared with the applicants.
3. Conflict of Interest Guidance:
 - a. Application review assignments are made by the Chair of the Grants Review Committee with input from the Co-Chair and other committee members as needed. The Chair will avoid assignments of applications to reviewers who are from the same institution as that of the applicant. Assignments are reviewed, and reviewers are asked to recuse themselves by one week of assignment to allow time for reassignment of application (self-determined and to exclude review of applications from the same institution or colleague at same institution within the last 4 years). All reviewers who accept their assignments electronically sign that they do not have a conflict of interest for review of their assigned applications.
 - b. The ASTS will rely on the integrity of its members to determine whether there is a real or perceived conflict of interest when invited to review award applications. For reference, excerpts from the NIH instruction to reviewers regarding Conflict of Interest (COI) is provided:
 - i. *“An individual must leave the room when an application submitted by his/her own organization is being discussed or when the reviewer, his/her immediate family or close professional associate(s) has a financial or vested interest even if no significant involvement is apparent in the application being considered”.*
 - c. Other conditions to avoid COI: if the reviewer is a provider of services, reagents or other materials, or writer of letter of reference for an application, and any actions which “give the appearance that a conflict of interest exists even though he/she believes there may not be an actual COI. Thus, for example, a member should not participate in the deliberations and actions on any application from a recent student, a recent teacher or a close, personal friend. Judgment must be applied on the basis of recency, frequency and strength of the working relationship between the reviewer and the applicant as reflected in publications etc. Another example might be an application from a scientist with whom the member has had longstanding differences that could reasonably be viewed as affecting the reviewer’s objectivity. Another example is the review of a project that closely duplicates work ongoing in the reviewer’s laboratory.”
 - d. If reviewers recuse themselves due to conflict of interest and additional reviewers are needed, request for additional reviewers will occur in advance of the review due date to ensure that all applications have a minimum of 5 reviewers, that the applications are reviewed in advance of the final score calculation and that additional reviewers review all applications in the relevant category in addition to the application(s) with reassigned reviewers.
4. There will be a minimum of five reviewers per category to ensure fair and unbiased review.
5. The Grants Review Committee will hold a conference call before rankings are submitted to ASTS Executive Council to discuss controversial or close ranks. The rank list will be finalized by the Grants Review Committee and approved by the Chair.
6. The Final Rank Summary will be submitted to the ASTS Executive Council for review and approval.