

The usual steps by which a grant-supported research project comes into being are:

(a) The responsible officer of an eligible institution submits to the Public Health Service, on behalf of the principal investigator, an application for a research grant. The application outlines the nature of the research contemplated, as well as the resources and facilities available or needed, and indicates the budget proposed and the years of support requested.

(b) A grant application is received and identified with a particular NIH research area. The application is then referred to the appropriate NIH Institute or division and to a study section or an initial review group consisting primarily of non-Federal scientists expert in that research area. The group reports its evaluation of the proposal, including its scientific merit and the requested financial support, with a recommendation for action, to one of the national advisory councils or committees.

(c) The Surgeon General, at his discretion, may award support to any application recommended for approval by a national advisory council, in the amount recommended or in a lesser amount. The criteria applied by the committees and councils in considering applications are (1) that the proposed research shall have high scientific merit; (2) that the principal investigator shall be competent to undertake and pursue the research; and (3) that the facilities available to him shall be adequate.

General research support (GRS) grants are designed to provide institutions a measure of increased control over the quality, content, emphasis, and direction of their own research and training programs. They allow increased institutional initiative in developing the institution's best research and research training capabilities, for consolidating scattered elements of research support, and for bettering the general research environment. The program is thus complementary to other forms of NIH grants-in-aid. The appropriation level for this program is set annually by Congress, within a statutory ceiling for this purpose of 15 percent of total NIH research grants. The program is administered by DRFR from funds made available by assessments against each NIH appropriation for research grants.

Four types of health professional schools (medicine, dentistry, osteopathy, and public health) are considered automatically eligible for GRS grants. Other types of institutions active in health research (such as hospitals or research foundations) are eligible if they have been awarded \$100,000 or more in PHS research grants within the past year. Following acceptance of NIH guidelines for an extension of this program, graduate academic departments (apart from health professional schools) will also be eligible for awards, beginning in the current fiscal year; this proposed university program, entitled the "Biomedical Sciences Support Program," is conceptually identical with the current general research support program. The amount of an individual award is based on a formula which is computed according to the health-related research expenditures of the institution from all funding sources.

A part of GRS funds will be used from now on to make health sciences advancement awards—a new program to encourage institutions with high health-research potential to deliberately plan an upgrading of their research capabilities.