

# SBIR Questions and Answers for NIH

September 24, 2003

1. The file nihschema.xsd contains this section:

```
<xs:element name="BaseRateDescriptors" minOccurs="0">
  <xs:complexType>
    <xs:sequence>
      <xs:choice>
        <xs:element name="SalaryAndWagesBase" minOccurs="0" />
        <xs:element name="OtherBase" minOccurs="0" />
        <xs:element name="ModifiedTotalDirectCostsBase" minOccurs="0" />
      </xs:choice>
      <xs:element name="OffsiteOtherSpecialOrMultipleRate" minOccurs="0" />
      <xs:element name="Explanations" type="xs:string" minOccurs="0" />
    </xs:sequence>
  </xs:complexType>
</xs:element>
```

Why is the line “<xs:element name=“OffsiteOtherSpecialOrMultipleRate” minOccurs=“0” />” outside of the choice?

**Answer: The “offsite, other special rate, or more than one rate involved” box is offered on the checklist page, to be an ADDITION to—NOT AN ALTERNATIVE for—one of the other “base rate” options. That is why it is outside the choice. You must choose one of the first three, with the “off-site” box as an optional, \*additional\* indication.**

**The “offsite, other special rate” box indicates that—in addition to the base descriptor (Salary, Modified Total Direct, or Other Base)—a special rate for off-site F&A is also factored into the indirect cost calculation.**

2. In nihschema.xsd, at the top of the element name “ResearchApplicationExtension”, is a choice that relates to the type of application being submitted. (In the ancient world of paper, this was known as the top of the Checklist page.) An application based on the 398 form must be one of four types: New, a Revision, a Competing Continuation or a Supplement.

I see nowhere to indicate the four checkboxes associated with these choices and, for the last three choices, that shouldn’t be a problem. The appearance of data in other fields will confirm that a box had been checked. (For instance, a SupplementGrantNumber will confirm that this is a Supplemental application.)

However, for any New application which is not an SBIR or STTR (such as the modulars we will be submitting in the pilot), there is no piece of data to indicate its type. Only the absence of data in any of the other fields could be construed to suggest that. Is that what is intended? By default, every proposal is a new one (either modular or traditional; not an SBIR or STTR) unless marked otherwise?

**Answer: Some of the application types *can* be implied by the presence of their qualifying subcomponents. However, the PHS 398 crosswalk, in fact, does identify a component where the type of application should be *explicitly* indicated, no matter *what* type it is:**

**“Checklist page/Type of Application: New, Revision, or Competing Continuation checkboxes” cross-walks to the following schema component are:**

## ResearchProjectDetails

### ResearchAndRelatedProject

#### ResearchCoverPage

#### ApplicationCategory

#### CategoryIdentifier

For our pilot, only one of two checkboxes (new or competing continuation) should be checked. If one of them is checked, the CategoryIdentifier (above) should indicate which one of them has been indicated. List of values for this component are “N,” “R,” or “C,” standing for “New,” “Revision” (DO NOT USE!!!), and “Continuation.”

Supplements are not acceptable for this release of the pilot, and so they are not even in the list of values. Mapping of the supplement checkbox will be addressed at a later time. The “R” (revision) type, while not accepted in the pilot, is supported in the LOV since this choice is consistent with the choices offered on the SF424 (and we tried *not* to tailor the cross-agency parts for our own pilot unless absolutely necessary). Please do not interpret this flexibility, inherited through the cross-agency schema, as an indication that revisions will be accepted through the pilot at this time. If received, these WILL be rejected when they arrive at the exchange, so please do not encourage or facilitate their submission at this time.

3. Is there a maximum size for attachments?

Is there a recommended maximum size? For example, although NIH will accept attachments up to \_\_\_ in size, NIH prefers that applicants keep the attachments under \_\_\_\_.

**Answer: At this time we have no imposed limit. We assume that the size will come from images and we may request some restriction in the future either in the size of the file or the technology for presenting images (same purpose, keep the size down).**

4. Is there someone we can talk to at Grants.gov about submitting applications directly to them? I'd like to get a timeframe of when this will be possible.

**Answer: Check Grants.gov Web sites for the contacts. If they do not specify receipt of stream for October that means it is not yet implemented. It will be in the future.**

5. Some of the uploaded attachments (PDF) in the application will contain images, charts, and graphs. Previous experiences have shown that some of the quality is lost in the presentation when converting to PDF. If the applicant is not satisfied with the quality of the proposal section when converted to PDF, what are the options?

**Answer: I am a little puzzled. Is the quality better with a black and white scanned copy? PDF usually does a good job and will be displayed in colors to the reviewers. Only the primary reviewer gets an original right now.**

**I think if there are high-quality images that are necessary, they should be part of the appendix which is hard copy or may have other media. We will have to discuss appendices at some later time and probably will have to address multi-media technologies for that.**

6. Sometimes the title field may contain Greek symbols or mathematical formulas. The XML headers defined for the NIH data stream use the UTF 8-character set. Does the NIH system provide for these characters to be used in the title of an application?

**Answer: The title is not rich text. Even though such characters can be hand-written on the paper forms, what actually happens at this time when the paper is received is that someone here at the NIH must expand the title text to “spell out” the Greek character when entering the project title into the system. For example, if your title shows the Greek symbol for “Omega” in the title, someone during data entry must convert that symbol into the actual word “Omega” when they enter the title.**

**The eRA Steering Committee decided that for the first implementation that is what will be used. Downstream systems, such as CRISP, need to be modified if we go to rich text for the title and that will take some time. This will not be a priority for near-term goals.**

7. A researcher inquired about the November 1 resubmission round.

- Will there be an opportunity for these folks?
- If NIH is still uncertain, do you have a date when you’ll know if NIH will support electronic submissions for the November 1 date?
- If there will be an opportunity, will it too be limited to modular R01s?

**Answer: Yes, modular grants, competitive renewals through SBIR’s submissions. Same restrictions as October submission. But definitely we would like those submissions!**

**However, we are not sure of the Grants.gov avenue for submissions.**

8. The schema currently requires the sequence of “AssuranceNumber” and “IACUCApprovalDate,” even if the answer to the VertebrateAnimalsUsedQuestion is “No.” This is impossible to work around using an “empty tag” approach, since the IACUCApprovalDate is a “date” type—since required in the sequence, it MUST appear in the data stream and because of its datatype MUST contain a valid date value. The only possible workaround for the schema validation is to supply a bogus date for this tag, which not an ideal workaround for the situation.

**Answer: The schema has been modified so that the “AssuranceNumber”/“IACUCApprovalDate” components are now optional. The new version of the schema will be available to post on the website, this week.**

9. The schema does not currently support the provision given in the 398 instructions for block 5A regarding pending IACUC reviews. The only component available in the schema is the IACUCApprovalDate. This must be supplied with a DATE value, and cannot be submitted with the word “Pending” as the 398 instructions suggest.

**Answer: This is a good point and will be researched further. For the pilot however, it will be acceptable for the date to be omitted altogether if the answer to the VertebrateAnimalsUsedQuestion is “Yes.” In these cases, a missing IACUC date will be implicitly understood by NIH to mean that the review is “pending,” without requiring that exact word to appear in the data stream. A more permanent solution will probably emerge after the pilot, but this will be acceptable for now.**

10. How do people submit a cover page electronically?

According to NIH, [http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/section\\_2.html#a\\_instructions](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/section_2.html#a_instructions):

**“Cover Letter**

If the principal investigator is making a request for assignment to a particular awarding component or initial review group include a cover letter. These suggestions will be taken into consideration at the time of assignment, although the final determination will be made by the PHS.”

**Answer: The cover letter is represented as InvestigatorCoverLetter in the schema, connected to the ResearchApplicationExtension.**