

AFTER APPLYING FOR AN F31

you should be proud of yourself, take a break, and try to take your mind off of waiting for your score. You will likely require a resubmission, so plan on that.



HOW IS MY F31 PROPOSAL EVALUATED?

- Your proposal will be read by a few members of a committee.
 - If it is deemed high impact, it will be discussed and scored.
- The scoring is based on 5 criteria (plus human/vertebrate subjects).
 - For each criterion, scores range from 1=excellent to 9=poor.
- The scores from each category are totaled and the average of all the reviewers becomes your total score.
- Generally scores under 20 are fundable, but this varies each year.

Lower scores are likelier to be funded.

WHAT IF MY SCORE IS HIGH OR MY PROPOSAL WAS NOT SCORED?

1. **Do not panic!** Submitting a proposal is a huge step and worthy of a reward.
2. **Make sure you're in the right headspace to receive feedback and then look over the comments.** Let yourself feel whatever feelings you have when you read the comments and **then put them away.**
3. **Take a break** and try not to think about the comments.
4. **After your feelings have subsided** (hours, days, a week later) return to the comments, this time with your advisor or with a pen and paper. I printed mine out and highlighted actionable things.
5. **Make a plan for how you will address the comments in a new draft.** Treat this like feedback from a reviewer or a trusted colleague; if it seems reasonable then try to address it!
6. **Reach out to your Program Officer.** You can find their information on the NIH website. I scheduled a phone call with my PO and discussed how I would make my proposal stronger. My PO gave me incredibly helpful feedback.
7. **You might consider writing out why you think your proposal should be funded, what is called a "defense of proposal."**
 - a. I wrote one for my F31 that received a score of 36, which is typically not fundable. I had a few colleagues provide feedback and then emailed it to my PO. My PO supported me and sort of went to bat for me in the final decision room and my proposal was funded. With a score of 36. **Anything is possible.**
8. **Prepare your resubmission for the next submission date.**
 - a. You might seek feedback from other people or seek a co-sponsor. After discussion with my PO, my resubmitted proposal scored a 12. My original proposal was funded, but the process of rewriting and resubmitting was a useful exercise for me.

You will likely receive your score and comments around 1-2 weeks before the next deadline. You might consider clearing your schedule for that time in the event you decide to resubmit.