Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) for Federal Awards

The Research Performance Project Report (RPPR) format is used by all federal agencies for research progress reporting. The RPPR resulted from an initiative of the Research Business Models (RBM) Subcommittee of the Committee on Science, a committee of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). One of the RBM Subcommittee's priority areas is to create greater consistency in the administration of Federal research awards. Please see federal agency implementation here.

While the RPPR is used by all federal agencies, each has a unique approach. Please be sure to check the terms and conditions of your award for specific reporting guidelines. The Local Research Administrator (LRA) can find a project's RPPR due date by reviewing the Notice of Award and working with the Principal Investigator (PI) to plan for the annual report submission. A list of NIH and NSF RPPRs due is distributed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) to the LRA elist at the beginning of each month.

Principal Investigators (PIs) are responsible for reporting on the progress of the project to the sponsor. A progress report is usually required by the agency to release funds for the next budget period, before acceptance of the financial report, and before any request for carryforward of funds. Consequences for overdue RPPRs may include withholding of further awards to PI and co-PI(s), suspension or termination of their active awards, unilateral closeout of an award by the agency, and the withholding support for other active awards at the institution. If a report is more than one year late, the institution may be reported to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), affecting the ability of the entire institution to receive federal funds.

Regardless of the funding agency, Principal Investigators should prepare all RPPRs in collaboration with their **Local Research Administrators** (**LRAs).** It is strongly suggested that before submission to the sponsor the RPPR should be also reviewed by the OVPR Pre-Award Signing Official. Standard Pre-Award turnaround time is two business days. For NIH, signing Officials at the OVPR Pre-Award office review the RPPR in eRA Commons, work with the LRA and the PI to correct any errors, and submit the RPPR to the sponsor. Pre-Award personnel ask the LRA who supports the project PI to confirm that the RPPR is ready for review before submission, to ensure that the PI and LRA have provided input into the relevant reporting elements.

Please note that the guidance below is specific to NIH and NSF. The interim/annual NSF and NIH RPPR is typically due 60 (in the case of some NIH project types, 45) days before the next budget period start date for each year of the project with the exception of the final project year. The final RPPR is due within 120 days of the project performance end date as part of the award closeout process. Both types of the RPPR are very similar in process, format, and information required.

How Local Research Administrators Assist with RPPRs

Local Research Administrators (LRAs) in partnership with central offices facilitate the fulfilment of this responsibility by the PIs. To assist in this process, a list of NIH and NSF RPPRs due is distributed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) to the LRA elist at the beginning of each month.

LRAs assist PIs with their RPPR by providing input in:

- Reporting of effort of the project participants whose salary is charged to the project.
    - **Note:** if a project participant was not charged to the project but contributed effort, it is the PI's responsibility to identify this effort for proper internal documentation and inclusion on the RPPR if necessary
- Carry-over/budgetary information
- Subaward reporting elements
    - For NIH projects, LRAs can request each subrecipient to send their NIH All Personnel Report form to assist the PI in completing the personnel table

    - For all projects, LRAs should request Other Support/Current and Pending support information from subrecipients no less than two weeks before the RPPR is due to ensure timely submission
- Identification of any changes that may require agency prior approval in the RPPR or via a separate request
- Changes in other support for key personnel
- Preparation of information that must be included with the prior approval request such as future inclusion of a foreign component or other support documentation for prospective changes in key personnel
- When a project involves subawards, inclusion of information on the project about the progress, participants to be reported, and unobligated balance from the subaward institutions
    - As a best practice the responsible LRAs should build and maintain working relationships with subcontractor's research administrators during the award. These working relationships can be leveraged to obtain the information in a timely and efficient manner
    - If there is a delay with receiving information from the subawardee, the LRA should engage Tufts PI to follow up with the PI at the collaborating institution to facilitate the response.

NIH RPPR Helpful Tips

- There is no RPPR form available for download
- Annual and Final RPPRs are submitted through eRA Commons. Only the PI or their delegate can initiate RPPRs in the eRA Commons. The PI can delegate the "Progress Report" to an LRA with the Assistant (ASST) role
    - For multi-PI grants only the Contact PI or the Contact PI's delegate can initiate the RPPR
- ***Once the RPPR has been submitted to the agency, no changes can be made in the system.*** If a revision is necessary post-submission, Pre-Award will need to notify the NIH Grants Management Specialist (GMS) for a determination of how the revision should be reflected in the sponsor files. The GMS may need to initiate a Progress Report Additional Material (PRAM).
- The RPPR should include each person who has worked at least one person month per year on the project during the reporting period, regardless of the source of compensation.
    - PI/multi PI effort must be reported regardless of the level of effort. All other personnel, including key personnel, should be reported only if their effort rounds to at least one person month or more. Reported effort includes effort paid from the award and any committed cost share.
    - Effort of part time individuals should be reported based on the 35-hour work week. For example, effort of a student who worked 10 hours per week in the lab for 12 months should be calculated as (10/35)*12 months= 3 calendar months (rounded to the nearest full month).
- The RPPR may be used for prior approval request or a prospective reduction in the level of effort of the PD/PI or other senior/key personnel named in the Notice of Award.
- An eRA Commons ID is required for all individuals with a postdoctoral, graduate or undergraduate role who participate in the project for at least one person month or more (NOT-OD-13-097). Please email Pre-Award at research_noas@tufts.edu to request a Commons ID. The following information is required to create a Commons account and must be included in a request:
    - Full name
    - Title
    - Tufts Email Address
    - Tufts User ID
    - Tufts campus
    - Requested Roles(s) (see eRA Commons User Roles)
    - Current eRA username (if applicable)

Once the Commons ID is established, the individual must Edit their Personal Profile in eRA Commons, otherwise the RPPR will generate errors.

- Any citations associated with the RPPR in the Publications section must be officially associated with the award in MyNCBI in My Bibliography. It is not possible to manually add publications into the RPPR.
    - PI/PIs can log into MyNCBI account using their Commons credentials. When non-compliant publications are included on the RPPR, the Public Access Progress Report Additional Materials (PRAM).feature sends automated notifications to the PD/PI and the RPPR is not accepted by NIH until compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy is verified.

NSF Project Report Helpful Tips

- NSF requires that all project reports be filed through Research.gov by the PI or Co-PI. Research.gov login information is the same as the ID and password for FastLane.
- Only NSF award PIs and Co-PIs can submit reports, due to the requirement that a PI certify the accuracy of each report.

Links and Resources

Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) – federal agency implementation
Role and Eligibility of Principal Investigators at Tufts
NSF Project Reports
NIH RPPR resource page
NIH RPPR Instruction Guide
Instructions For Program Directors/Principal Investigators to initiate an RPPR
eRA Commons User Roles
Edit your Personal Profile in eRA Commons
Access Human Subjects System (HSS) for updates to human subjects information
NIH Public Access Policy
Public Access Progress Report Additional Materials (PRAM)
MyNCBI
My Bibliography FAQs