

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM TO THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Peter R. Orszag *PO* 4/21/10
Director
Office of Management and Budget

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SUBJECT: Policy on Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR)

Background: The National Science and Technology Council, through the Committee on Science (CoS), Research Business Models (RBM) Subcommittee, asked for public comments on federal policies and procedures related to business practices that could be changed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the nation's research enterprise. One issue raised was inconsistency in interim research progress reporting among Federal agencies. Given the increasing complexity of interdisciplinary and interagency research, it is important for Federal agencies to manage awards in a consistent fashion. Unnecessary variations contribute to administrative burdens, take research time from investigators, and increase associated costs involved in the management of research programs.

The RBM Subcommittee, with the approval of the CoS, developed a uniform reporting format. This format, the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) is intended for annual or other interim research progress reporting. The subcommittee proposed the draft RPPR format for comment in the *Federal Register* [Volume 72, pages 63629-63631, November 9, 2007] and considered all comments in developing the final RPPR format. It is intended to replace other interim performance reporting formats currently in use by agencies. The RPPR does not change the performance reporting requirements specified in 2 CFR Part 215 (OMB Circular A-110) and the Grants Management Common Rule implementing OMB Circular A-102.

1. *Purpose:* This policy establishes a uniform Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) format for use by agencies and awarding offices that support research and research-related activities. While the format has been specifically developed for use in grant and cooperative agreement awards, agencies and awarding offices may use this format with relevant contract awards, if appropriate.

2. *Authority:* This policy is an implementation of 2 CFR Part 215 (OMB Circular A- 110, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non- Profit Organizations) and the Grants Management Common Rule implementing OMB Circular A-102, *Grants and Agreements with State and local Governments.*

3. *Policy:*

a. Use of the RPPR:

- i. The RPPR will be used by agencies and awarding offices that support research and research-related activities for use in submission of required annual or other interim performance reporting on grants and cooperative agreement awards. The uniform RPPR format will replace other performance reporting formats currently in use by agencies supporting research and research-related activities. The RPPR addresses progress for the most recently completed period, at the frequency required or designated by the agency. If an agency has implemented an electronic solution for submission of progress reports, information, once reported, should be pre-populated in subsequent reports. However, agencies may use this format in either paper copy or in electronic form.
- ii. Each category in the RPPR is a separate reporting component. Agencies will require award recipients to report on “Accomplishments.” As needed, agencies may also use optional components of the format to request additional information. Within a particular component, agencies should direct recipients to complete only those questions that are relevant to the award or agency. If a recipient has nothing significant to report during the reporting period on a question or item, they will be asked to state “Nothing to Report.”
- iii. Agencies will utilize the standard instructions that have been developed for each category, but may provide additional program-specific instructions necessary to clarify a requirement for a particular program.

b. Development of Agency- or Program Specific Reporting Components. Agencies may develop additional agency- or program-specific reporting components; however, to maintain maximum uniformity, agencies should minimize the degree to which they supplement the standard categories. Such agency- or program-specific requirements will require additional OMB review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

c. Use of other formats. Agencies may use other reporting formats, such as the Performance Progress Report (PPR), if those formats are better suited to the agency's reporting requirements, for example, for research centers/institutes, clinical trials, or fellowship/training awards or in connection to reporting on program performance.

- d. Maintenance of the RPPR. As Federal reporting requirements evolve, the RBM subcommittee will update the RPPR, as needed, to maintain it as the standard uniform research project reporting requirement. Significant changes will be coordinated with the Office of Management and Budget, and adopted after opportunity for public comment.

- e. Posting of the administrative requirements. NSF will post the RPPR on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rppr/index.jsp>. As changes are made in the future, NSF will maintain both the current version and an archive of earlier versions.

4. *Agency implementation:* In order to implement the RPPR, each Federal research agency will post policy or an implementation plan on the NSF and RBM websites within nine months after issuance of this policy direction. Each implementation plan will address whether the agency plans to implement the RPPR in paper or electronic format, and include an anticipated implementation date. Prior to this date, Agencies will be required to submit, through the Paperwork Reduction Act, revisions to their currently approved interim performance progress reporting information collections in order to comply with the new uniform RPPR format.

The plan should also include a list of all existing OMB approved information collections and the burden associated with interim reporting that will be affected by the plan.