



Merit Review Modernization

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July 29, 2020



Merit Review Modernization

Vision

Continuously modernize the merit review process to promote fairness, transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency in decision-making.

Mission

Enable oversight through open access to data about the merit review process; accelerate broad NSF adoption of proven process improvements.

Strategies

Develop common understanding of the current state of merit review

Launch and measure the impact of prototypes and pilots

Increase accessibility and usefulness of merit review data



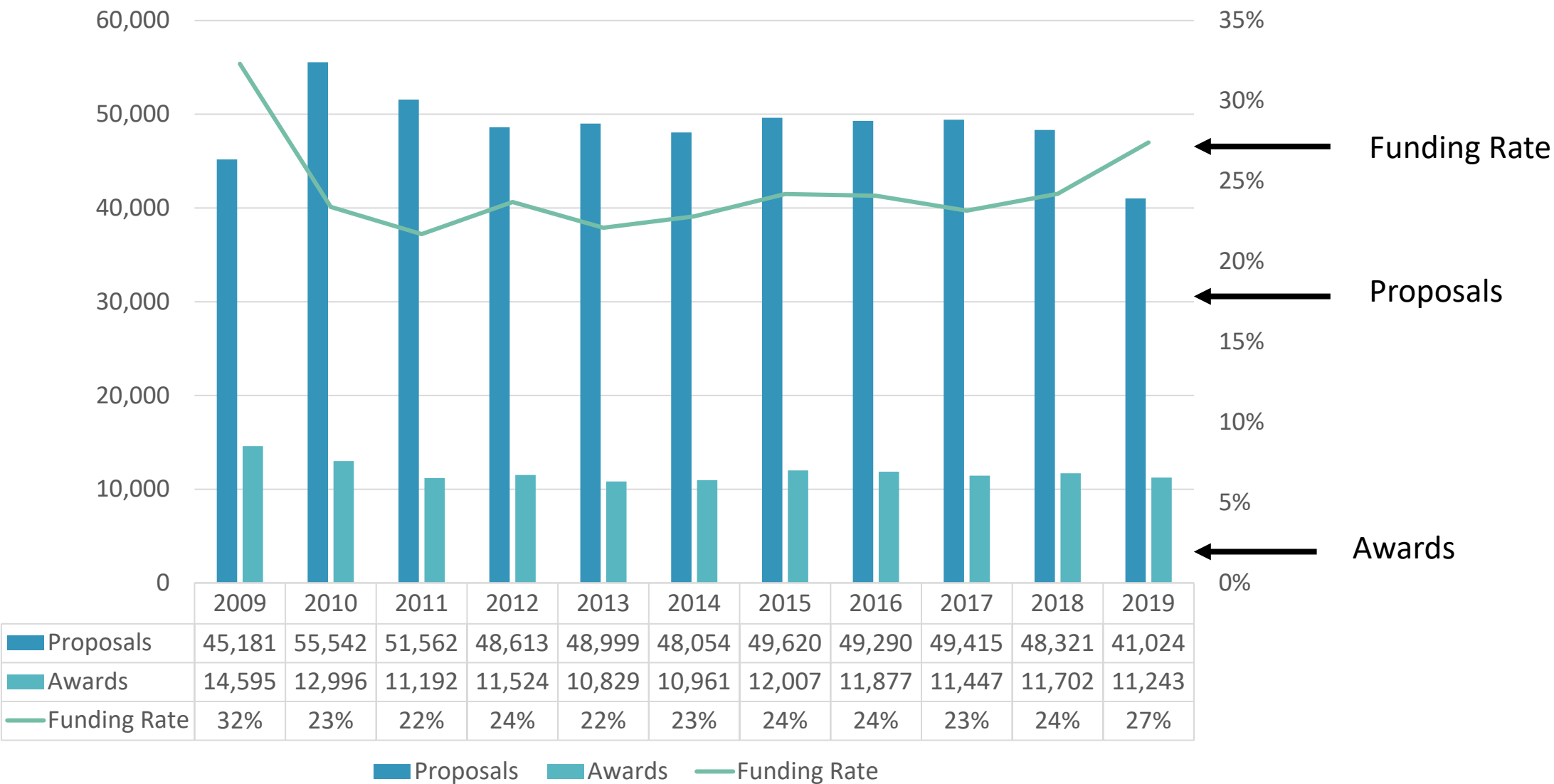
FY 2019 Merit Review Digest

Highlights



Merit Review Digest – Summary Statistics

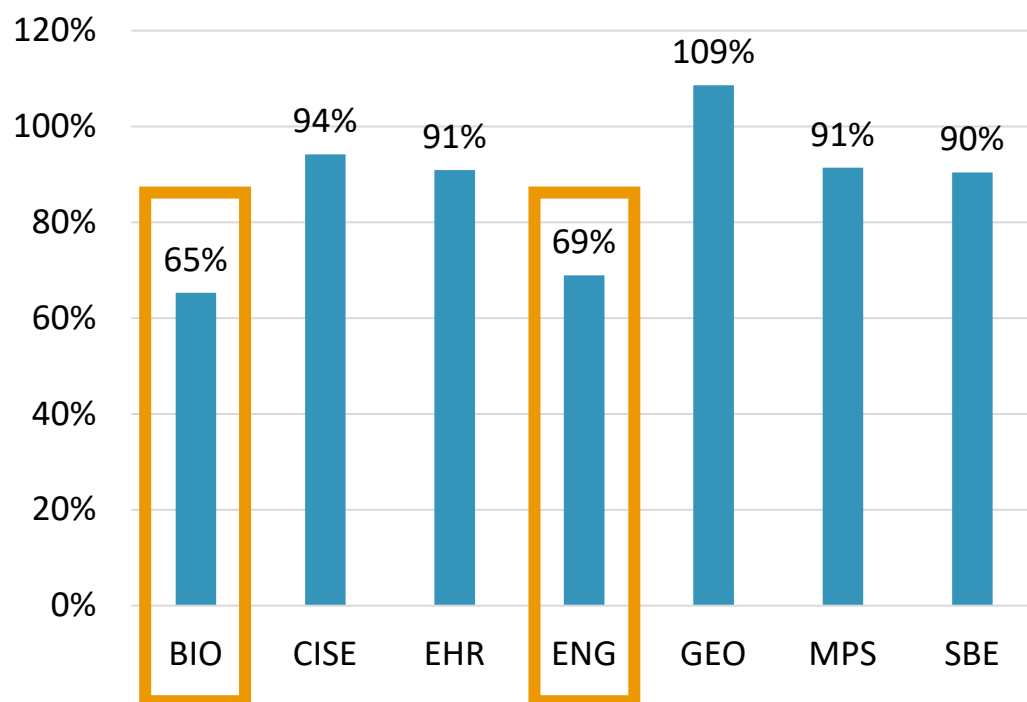
Competitive Proposals, Awards, and Funding Rates



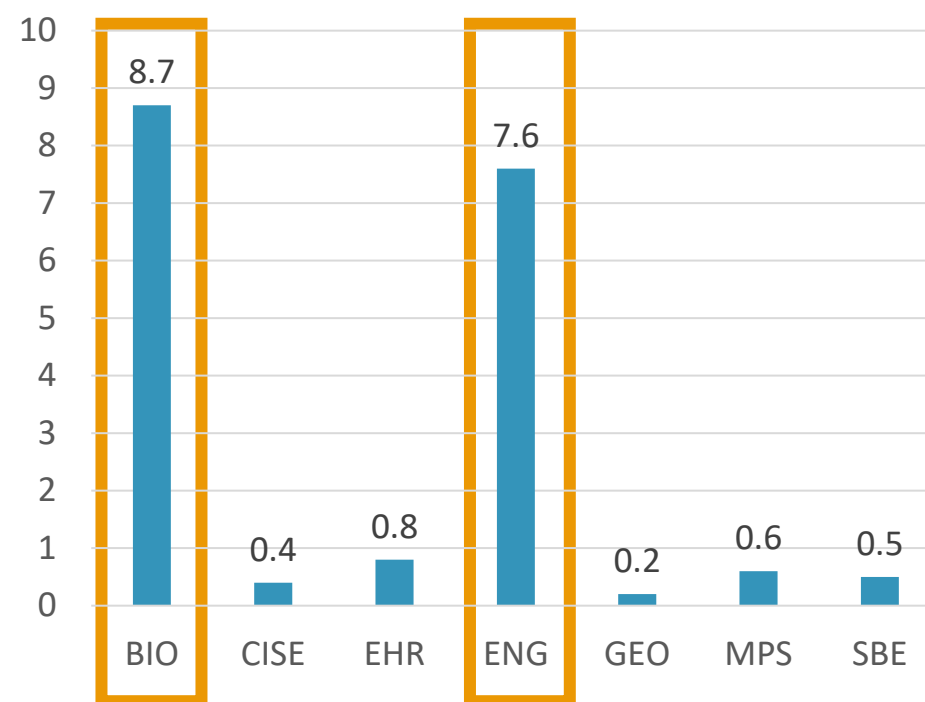


Directorate-wide Adoption of No-Deadlines

Proposals Acted on by Directorates in FY 2019
Compared to FY 2018



Difference in Proposal Funding Rates by
Directorates in FY 2018 and FY 2019

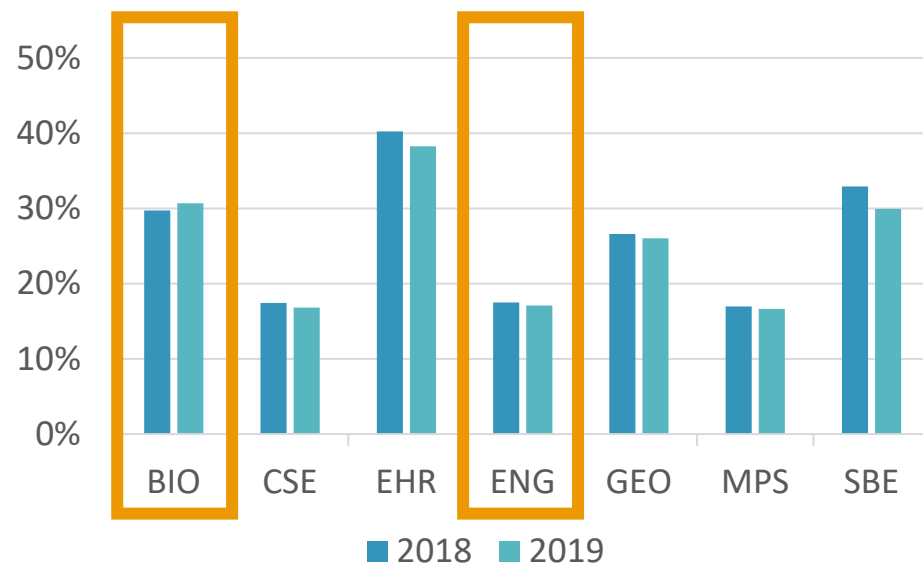


BIO and ENG – Directorate-wide adoption of no-deadline approach for core programs; saw fewer proposals and increased funding rates.

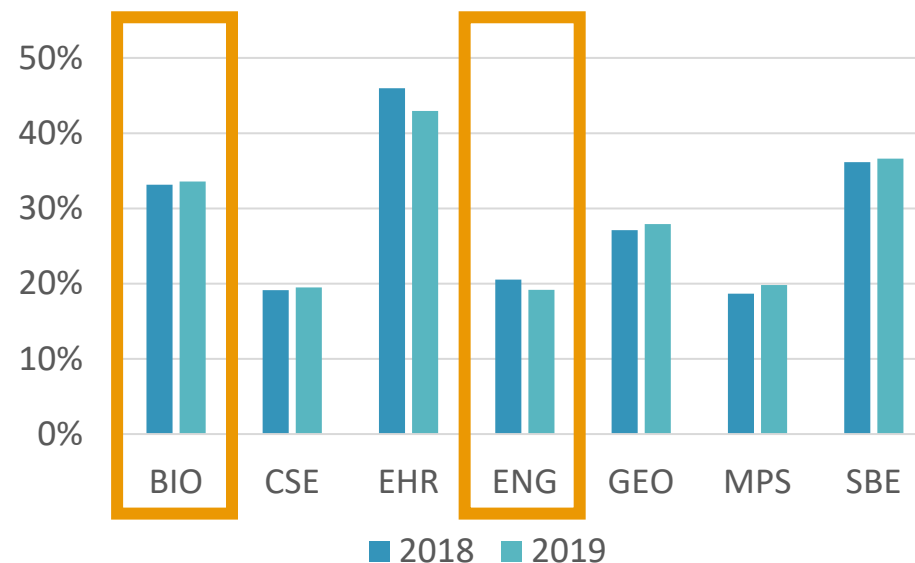


Diversity of Proposals and Awards, by Female PIs

Total Percent **Proposals** from **Female PIs**



Total Percent **Awards** to **Female PIs**

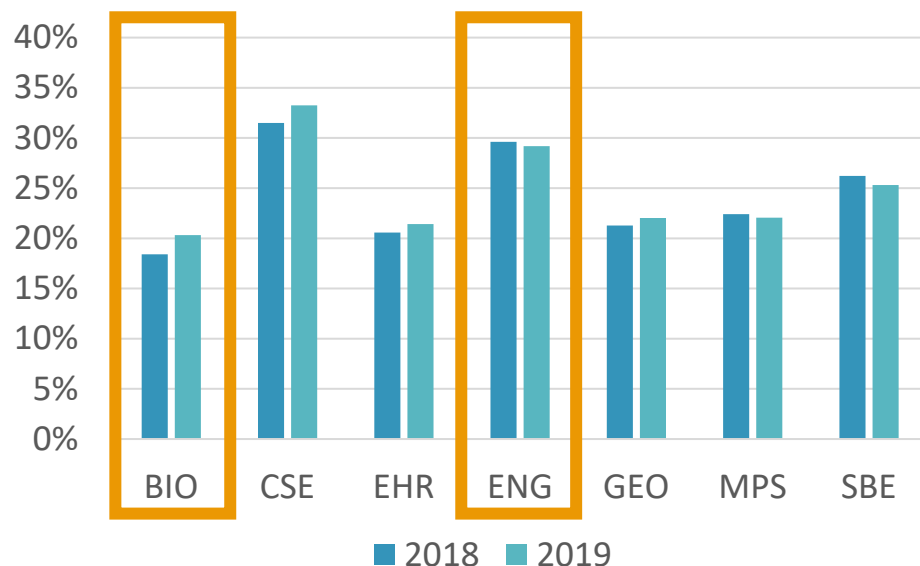


BIO and ENG – no large variance in participation by female PIs.



Diversity of Proposals and Awards, by Early Career PIs

Total Percent **Proposals** from **Early Career PIs**



Total Percent **Awards** to **Early Career PIs**



BIO and ENG – no large variance in participation by early career PIs.



Survey of Principal Investigator and Reviewer Experiences

Highlights

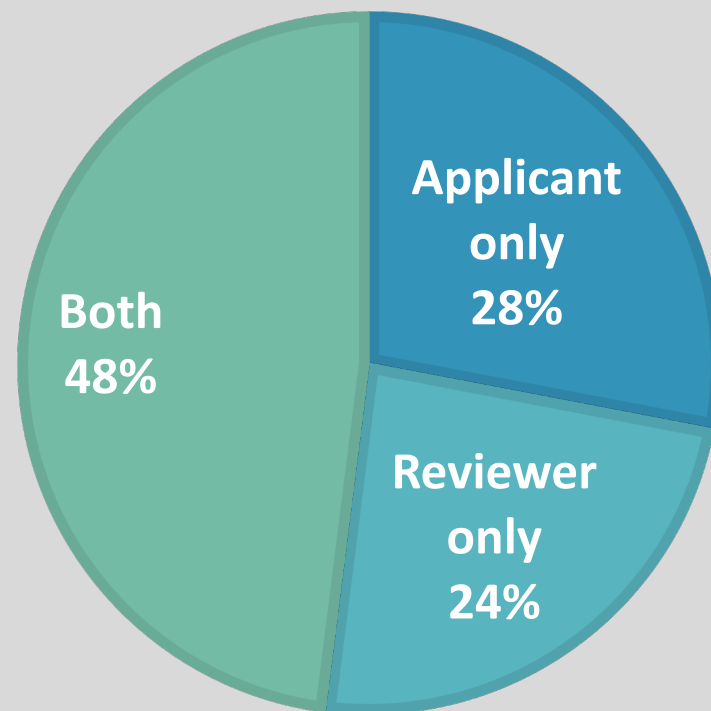


Survey Overview

Summary

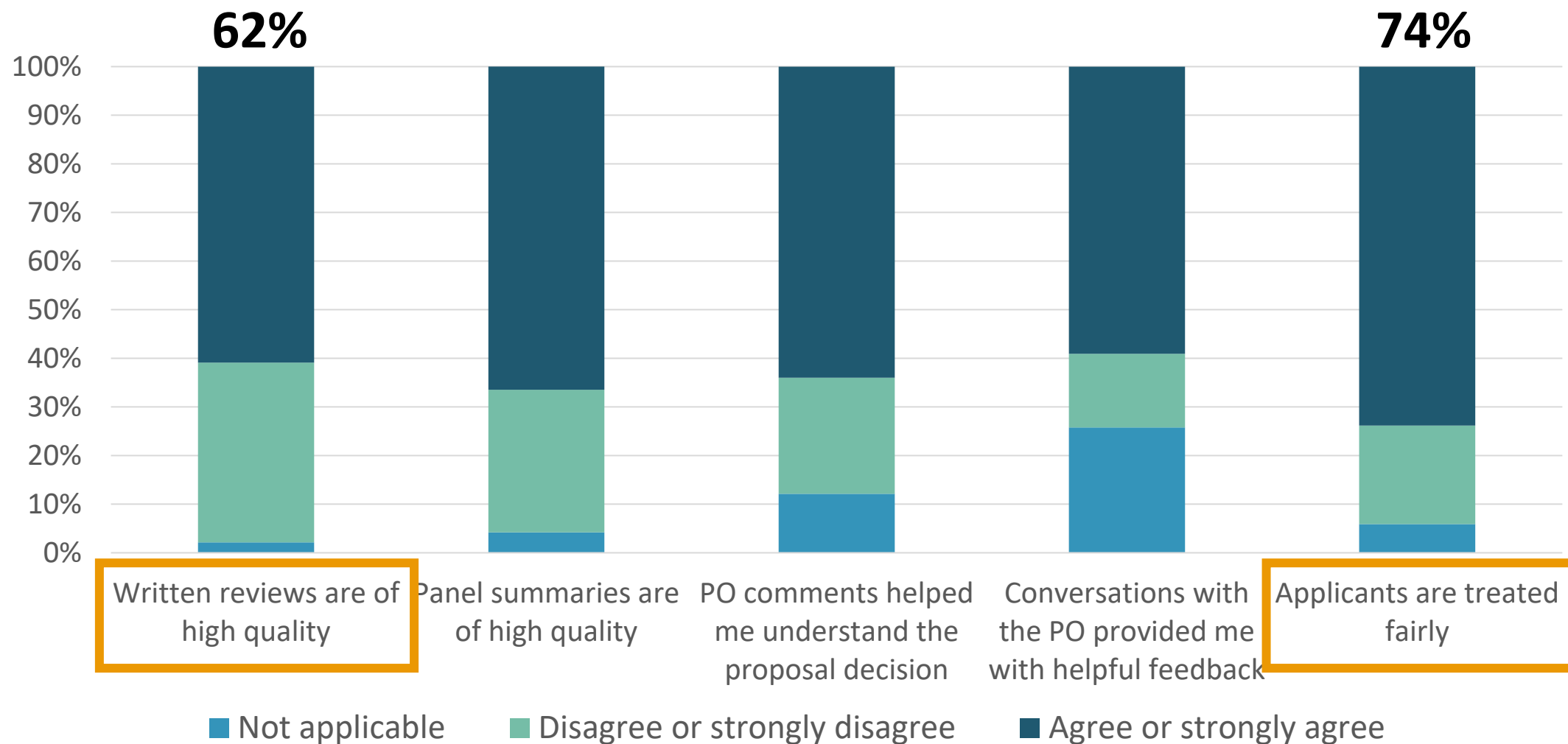
Period covered by survey	FY 2016 - FY 2018
Invitees	89,012
Number of respondents (N)	26,216
Response rate	29%

Respondent Role n = 26,216





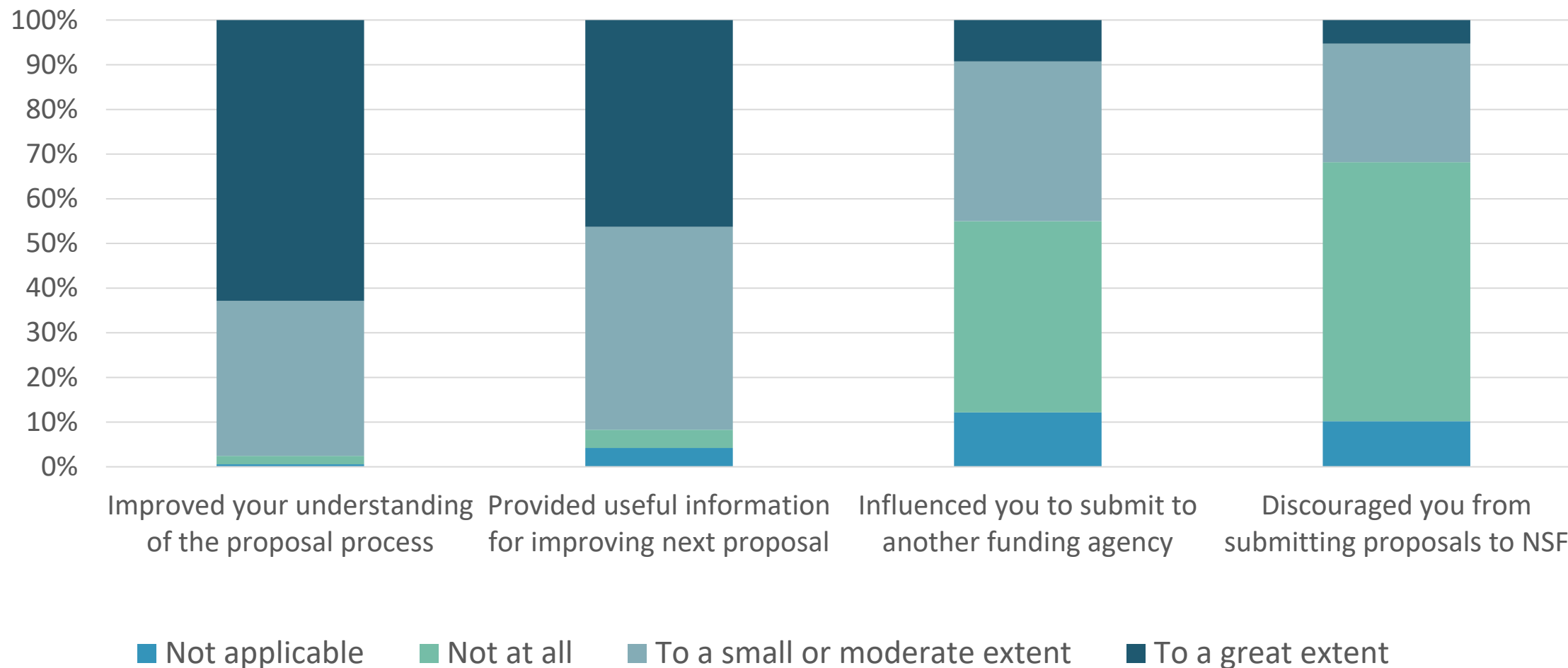
Experiences of Applicants



Applicants are generally satisfied with the merit review process and believe it is fair.



Experiences of Reviewers



Reviewers recognize that review service helps them in their roles as applicants.



Merit Review Website

Phase 1 Release



Oversight of the Merit Review Process

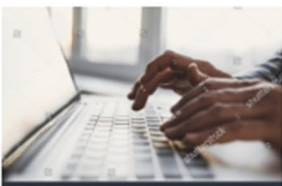
Merit Review

Merit Review

[Oversight of the Merit Review Process](#)

Background Information

NSF's mission is to promote the progress of science. Every year, the Foundation is able to support only a fraction of the proposed research with its limited resources. NSF uses a rigorous merit review process to decide which proposals have the greatest potential and will be the most fruitful investment of the taxpayer dollars. Considered the gold-standard for evaluating research proposals in a competitive environment, NSF continuously evaluates opportunities to strengthen the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the process.



Overview of Merit Review Policies and Process

Are you interested in learning about NSF's Merit Review criteria and process? Details of policy and procedures can be found by following the link below.

[Visit Page](#)



Oversight of the Merit Review Process

Learn more about how NSF ensures the continuing integrity and efficiency of the merit review process.

[Visit page](#)

Oversight of the Merit Review Process




Through its merit review process, the National Science Foundation (NSF) ensures that proposals submitted are reviewed in a fair, competitive, transparent, and in-depth manner. NSF has several external and internal oversight mechanisms that evaluate the integrity and efficiency of this vital process, including:

- [Congress](#) – NSF is an independent agency of the executive branch of the US government. Congressional committees with oversight responsibilities for NSF hold the agency accountable for the proper functioning of the merit review process.
- [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) – GAO is an independent agency that works for Congress. It performs independent audits and reviews of agencies to identify opportunities to improve performance and efficiency.
- [National Science Board](#) – The Board was established by Congress in 1950, and along with the Director, constitutes NSF. The Board provides oversight for, and establishes the policies of, the agency within the framework of applicable national policies set forth by the President and Congress. In addition, the Board serves as an independent body of advisors to both the President and Congress on broad national policy issues.
- [Office of the Inspector General \(OIG\)](#) – The OIG is an independent oversight office that reports directly to the NSB and Congress. It is responsible for conducting audits, reviews, and investigations of NSF programs, and of organizations and individuals that apply for or receive NSF funding. OIG also investigates allegations of research misconduct, such as plagiarism, falsification, or fabrication, involving researchers who request or receive NSF funding.
- [NSF Directorates and Divisions](#) – NSF Directorates and Offices oversee Program Divisions/Offices that are responsible for the scientific, technical, and programmatic review and evaluation of proposals and for recommending that proposals be declined or awarded. NSF Division Directors are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the merit review and award process within their Divisions.

<https://beta.demo.nsf.gov/merit-review>



FY 2020-2021 Timeline

	FY 2020	FY 2021		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Merit Review Digest	<div> Publish FY 2019 Digest</div>	<div>Compile FY 2020 data</div>	<div>Draft FY 2020 Digest</div>	<div>Review and clear draft</div>
Survey of PIs and reviewers	<div>Review and clear draft</div>	<div> Publish survey report</div>	<div>Prepare and plan next survey</div>	
Merit Review website and modules	<div> Launch website</div>	<div>Incrementally publish statistical data, reports, videos</div>		

In Process



Major milestone



Questions?