

Eligible PIs urged to establish Early Stage Investigator status; Update Personal Profile in eRA Commons

January 9, 2009

Attention Principal Investigators! If you attained your terminal research degree or completed your medical residency within the past ten years, and you have not previously received a substantial NIH research grant, you may be eligible to qualify as an Early Stage Investigator for the purposes of your NIH R01 research grant application. An ESI is a subset of the New Investigator category.

How exactly does that benefit you, you may ask? Well, for one, your R01 grant application will be flagged as an Early Stage Investigator application beginning with the February 2009 R01 submissions. In reviewing this application, reviewers will be instructed to focus more on the research portion of your application and less on your track record. Beginning in May 2009, Early Stage Investigator applications will be clustered for review.

The idea behind this new policy is to encourage scientists to seek NIH funding for their research early on in their career.

To ensure that NIH recognizes your eligibility as an Early Stage Investigator, PIs are urged to log into eRA Commons (<https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/>) and update their Personal Profile immediately. Note that PIs need to update their degree/residency data before they submit their R01 application.

After Jan. 17, 2009, the eRA Commons will be ready to accept completion dates for medical residency; please do not try before that date. Once the PI enters the information, the system will calculate ESI eligibility and display the eligibility end date to the user if he is eligible.

Steps to update degree and medical residency information in your Personal Profile:

- Log into Commons and click on the Personal Profile tab
- Click on the Degree/Residency Info tab on the second dark blue row that appears
- The List of Degrees screen appears
- Either edit/delete the existing degree information or click on the 'Add New Degree tab'
- If you click on 'Add New Degree,' a new screen will appear; fill out the fields and click on 'Submit'
- Once the degree information is entered, the Add Medical Residency button on the screen becomes functional
- Add end date (or expected date) of medical residency and click 'Submit' (Entering the area of medical residency is optional)
- You will be returned to the List of Degrees screen where your 'Early Stage Investigator' Status will be displayed. (If determined ESI eligible, you will also see an End of Eligibility date).

It is important to note that the ESI status will be updated if the ESI eligibility changes due to the following circumstances:

- Eligibility has expired
- Award representing significant NIH support has been made
- Your ESI eligibility has been extended due to special circumstances
- Degree or residency date has been modified

The PI will be notified if his or her ESI eligibility status changes.

Note: A Multiple-PI application is only considered ESI-eligible if all PIs listed on the application are ESI-eligible.

Related NIH Guide Notices

- [NOT-OD-09-034](#) Requesting an Extension of the ESI Period (Dec. 31, 2008)
- [NOT-OD-09-021](#) Implementing the Early Stage Investigator Policy: Updating eRA Commons Profiles to Include Degree and Residency Completion Dates (Nov. 21, 2008)
- [NOT-OD-09-013](#) Revised New and Early Stage Investigator Policies (Oct. 31, 2008)
- [NOT-OD-08-121](#) Encouraging Early Transition to Research Independence: Modifying the NIH New Investigator Policy to Identify Early Stage Investigators (Sept. 26, 2008)

Important Links

- [New and Early Stage Investigator Policies](#)
- Please look for Commons Release Notes with detailed information and screenshots on the [Commons Support Page](#) of the eRA Web site in the coming days.

Questions?

eRA Commons Help Desk

Web: <http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/> (Preferred method of contact)

Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552

Phone: 301-402-7469

TTY: 301-451-5939

Hours: Mon-Fri, 7a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time

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