

# NIH's Next Generation Researchers Initiative

## Background

Effective August 31, 2017, NIH has instituted the **Policy Supporting the Next Generation Researchers Initiative** to provide opportunities for earlier research independence while enhancing workforce diversity. The policy requires institutes and centers to prioritize awards that will fund Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) and Early Established Investigators (EEIs). Complete details about this policy can be found via notice number [NOT-OD-17-101](#).

## Definitions

**Early Stage Investigator (ESI):** An ESI is a Program Director / Principal Investigator (PD/PI) who has completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and who has not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award. Under the Next Generation Researchers policy, meritorious R01-equivalent applications with ESI PD/PIs will be prioritized for funding.

**Early Established Investigator (EEI):** An EEI is a PD/PI who is within 10 years of receiving their first substantial, independent competing NIH R01-equivalent research award as an ESI. A meritorious application with a designated PD/PI EEI may be prioritized for funding if:

- The EEI lost or is at risk for losing all NIH research support if not funded by competing awards this year, OR
- The EEI is supported by only one active award.

**Note:** NIH grant applications with more than one PD/PI (MPI) will be prioritized for funding only if all MPIs have EEI status and meet prioritization criteria.

## Necessary Actions by PI/PD

If you believe you qualify as an **ESI**:

- Ensure that you have only been a PI/PD of smaller grants and awards that maintain ESI status (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/early-investigators/list-smaller-grants.htm>)
- Enter the date of their terminal research degree or the end date of their post-graduate clinical training in their eRA Commons profile

If you believe you qualify as an **EEI**:

- Make sure your eRA Commons profile is up to date

## Requests for Extension of Next Generation Researchers Status

NIH will consider requests to extend ESI or EEI period for reasons that can include medical concerns, disability, family care responsibilities, extended periods of clinical training, natural disasters, and active duty military service, determined on a case by case basis at the sole discretion of NIH.

ESIs and EEIs may request an extension of their eligibility under existing ESI procedures.

## Scoring

This policy **does not affect the proposal review score**. However, the policy requires institutes and centers to prioritize awards that will fund ESIs and EEIs.