

Scoring Aid for IES Grant Peer Reviewers

This is a general framework for you to use as you consider what criterion and overall scores to give each application you review. Your overall score should reflect your evaluation of the application as a whole. It is very important that your overall score is well-aligned with both your narrative review and the criterion scores that you assign to the application. This does not mean, however, that there is a one-to-one correspondence between criterion and overall scores. Criterion scores are not averaged or mathematically manipulated to determine an overall score. Rather, carefully consider the strengths and weaknesses of the application as reflected in your criterion scores and narrative review when assigning an overall score to each application.

Depending on the availability of funds, the Institute hopes to fund applications that are in the Outstanding and Excellent range, which generally corresponds to an average overall score of 2.0 or better.

Criterion Score Range	Narrative Review Comments Your evaluation with respect to a criterion is...
6 or 7	very positive; your critique includes numerous major strengths and few or no major weaknesses.
3, 4, or 5	mixed; your critique includes both some major strengths and some major weaknesses.
1 or 2	generally negative; your critique includes many major weaknesses and few or no major strengths.

Overall Score Range	Adjectival Equivalent	Typical Range of Criterion Scores	Interpretation and Match with Narrative Review Comments
1.0 to 1.5	Outstanding	Most or all criterion scores are 6s or 7s	<p>The application is “ready to go” – the application describes a project that clearly addresses the relevant review criteria, including recommendations discussed in the RFA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a score in the “Outstanding” range if you believe the project as described in the application has exceptional merit, with few if any weaknesses. Consider a score in the “Excellent” range if you feel the project as described in the application has some weaknesses but these can be addressed without the need to revise and resubmit the application.
1.6 to 2.0	Excellent	Most criterion scores are 6s or 7s, although some may be less positive.	
2.1 to 2.5	Very Good	Criterion scores may be mixed, but most are in the 5-6 range.	<p>The project has more strengths than weaknesses, but you feel that it is not yet “ready to go.” You have questions about how the application addresses the recommendations included in the RFA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a score in the “Very Good” range if you feel there are weaknesses that need to be addressed, but that addressing those weaknesses in a revised and resubmitted application would likely result in a successful project. Consider scores in the “Good” range if you have more substantial concerns about the project that need to be addressed for the project to be successful.
2.6 to 3.0	Good	Criterion scores may be mixed but most are in the 4-5 range.	
3.1 to 4.0	Fair	Criterion scores may be mixed but most are in the 3-4 range.	Consider a score in the “Fair” range if you believe the application has more weaknesses than strengths. You see the project as having some merit, but it is not sufficiently demonstrated in the application; and it is not clear that the weaknesses could be addressed without substantially reconsidering aspects of the proposed work.
4.1 to 5.0	Poor	Criterion scores may be mixed but most are low - in the 1-3 range.	Consider a score in the “Poor” range if you feel the application has many weaknesses and few strengths, and it seems unlikely that the applicants could revise the plans laid out in the current application in a way that would result in a successful project.