

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE NIH DIRECTOR (ACD)
Next Generation Researchers Initiative Working Group Charter

BACKGROUND

NIH and its stakeholder community have for many years been concerned about the long-term stability of the biomedical research enterprise. Too many researchers vying for limited resources has led to a hypercompetitive environment in which many highly meritorious applications go unfunded. The current environment is particularly challenging for many early- and mid-career investigators.

Over the last several years, NIH has taken numerous steps to balance, strengthen, and stabilize the biomedical research workforce. However, these measures have only taken us so far. To ensure the long-term stability and strength of the U.S. biomedical research enterprise, the pool of NIH-funded researchers must be balanced such that the greatest number of early-stage (ESI)¹ and early-established (EEI)² investigators are enabled to tackle tough research questions to improve the health of all Americans.

To address this challenging issue, NIH has proposed the Next Generation Researchers Initiative (Next Gen): a bold, focused approach to bolster support to ESIs and EEIs through specific funding and evaluation efforts.

CHARGE

The ACD Working Group on the Next Generation Researchers Initiative (ACD Next Gen WG) will provide advice on the development, implementation, and analysis of the Next Gen policy to increase the number of NIH-funded ESIs and EEIs and stabilize the career trajectory of scientists. Consistent with this charge, the ACD Next Gen WG will:

- Advise NIH leadership on the development of a trans-NIH Next Gen policy;
- Review independent assessments to identify evidence-based metrics for research productivity, and determine the impact of NIH grant support on scientific progress;

¹ An ESI is an individual who has completed his or her terminal research degree or medical residency, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and is new to the NIH. An ESI equivalent is an investigator that would have been considered an ESI prior to the announcement of the [ESI Policy](#) in 2008.

² An EEI is an applicant who is within 10 years of receiving their first major NIH competing award as an ESI (or ESI equivalent). EEIs may be prioritized for funding of meritorious research applications if they are either: an EEI applicant who has lost or is at risk for losing all NIH research funding if they receive no competing awards this year, or an EEI applicant who has only one active award.

- Provide advice and recommendations on approaches for developing or enhancing NIH funding mechanisms aimed at ESIs and EEIs;
- Propose recommendations for tracking and assessing funding decisions for ESIs and EEIs with fundable scores to ensure the Next Gen is effectively implemented in all areas of research;
- Assure alignment of recommendations for the opportunities and needs of ESIs and EEIs with the work of other ACD and internal NIH WGs regarding the demographics of workforce, age, sex, ethnic/racial diversity, MDs vs. PhDs;
- Review analyses to assess the impact of the Next Gen policy on the overall NIH scientific portfolio and workforce trends.

In carrying out its charge, the working group will need to engage individuals at every career stage, as well as research institutions and other stakeholders, to ensure that the Next Gen policy is effective in its goal of providing long-term stability and strength to the U.S. biomedical research enterprise.

STRUCTURE

Membership: Working group members will be appointed by the NIH Director. The working group will be comprised of no more than 18 members, and will consist of the following: two co-chairs (the NIH Principal Deputy Director and an external member); NIH Leadership (Deputy Directors, OD Office Heads, IC Directors); ACD members; full, associate, and assistant professors; postdoctoral researchers and/or graduate students; economist(s).

Quorum: A quorum for conducting business and making recommendations shall consist of a simple majority of members.

Terms: The NIH Director shall appoint the members at his discretion for a term not exceeding 4 years. Members may serve after the expiration of their terms until successors have been appointed. At the expiration of a member's term, the Director may reappoint the member for an additional term.

Staff Support:

The Immediate Office of the Director will provide analytical and administrative support to the ACD Next Gen WG. Staff activities include:

- Coordinating appropriate logistical issues to assure that the ACD Next Gen WG operates efficiently and effectively.
- Developing briefing documents, meeting summaries, and other ACD Next Gen WG materials as needed.

MODIFICATION OF THE CHARTER

The ACD Next Gen WG's effectiveness will be evaluated periodically at the discretion of the NIH Director and the charter will be modified accordingly to ensure that it is achieving its intended purpose.

MEETINGS

The ACD Next Gen WG schedule will be determined by the co-chairs.

ATTENDANCE

ACD Next Gen WG meetings shall be attended by members without the designation of alternates. Additional attendees may be invited for individual meetings, as appropriate.

REPORTS

- Meeting summaries will serve as record of ACD Next Gen WG activities and decisions and will be provided routinely to members.
- The ACD Next Gen WG will determine when formal reports are necessary, except when requested at the direction of the NIH Director.
- The ACD Next Gen WG will report on progress at each public meeting of the full ACD.