5. Criteria to apply in reviewing NACC project applications

FY2018 FUNDING (7/01/18 – 6/30/19)

Please follow the guidelines below when reviewing the applications assigned to you. These criteria are consistent with current NIH Scientific Review Guidelines, with slight modification to meet specific NACC goals, so this format should be familiar to most reviewers. The NACC Steering Committee has determined that applications involving specific mentoring, use of NACC data in some form, or visiting/observing other ADCs as part of a data collection, clinical or laboratory experience should be viewed "more favorably"; however they provided no operational definition or metric to apply the "more favorable" effect.

PLEASE NOTE: Written reviews should not bear personal identifiers, as reviews will be forwarded to the investigator as part of a summary statement. Your reviews MUST be edited following the meeting to faithfully reflect the discussion that took place; scores must also be modified to be consistent with the discussion.

OVERALL IMPACT

Briefly summarize the most important strengths and weaknesses of the application. An application need not be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have a significant and lasting scientific impact on the field and thus deserve a high-merit rating. For example, a project that by its nature is not innovative may be essential to advance a field. **Significance, Innovation** and **Approach** should contribute more to overall impact than other criteria. "Overall Impact Score" is <u>NOT</u> simply the average of the individual criteria scores.

SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Include as little descriptive information in this section as possible. Reviewers are asked to consider each of the five review criteria below in determining scientific and technical merit and give a separate score for each. Please address, in individual sections, each criterion listed below. Only the assigned reviewers will assign category scores; these scores will not be debated by the Committee, as such; they are primarily given to better understand the strong and weak areas of the application which may be influencing the overall Impact score.

1. **Significance** — Does this project address an important scientific research question regarding Alzheimer's disease or related disorders? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge in this field be advanced? What will be the effect of this study on the concepts or methods that drive this field? How will results advance research at the NIA/NIH Alzheimer's Disease Centers? Is there a hypothesis or research question that will be addressed by the application, or is this "data collection" only? Is it likely to evolve into an R01?

2. **Investigator** — (NOTE: Please determine and evaluate this criterion based on who will be actually running the study, not the ADC Director who is required to sign the application for grant administration purposes.) However, please specifically address all planned mentoring relationships described (or not) in the application. Is the PI, well suited to the project? Does the investigator have appropriate experience and training? How will the current experience serve to provide experience or mentoring, which could benefit their transition to becoming an independent investigator? Have they already demonstrated accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?

3. **Innovation** — Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Does this application provide a novel or unique opportunity for training and experience for the investigator?

4. **Approach** — Are the overall strategy (e.g., research design and hypotheses), methodology, and analysis plan clearly presented, well-reasoned, and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? How are mentors' interactions, and/or specific laboratory, methodological or clinical experience, from single or multiple ADCs incorporated to answer the research question?

5. **Environment** — Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are multiple ADCs involved in providing an environment for the application (even though they are not budgeted "collaborators")? Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements? Please do not include descriptions of available facilities or equipment unless this is important to the evaluation of merit.

Reviewers are asked to consider the following item in the determination of scientific and technical merit, but not to give a separate score for this item:

6. **Budget** — Reviewers will consider whether the budget is fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed research.

PRELIMINARY SCORE

Assign a preliminary overall impact score number to each proposal prior to the meeting. This score may be changed after Committee discussion. It is important to use the full range of priority score ratings. Please use the following calibration guide in assigning scores:

Impact	Score	Descriptor	Additional guidance on strengths and weaknesses
High	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Medium	4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Please note that in the past, NACC has asked primary reviewers to provide a follow-up summary paragraph reflecting actual Committee discussion. This is no longer necessary.