Overview of the Biosketch Form

- Introduction
- Difference between Biosketch and CV
- Sections of the Biosketch (focusing on the NIH Biosketch format; includes a sample copy)
- Common mistakes and how to avoid them
- Tips for a “Better Biosketch”

Module 1

Hi, I’m Amy Barelli and I’m here to discuss biosketches with you. Some major topics in this discussion are: the purpose of the biosketch and what exactly it is, who needs a biosketch, how to complete it, and some common mistakes and how to avoid them. We will also give some tips on keeping the biosketch up-to-date. You can access information on those in the Resources section of this webpage.

Module 2

First, what is a biosketch and how does it differ from a Curriculum Vitae, or CV? A biosketch is used to briefly highlight your education and accomplishments as a scientist. A CV is a detailed overview of a person’s life and qualifications, and elaborates in detail on education, professional history including all employment, academic credentials, publications, et cetera. Information for the biosketch is often drawn from the CV.

Next, when do you use the biosketch? When applying for grants or contracts, most sponsors will require that a biosketch be submitted as part of the application. Reviewers use this information to assess each individual’s qualifications for a specific role in the proposed project.

Finally, who must submit a biosketch? At minimum, most sponsors require a biosketch for people designated with the Principal investigator or Project Director role. Additionally, sponsors may require a biosketch for other types of personnel listed in the application. Always remember to check a sponsor’s requirements.
Module 3

Now let’s discuss the actual Biosketch form. We will focus today on the standard NIH format. A majority of NIH proposals follow the standard format; however a few specific types of grants will require a modified version. Additionally, many other sponsors will accept the NIH version; however some sponsors such as the NSF have their own requirements. It is important to always read the instructions. There are basically five sections to the biosketch form. Let’s take a look at a sample form while we review it.

The top section contains the person’s name, title, eRA Commons Username and educational listing. If you are using this form for another sponsor, be sure to check their instructions and update accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Hunt, Virginia Lively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSITION TITLE</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eRA COMMONS USERNAME</td>
<td>hunty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION/TRAINING</td>
<td>(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION AND LOCATION</th>
<th>DEGREE (if applicable)</th>
<th>MMNY</th>
<th>FIELD OF STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
<td>05/80</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Vermont</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>05/86</td>
<td>Experimental Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>Postdoctoral</td>
<td>08/88</td>
<td>Public Health and Epidemiology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section A is the personal statement, which should briefly describe the experience and qualifications make this person the best candidate for the application. It should be about a paragraph in length and should tie the goals of the research with the persons skills.
A. Personal Statement

The goal of the proposed research is to investigate the interaction between drug abuse and normal aging processes. Specifically, we plan to measure changes in cognitive ability and mental and physical health across a five-year period in a group of older drug users and matched controls. I have the expertise, leadership and motivation necessary to successfully carry out the proposed work. I have a broad background in psychology, with specific training and expertise in key research areas for this application. As a postdoctoral fellow at Berkeley, I carried out ethnographic and survey research and secondary data analysis on psychological aspects of drug addiction. At the Division of Intramural Research at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), I expanded my research to include neuropsychological changes associated with addiction. As PI or co-investigator on several previous university- and NIH-funded grants, I laid the groundwork for the proposed research by developing effective measures of disability, depression, and other psychosocial factors relevant to the aging substance abuser, and by establishing strong ties with community providers that will make it possible to recruit and track participants over time. In addition, I successfully administered the projects (e.g. staffing, research protections, budget), collaborated with other researchers, and produced several peer-reviewed publications from each project. As a result of these previous experiences, I am aware of the importance of frequent communication among project members and of constructing a realistic research plan, timeline, and budget. The current application builds logically on my prior work, and I have chosen co-investigators (Drs. Gryczynski and Newlin) who provide additional expertise in cognition, gerontology and geriatrics. In summary, I have a demonstrated record of successful and productive research projects in an area of high relevance for our aging population, and my expertise and experience have prepared me to lead the proposed project.

Section B lists positions and honors. These chronological listings, starting with oldest and ending with newest, are grouped by type: employment, other experience, memberships, and honors.

B. Positions and Honors

**Positions and Employment**

1998-2000 Fellow, Division of Intramural Research, National Institute of Drug Abuse, Bethesda, MD
2000-2002 Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT
2001- Consultant, Coastal Psychological Services, San Francisco, CA
2002-2005 Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
2005- Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

**Other Experience and Professional Memberships**

1995- Member, American Psychological Association
1998- Member, Gerontological Society of America
1998- Member, American Geriatrics Society
2000- Associate Editor, Psychology and Aging
2003- Board of Advisors, Senior Services of Eastern Missouri
2003-04 NIH Peer Review Committee: Psychobiology of Aging, ad hoc reviewer
2005-09 NIH Risk, Adult Addictions Study Section, member

**Honors**

2003 Outstanding Young Faculty Award, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
2005 Excellence in Teaching, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
2008 Award for Best in Interdisciplinary Ethnography, International Ethnographic Society

Section C contains peer-reviewed publications or manuscripts in press, and should be listed in chronological order. NIH encourages applicants to limit this list to no more than 15, including your most recent, relevant to the field and/or relevance to the project. Do not include manuscripts submitted or in preparation.
Section D lists research support. Identify both selected ongoing and completed research projects for the last three years. Also include both Federal and non-Federal support. Begin with the projects that are most relevant to the research proposed in this application, and don’t confuse “Research Support” with “Other Support.” We’ll discuss this more in the next module.
D. Research Support

**Ongoing Research Support**

R01 DA942367-03          Hunt (PI)          09/01/07-08/31/12
Health trajectories and behavioral interventions among older substance abusers
The goal of this study is to compare the effects of two substance abuse interventions on health outcomes in an urban population of older opiate addicts.
Role: PI

R01 MH922731-05          Meryle (PI)          07/15/05-06/30/10
Physical disability, depression and substance abuse in the elderly
The goal of this study is to identify disability and depression trajectories and demographic factors associated with substance abuse in an independently-living elderly population.
Role: Co-Investigator

**Completed Research Support**

K02 AG442898          Hunt (PI)          09/01/06-
08/31/09
Drug Abuse in the Elderly
Independent Scientist Award to develop a drug addiction research program with a focus on substance abuse among the elderly.
Role: PI
Module 4

Now that we have discussed the basics of the form, let's talk about some of the most common mistakes we see on biosketches. The most common mistake we see is people confusing “Research Support” with “Other Support”. Research Support and Other Support follow very similar formats but have some distinct differences. For more information on “Other Support” check the resources section of this website. For the purposes of the biosketch, Research Support should NOT include the following:

- Pending proposals
- Level of effort
- Dollar amount of the award.

Another mistake frequently seen is missing PubMed IDs from the publications list. Be sure to follow the sample NIH format linked in the resources section. Additionally, please be aware of page and font requirements in general. For grants.gov submissions do not include headers or footers.

Module 5

Now that we’ve reviewed common mistakes, let’s discuss ways to prevent them. First, we recommend a “master biosketch” be created for each PI that includes all publications. Keep this biosketch up-to-date with all personal and professional information, and use it as a starting point for new applications. As the biosketch is tailored to each application, use the 15 publications most relevant to that research. You must also include a personal statement that applies to the specific application.

For all applications, remember to read the program announcement and instructions for deviations from the general format, and for sponsor- or application-specific information. Take a minute to review the Resource section of this website. We hope this has helped take some of the mystery out of the biosketch. If you have questions or do not find what you are looking for on our resource links, please be sure to contact your institutional representative for assistance.