

# Is grant review feedback perceived as fair or useful?

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An important function of the grant peer review process is to provide constructive feedback to applicants for their resubmissions. However, little is known about whether review feedback achieves this goal.

The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), in collaboration with Washington State University, has published findings on a multi-methods analysis of responses from grant applicants regarding their perceptions of the usefulness and appropriateness of peer review feedback they received from grant submissions.

The analysis focused on responses from a survey sent to over 13,000 scientists concerning the feedback from their recent funding applications (largely from NIH and NSF). The results suggested that only 56-60% of applicants determined the feedback to be appropriate (fair, well-written, and well-informed), although their judgments were more favorable if their recent application was funded. Importantly, independent of funding success, women found the feedback better written than men, and more White applicants found the

feedback to be fair than non-White applicants.

Less than 40% of applicants found the feedback to be very useful in informing their research and improving grantsmanship and future submissions. Overall, these results suggest that more effort is needed to ensure that appropriate and useful feedback is provided to all applicants. This investigation is in line with the AIBS commitment to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the [biological sciences](#).

**More information:** Stephen A. Gallo et al, Grant Review Feedback: Appropriateness and Usefulness, *Science and Engineering Ethics* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s11948-021-00295-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-021-00295-9)

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