

UPDATE OF THE PHS 398, 2590 AND 416 FORMS

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NOTICE: NOT-OD-03-062

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

In response to comments and suggestions from the research community on how NIH can continue to improve the application forms to make them more user-friendly, NIH has made several formatting enhancements to the PHS 398, 2590 and 416 forms. Applicants who are experiencing difficulties with earlier versions of the forms are encouraged to use the recently updated forms. IF YOU HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS, AND YOU DOWNLOADED THE FORMS TO YOUR PERSONAL COMPUTER, YOU MAY CONTINUE USING THE SET OF FORMS PREVIOUSLY POSTED.

Following is a summary of the recent enhancements. The forms are now more compatible with existing software and Microsoft Word (MS Word) files. In addition, forms links in the instructions have been updated to reflect these changes. Institutions may want to link to the PHS 398 Forms and Instructions page rather than maintaining copies of forms on internal web sites, to be sure the most current forms are available for applicants.

O Microsoft Word (MS Word) files have replaced previous versions of Rich Text Format (RTF) files due to a problem experienced by some users of Word XP (a.k.a. Word 2002), where the single-page RTF forms display and print on more than one page, or the font in the text form fields changes. For more information, see Microsoft Knowledge Base Article #332114, <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;332114>, which describes this problem documented by Microsoft.

Minor formatting adjustments have been made to the PHS 398 forms to provide greater usability, as follows:

Microsoft Word files:

- Headers and Footers were removed from the form pages. The previous forms needed to be unprotected to edit the headers and footers, but needed to be protected to enable the form field function. Removing headers and footers eliminates the need to unprotect and re-protect the forms, which sometimes led to loss of data.
- Table row heights were restricted to prevent the form layout from being changed.
- Biographical Sketch and Continuation Page were removed from the combined form files. These pages are not designed with form fields and do not need to be protected. These can be used as multi-page files with headers and footers.

PDF files:

- Scrolling in text form fields was disabled (on previous versions, fields allowed text to scroll out of view).
- Shading was removed from the fillable form fields. If JavaScript is disabled or not supported, the forms fields will print with shaded backgrounds, rendering them unable to be scanned by NIH staff.
- Help message added to print forms without 'shrink' option (to maintain font size).

PHS 398 Face Page, Form Page 1, "Item 11 DUNS NO. (If available)":

"If available" was removed in order to comply with the 6/27/03 Federal Register policy change which now requires that effective October 1, 2003, use of the Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number will be required when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. See NIH Guide Notice dated August 14, 2003 and the DUNS Q&A (MS Word) document for more information.

NIH will continue to inform the public of notable changes to the documents and forms through the "NIH Guide" and the "NIH Forms and Applications Page" (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms.htm>.) Applicants are urged to always check the PHS 398 and PHS 2590 websites to download the most current versions of the instructions and forms prior to submission of an application to NIH.

For other inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact grantsinfo@nih.gov or 301-435-0714.

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