



Service Guidelines for Scientific Editing

Last updated: June 22, 2026

Introduction

The goal of the Scientific Editing Service is to provide Siteman Cancer Center (SCC) members and their trainees with comprehensive editing – at both the science and writing level – to maximize the success of grant applications.

The Scientific Editor can help with:

- Scientific editing of federal, external, and institutional/internal grant proposals (and related documents, such as Biosketches)
- Suggestions to improve clarity, grammar, highlighting of significance, and strength of scientific arguments
- Ensure materials meet guidelines for funding agency

Editing services are provided **free of charge** to Siteman Cancer Center members located at WashU/BJC and their trainees performing cancer-focused research.

Submission Information

It is recommended to submit documents a month in advance of your intended deadline. In general, documents will be reviewed on a first-come first-served basis, with edited versions returned in around 2 weeks. This time can vary depending on the number of requests in the editor's queue and the editing task requested. An estimated return date will be communicated within 24 hours of submission.

If submitted documents are not cancer-focused, they may not be considered. Any documents that are only partially related to cancer will be subject to review before services are provided.

When submitting editing requests for grants, please note:

- **Current turnaround time is at least 2 weeks, due to high demand.**
- **Documents received less than one week prior to the submission deadline may not be considered.**

Editing

What to submit:

Grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Aims page • Research Strategy sections (Significance, Innovation, Approach) • Other sections (Abstract, Project Narrative, Biosketches, Multi-PI plan, etc.) • Funding agency, grant type, RFA, due date • Previous reviewers' comments (if applicable)

What to expect

Phase	Examples	Editing services provided
Early draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Specific Aims • Trainee-written draft before an advisor's critiques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial comments to guide the author in rewriting • Anticipated reviewer concerns
Well-developed draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete draft of a grant written by a faculty member • Trainee-written proposal after an advisor's critiques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive editing for language, clarity, and highlighting significance • Comments explaining suggested changes and possibly posing scientific questions
Final draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft that has been through multiple rounds of revision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correction of grammar • Other small changes for clarity, flow, and accuracy

Applicable requests

Document Type	Yes	If time allows	No
Single project grants and trainee awards			
PI is SCC member	X		
SCC member is Co-I		X	
Fellowship/award: trainee mentored by SCC member	X		
NIH loan repayment program: SCC member	X		
Deadline in < 7 days		X	
Multi-project grants involving SCC faculty/trainees			
Must be submitted through WashU (no sub-awards)	X		
Other documents			
Biosketches	X		

Note: Documents submitted for editing services **must be cancer focused**. Any documents that are only partially related to cancer will be subject to review before services are provided.

Factors considered when prioritizing requests

During times when the service is heavily subscribed, to ensure fair distribution of support, requests will be prioritized based on the following guidelines:

- Priority will be given to early career track investigators moving toward independent investigator careers focused on cancer research.
- Due date
- Order of receipt

Services that are NOT provided

- Writing of first drafts
- Exhaustive searches for research funding opportunities
- Initial revising of grants in response to reviewer comments
- Collecting, collating, or managing references
- Making or revising figures or graphics

Contact Information

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