

A Few Pieces of Advice from a Past Reviewer

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OUTLINE

- How does it go?
- Who are the reviewers?
- What are they after?

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How does it go? — It depends.

Grant Programs	Reviewers	Review Method	Interview
Scientific Research (S)	Broad Section	Comprehensive Review	Yes
Scientific Research (A)	Medium-sized Section		Two-Stage Document Review
Challenging Research (Pioneering)		Scientific Research (B)	
Challenging Research (Exploratory)			Scientific Research (C)

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4. Practical Examples of the Review Process

From the 2018 funding year (call for proposals: September 2017), the review methods shown in the figures below are employed.

[Two-Stage Document Review]— “Scientific Research (B/C)”, “Early-Career Scientists” and “Challenging Research (Exploratory)” —

Each “Scientific Research (B)” proposal is reviewed by six reviewers; each “Scientific Research (C)” and “Early-Career Scientists” proposal is reviewed by four reviewers; each “Challenging Research (Exploratory)” proposal is reviewed by six to eight reviewers. In the event that the number of proposals received is large, reviews are conducted following a preliminary screening (in the Challenging Research category only).

**First-stage Document Review
(in each Basic Section*)**

Each proposal undergoes a document review (relative evaluation) via the electronic application system, conducted by multiple reviewers appointed in the applicable Basic Section*

**Second-stage Document Review
(in each Basic Section*)**

Proposals mainly close to the borderline are awarded scores for the second time based on the results of the first-stage document reviews and taking into account the individual comments of other reviewers

<Reviewers>

<Reviewers>

*Conducted by same reviewers as first-stage document review

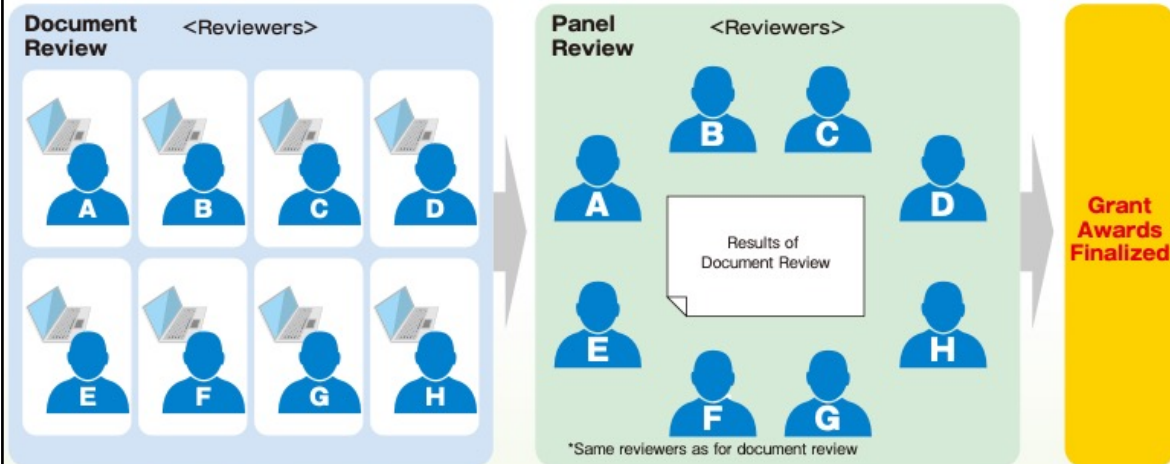
Grant
Awards
Finalized

https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/kakenhi_pamph_e.pdf

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[Comprehensive Review]— “Scientific Research (A)”, and “Challenging Research (Pioneering)” —
 Between six and eight reviewers are appointed for each proposal in the “Scientific Research (A)” and “Challenging Research (Pioneering)”, and each proposal is subject to both a document review and a more thorough and multi-faceted panel review. In the event that a large number of applications is received, the review may include processes such as preliminary screening (“Challenging Research” only) or random assignment* of research proposals.

*In order to alleviate the burden on reviewers in sections with large numbers of applications, multiple review groups are established and proposals assigned to them randomly.



*For “Scientific Research (S)”, in addition to the Comprehensive Review, we have introduced a system of review comments produced by researchers in closely-related specializations, taking into account the specialized nature of applications.

*Reviews in the Challenging Research (Exploratory) category were conducted in a comprehensive review format up to the call for proposals for the 2021 funding year, but the two-stage document review format will be used for the 2022 funding year and thereafter.

https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/kakenhi_pamph_e.pdf

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Who are the reviewers? — It depends.

Grant Programs	Reviewers	Review Method	Interview
Scientific Research (S)	Broad Section	Comprehensive Review	Yes
Scientific Research (A)	Medium-sized Section		No
Challenging Research (Pioneering)			
Challenging Research (Exploratory)	Basic Section	Two-Stage Document Review	No
Scientific Research (B)			
Scientific Research (C)			

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The Review Section Table (Overview)

Broad Section A		Broad Section A (continued)	
Medium-sized Section 1: Philosophy, art, and related fields		Medium-sized Section 5: Law and related fields	
Basic Section		Basic Section	
01010	Philosophy and ethics-related	05010	Legal theory and history-related
01020	Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy and Buddhist philosophy-related	05020	Public law-related
01030	Religious studies-related	05030	International law-related
01040	History of thought-related	05040	Social law-related
01050	Aesthetics and art studies-related	05050	Criminal law-related
01060	History of arts-related	05060	Civil law-related
01070	Theory of art practice-related	05070	New fields of law-related
01080	Sociology of science, history of science and technology-related	Medium-sized Section 6: Political science and related fields	
90010	Design-related	Basic Section	
Medium-sized Section 2: Literature, linguistics, and related fields		06010	Politics-related
Basic Section		06020	International relations-related
02010	Japanese literature-related	80010	Area studies-related
02020	Chinese literature-related	80030	Gender studies-related
02030	English literature and literature in the English language-related	Medium-sized Section 7: Economics, business administration, and related fields	
02040	European literature-related	Basic Section	
02050	Literature in general-related	07010	Economic theory-related
02060	Linguistics-related	07020	Economic doctrines and economic thought-related
02070	Japanese linguistics-related	07030	Economic statistics-related
02080	English linguistics-related	07040	Economic policy-related
02090	Japanese language education-related	07050	Public economics and labor economics-related
02100	Foreign language education-related	07060	Money and finance-related
90020	Library and information science, humanistic and social informatics-related	07070	Economic history-related
Medium-sized Section 3: History, archaeology, museology, and related fields		07080	Business administration-related
Basic Section		07090	Commerce-related
		07100	Accounting-related
		80020	Tourism studies-related
		Medium-sized Section 8: Sociology and related fields	
		Basic Section	

https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/09/2023/review_section_table_e.pdf

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My personal comments

- Reviewers are *not* necessarily specialists of your research topic.
 - If you write a grant proposal in the same way as you write a journal article, there is little chance that it will be accepted.
- Write your proposal in an engaging and self-contained way.
 - It is no less important to fascinate non-specialists with your proposal.
- Know thy readers!
 - Take a close look at JSPS's Review Section Table before you start writing your proposal.

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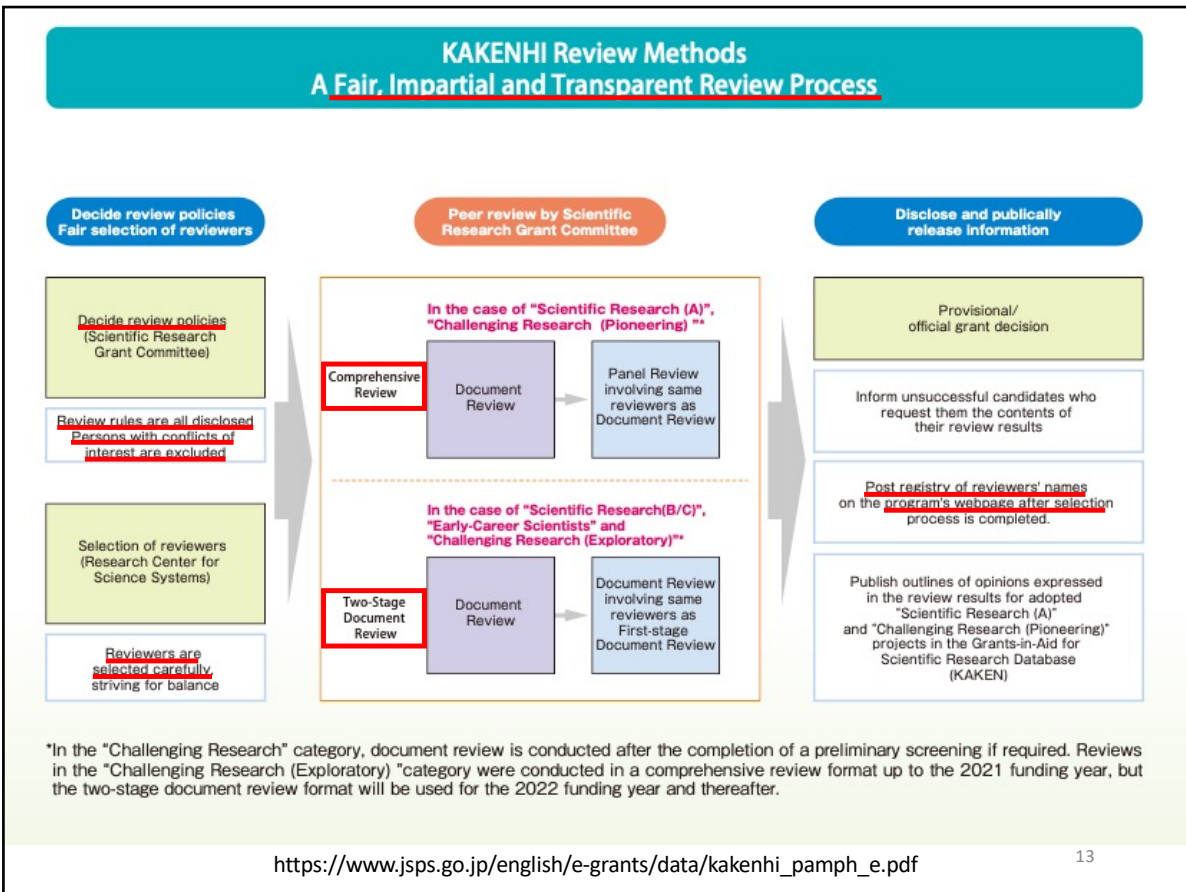
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Assessment Criteria for Document Review

Scientific Research (S, A, B, C)

1. Academic Importance of Research Project
2. Validity of Research Method
3. Appropriateness of Ability to Conduct Research and Research Environment

Challenging Research (Pioneering, Exploratory)

1. Validity as Challenging Research
2. Validity of Research Objective and Research Plan
3. Appropriateness of Ability to Conduct Research

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My personal comments

- Write your proposal in a self-contained way.
 - Unless your points are made clear only by the application document, they will be evaluated to be unclear.
- It is always a good idea to have your application read by someone from a different field within the relevant Review Section.
- Some reviewers may check Researchmap for further information, so always keep TRIOS up-to-date.

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RECAP

- How does it go?
 - Depending on grant programs, the number and spectrum of reviewers vary, and so do review methods.
- Who are the reviewers?
 - Reviewers are *not* necessarily specialists of your research topic.
- What are they after?
 - All the reviewers are after the three assessment criteria, which you should highlight in your proposal.
 - Unless your points are made clear only by the application document, they will be evaluated to be unclear.

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