ESI Status Extension Transcript

Welcome to this tutorial on the eRA Common's Early Stage Investigator (ESI) status extension request feature. This feature will permit principal investigators to electronically submit ESI status extension requests directly from eRA Commons to the extension committee.

An Early Stage Investigator (ESI) is an NIH status granted to applicants who have completed his or her terminal research degree, or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years,

and who have not previously competed successfully as a Program Director / Principal Investigator (PD/PI) of a substantial NIH independent research award. The benefit of this status is that ESI applications with meritorious scores are often prioritized for funding.

It is important to note that the calculation for this status is based on the information provided by the applicants, under the Education section of the Personal Profile. It is critical that applicants have accurate and up-to-date information in their profile at the time the application is submitted so the ESI status can be properly applied.

Sometimes researchers may have lapses in their research or research training, or experience periods of less than full-time research effort during their ten year ESI period. These lapses can result from a number of different scenarios, for example: family care responsibilities, medical concerns, disability, extended periods of clinical training, natural disasters, and/or active duty military service.

A researcher may request an extension of their ESI Status eligibility if they feel their particular scenario merits such a request. Each request is evaluated on a case by case basis at the sole discretion of NIH.

ESI Status Extension Requests can be submitted electronically through the eRA Commons Personal Profile by accessing the Education section of the profile in edit mode.

Click the Edit link for the Education Section. Scroll down to the Early Stage Investigator (ESI) Status portion of the page.

In the middle of the ESI section is your current ESI status. If your status is currently eligible, the text reads: Your terminal degree or post-graduate clinical training was completed in (the month and year), so you are eligible for ESI until (the calculated month and year).

To submit a request, click the ESI Extension Request button to the right. This opens the ESI Status Request screen.

ESI Status Request screen has two primary parts. The upper portion is prefilled with the applicant's information: their name, highest terminal degree, email address, current ESI End Date and their eRA Commons ID. All this information is pulled from the system and cannot be edited on this screen.

The second part of the screen, called Extension Request, deals with all the specifics of the request itself. The first data field is the total number of months requested for the extension. This field supports whole numbers only. Do not use decimals. For example, if you wanted to make a request for of a year and a half, do not put 1.5, but use 18, for 18 months. For now, let's put in a value of 4 months.

Just below the number of months requested, the next data field is a radio button to answer the question. "Are you requesting an extension for childbirth(s) during your initial 10 years ESI period? By default the radio button is set to "No."

If you select "Yes", you see that the screen expands to provide additional data fields. The first field confirms your gender as indicated on the Demographics portion of the Personal Profile. If you indicate Male or Do Not Wish To Provide, you will see an additional field asking you to provide an explanation for the hiatus in a 1500 character text box.

There is also a drop-down number selector for the number of children. And for each child a corresponding Date of Birth field will be displayed. You can enter the date of birth using the calendar picker.

If the reason for the request is not the birth of a child, you will find along the right side of the screen a button called Add Hiatus. Clicking this button presents the Reason for Hiatus window. You can select a preconfigured reason from the Reason for Hiatus drop down menu, including Other/Miscellaneous if your particular circumstances don't conform to the other options provided.

You will enter the dates from when the hiatus started and when it ended, using the calendar pickers. Next, you will add your typical percent of your research effort. This percentage is amount to time that you devote to actual research activities. It would not include other professional activities such as teaching or administrative duties. This will be a whole number from 1 to 100. The field does not accept decimal values.

Next complete the Total Percent Research Effort During Life Event field. This is the percentage of effort you will devote to research activities while on hiatus. For example, if you normally spent 75 percent of your time devoted to research activities, but the life event resulting in your hiatus forces you to only devote a third of that, you would put 25 percent. Note that research activities can include writing, reading, and attending scientific conferences, virtually or in person. If you put zero percent for research activities during the hiatus, a more detailed explanation and or documentation will be needed.

Finally, there is a text field, Description of Hiatus, that supports 1500 characters, where you can add a description or additional information about the hiatus. However, this field is optional. NOTE that any medical data provided as justification, either as text or as an uploaded attachment, will be kept confidential; only people reviewing the request will see such data. In the bottom right corner, click the Save button to save the changes you have made.

Back on the ESI Status Request screen, you will see the table populated with the information you just provided. Using the 3 dot ellipses icon in the Reason for Hiatus column, there are options that will let you edit the record, or delete the record.

Under the section for General Principals for Extending the Periods of ESI Status, there is an attachments section. Attachments are not required, but if you wish to provide them, be sure they are in PDF format.

To add an attachment, start by clicking the browse button. This opens a dialog box for you to navigate to the desired document. Once you navigate to the desired file, click the Open button. You will now see the file listed in the table. Again, in the File Name column is a three dot ellipses icon. Clicking the icon provides the option to view the PDF in a new browser window by selecting View, and a Delete option to remove the attachment from the extension request.

Finally, at the very bottom, right corner of the extension request screen, you will find three buttons. Cancel, Save, Save and Submit. Cancel will close out the request screen without saving any of the changes. The Save button will save any changes you made to the request since opening it, but will not send the request to NIH. And, as you might expect, Save and Submit will save all the changes and then send the request to NIH for consideration.

When the request is submitted, a confirmation message will be displayed and you will receive a notification of the submission. Additionally, the NIH ESI Extensions Committee will receive an email of your request so that it may be evaluated.

This concludes this video on the Early Stage Investigator Status Request process. If you have additional questions, visit the eRA Commons online help at the URL shown here: https://era.nih.gov/erahelp/commons/Default.htm#cshid=5

Or contact the eRA Service Desk at: https://era.nih.gov/need-help

Thank you for watching.