

NIMBioS Evaluation Policy

NIMBioS collects information from and/or about all of its participants for the purpose of program evaluation. The Evaluation Coordinator (EC) is responsible for overseeing all data collection, data analysis, outcome measurement, and performance measurement activities. NIMBioS program evaluations seek to:

- Improve knowledge and understanding of how NIMBioS' programs work
- Strengthen program organizer and participant accountability for program outcomes
- Assess program effectiveness and efficiency
- Help NIMBioS staff and program organizers use demographic, output, and impact information to make programmatic and strategic decisions

Both formative and summative evaluations are conducted. Formative evaluations document and analyze the development and implementation of NIMBioS activities, and are intended to provide activity organizers, NIMBioS leadership, and NIMBioS staff with information useful in improving activities. Information collecting during formative evaluations includes, but is not limited to:

- Demographic data, such as discipline area, institution, geographic location, gender, ethnicity, and race of participants
- Satisfaction data regarding content and format of activities, and accommodations provided before and during the activity
- Participant knowledge gains
- Suggestions for improvement

Summative evaluations assess outcomes and impacts, and are intended to show the effectiveness of activities in both the short and long-term. Data from these evaluations will provide NIMBioS stakeholders (e.g. leadership, staff, and funding agencies) with information about the overall effectiveness and worth of activities. Information collecting during summative evaluations includes, but is not limited to:

- Number and type of activities offered, as well as attendance and demographic statistics of the activities
- Outcomes of research activities such as papers, websites, curricula, new collaborations, and grant proposals
- Long-term tracking of educational program and postdoctoral participants to track career choices and effects of participation in NIMBioS activities

The EC conveys completed evaluation reports to organizers of activities to provide guidance for future activities. In some cases, evaluation findings will also be provided to organizers of future activities to provide information on best practices for their activities. Aggregated (meta-evaluation of all activities) and disaggregated

(evaluations by activity) evaluation data are also presented in annual reports to NSF, the Advisory Board, and any review committees as needed. All evaluations are conducted in compliance with the Program Evaluation Standards set for by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/>) and the American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for Evaluators (<http://www.eval.org/publications/GuidingPrinciplesPrintable.asp>).

NIMBioS collects demographic information on all participants using the University of Tennessee's online survey software, mrInterview. This information is aggregated and used internally and in reports to the National Science Foundation. Aggregated and de-identified data may also be used for other reporting purposes (such as research papers about institutional efficiency) with Institutional Review Board approval. No individually identifiable information is shared with others without that individual's consent. Participant data are stored in a password protected database on the NIMBioS server and are accessible only by NIMBioS staff.

All personal data collected from NIMBioS applicants and participants are handled in accordance with the University of Tennessee's Information Technology security policies and best practices. For more information about these policies, visit IT policies at <http://www.tennessee.edu/policy/> and best-practice documents at <http://security.tennessee.edu/>.