

NSF PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

SIUE NSF TEMPLATES: <https://www.siu.edu/funding/external-funding/templates.shtml>

Format of the NSF Proposal

Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that proposers conduct an administrative review to ensure that proposals comply with the proposal preparation guidelines established in the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG). Page 51 [Exhibit II-I: NSF Proposal Preparation Checklist](#) links to the checklist that may be used to assist in this review. This checklist is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the required proposal contents and associated proposal preparation guidelines. It is, however, meant to highlight certain critical items so they will not be overlooked when the proposal is prepared. Below is a more detailed list that incorporates the elements of the NSF, but also includes more information that may be useful

1. Proposal Pagination Instructions

Proposers are advised that FastLane does not automatically paginate a proposal. Each section of the proposal that is uploaded as a file must be individually paginated prior to upload to the electronic system.

2. Proposal Margin and Spacing Requirements

The proposal must conform to the following requirements:

a. Use one of the following typefaces identified below:

- Arial⁹, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 10 points or larger;
- Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger; or
- Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 points or larger.

A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, table or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable.

b. No more than six lines of text within a vertical space of one inch.

c. Margins, in all directions, must be at least an inch.

These requirements apply to all uploaded sections of a proposal, including supplementary documentation.

3. Page Formatting

Since many reviewers will be reviewing proposals electronically, proposers are strongly encouraged to use only a standard, single-column format for the text. Avoid using a two-column format since it can cause difficulties when reviewing the document electronically.

While line spacing (single-spaced, double-spaced, etc.) is at the discretion of the proposer, established page limits must be followed. (Individual program solicitations, however, may eliminate this proposer option by requiring other type size, margin or line spacing requirements.)

The guidelines specified above establish the **minimum** type size requirements; however, PIs are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. **Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the proposal; consequently, the use of small type not in compliance with the above guidelines may be grounds for NSF to return the proposal without review.** Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements also is necessary to ensure that no proposer will have an unfair advantage, by using smaller type or line spacing to provide more text in the proposal.

Exhibit II-1: Proposal Preparation Checklist:

https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg17_1/nsf17_1.pdf

It is imperative that all proposals conform to the proposal preparation and submission instructions specified in this Guide. Conformance with all preparation and submission instructions is required and will be strictly enforced unless a deviation has been approved in advance of proposal submission. Note that some NSF program solicitations modify the general provisions of the PAPPG, and in such cases, the guidelines provided in the solicitation must be followed. Effective with this implementation of the PAPPG, FastLane will begin using the rules specified for each type of proposal, (e.g., RAPID, EAGER, Equipment, Conference, and International Travel) to check for compliance prior to submission to NSF. Proposers are strongly advised to review the applicable sections of the PAPPG pertinent to the type of proposal being developed PRIOR to submission. NSF will not accept³⁴ or will return without review proposals that are not consistent with these instructions. See [PAPPG Chapter IV.B](#) for additional information.

Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that proposals comply with the instructions, in the format specified. This checklist is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the required proposal contents and associated proposal preparation guidelines. It is, however, meant to highlight certain critical items so they will not be overlooked when the proposal is prepared.

14. Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC)

a. Applicability

This section applies to all research, for which NSF grant funds may be used, that potentially falls within the scope of the [US Government Policy for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern](#) as published in September, 2014, hereafter referred to as the "Policy".

b. Policy

NSF is committed to preserving the benefits of life sciences research while minimizing the risk of misuse of the knowledge, information, products, or technologies provided by such research. The purpose of NSF's implementation of the Policy is to clarify proposer expectations about NSF-funded research with certain high-consequence pathogens and toxins with potential to be considered dual use research of concern.

Proposing organizations are responsible for identifying NSF-funded life sciences proposals that could potentially be considered dual use research of concern as defined in the *US Government Policy for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern* and for compliance with the requirements established in that Policy. (See also [AAG Chapter VI.B.5](#) for additional information.)

Exhibit II-1: Proposal Preparation Checklist

It is imperative that all proposals conform to the proposal preparation and submission instructions specified in Part I of the *Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide*. Conformance with all preparation and submission instructions is required and will be strictly enforced unless a deviation has been approved in advance of proposal submission. Note that some NSF program solicitations modify standard NSF proposal preparation guidelines, and, in such cases, the guidelines provided in the solicitation must be followed. FastLane uses the rules specified for each type of proposal, (e.g., Research, RAPID, EAGER, RAISE, GOALI, Ideas Lab, FASED, Conference, Equipment, or Travel) to check for compliance prior to submission to NSF. Proposers are strongly advised to review the applicable sections of Chapter II.E relevant to the type of proposal being developed PRIOR to submission. NSF will not accept³⁵ or will return without review proposals that are not consistent with these instructions. See Chapter IV.B and visit: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/autocompliance.jsp> for additional information.

Prior to submission, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that proposals comply with the instructions, and the format specified. This checklist is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the required proposal contents and associated proposal preparation guidelines. It is, however, meant to highlight certain critical items so they will not be overlooked when the proposal is prepared.

General:

- The proposal is compliant with the provisions in the PAPPG and/or the relevant program solicitation.
- The proposal is responsive to the relevant program description or announcement (if applicable).
- If the proposal has been previously declined and is being resubmitted, the proposal has been revised to take into account the major comments from the prior NSF review.
- The proposed work is appropriate for funding by NSF, and is not a duplicate of, or substantially similar to, a proposal already under consideration by NSF from the same submitter.
- The proposal must be submitted by 5 p.m. submitter's local time on the established deadline date.

Single Copy Documents:

- Authorization to Deviate from NSF Proposal Preparation Requirements is included (if applicable).
- List of Suggested Reviewers, or Reviewers Not To Include has been provided (if applicable).
- SF LLL, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities* has been provided (if applicable).
- Collaborators and Other Affiliations Information has been separately provided for each individual identified as senior project personnel.

³⁵ Proposal Not Accepted is defined as FastLane will not permit submission of the proposal.

Cover Sheet:

- For interdisciplinary proposals, ensure all relevant programs are identified.
- Title includes any necessary prefix, e.g., "Collaborative Proposal:."
- For renewal proposals, previous award numbers have been entered.
- Related preliminary proposal number has been entered (if applicable).
- The "Special Exception to the Deadline Date Policy" box has been checked on the NSF Cover Sheet and the requisite Single Copy Document has been provided (if applicable).
- Appropriate box(es) have been checked, and requisite information has been provided.

Project Summary:

- The Project Summary may ONLY be uploaded as a Supplementary Document if use of special characters is necessary. Such Project Summaries must be formatted with separate headings for Overview, Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts.
- The Project Summary should be written in the third person.
- The Project Summary must not exceed one page.

Project Description:

- The Project Description must not exceed the 15-page limitation, the limit specified in a specific program solicitation, or the limit provided in the instructions for types of proposals (e.g., RAPID, EAGER and Ideas Lab).
- Project Description contains, as a separate section within the narrative, a section labeled "Broader Impacts".
- Project Description is self-contained, and Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) have not been included.
- Results from Prior NSF Support have been provided for PIs and co-PIs who have received NSF support with a start date in the past five years. Results related to Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts are described under two separate, distinct headings, and are limited to five pages of the Project Description.

References Cited:

- This section includes bibliographic citations only and does not provide parenthetical information outside of the 15-page Project Description.
- Each reference is in the required format, which may vary according to the norms of the scientific discipline.

Biographical Sketch(es):

- The content described is in accordance with the instructions, and does not contain additional information beyond that specified.

- Each biographical sketch must not exceed two pages.
- Each individual's biographical sketch must be uploaded as a single PDF file associated with that individual.
- Proposal Budget:**
 - Each budget line item is documented and justified in the budget justification.
 - A budget justification must be provided for the proposer AND any proposed subawardee.
 - Each budget justification must not exceed three pages or the page limitation specified in a specific program solicitation.
- Cost Sharing:**
 - Unless required by an NSF program solicitation, voluntary committed cost sharing has not been included. Note that voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited and Line M on the proposal budget will not be available for use by the proposer. While not required by NSF, proposing organizations may, at their own discretion, continue to contribute voluntary uncommitted cost sharing to NSF-sponsored projects. These resources are not auditable by NSF and should not be included in the proposal budget or budget justification.
- Current and Pending Support:**
 - All current and pending support from whatever source (e.g., Federal, State, local or foreign government agencies, public or private foundations, industrial or other commercial organizations, or internal funds allocated toward specific projects) must be listed. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the PI and other senior personnel must be included, even if they receive no salary support from the project(s).
 - Information on this proposal is included.
 - Each individual's current and pending support must be uploaded as a single PDF file or inserted as text associated with that individual.
- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources:**
 - An aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded, has been included.
 - No quantifiable financial information has been provided.
 - If there are no facilities, equipment or other resources identified, a statement to that effect has been included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.
- Special Information and Supplementary Documentation:**
 - A postdoctoral mentoring plan, limited to one page, has been included, if required.
 - A data management plan, limited to two pages, has been included.

- Letters of collaboration documenting collaborative arrangements of significance to the proposal have been included (if applicable).
- Other types of information identified in Chapter II.C.2.j have been included, as appropriate.
- Any additional items specified in a relevant program solicitation have been included.
- Appendices:**
 - Appendices may not be included unless a deviation has been authorized.