Navigating the National Science Foundation (NSF) Proposal Submission Process (at OU)

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NSF Proposal Submission....

OBJECTIVES

• Understand basic organization of ORS and OU’s proposal processing

• Identify common elements of a complete proposal for a successful NSF Submission

• Implement Strategies to avoid or correct common issues and problems that affect the submission process.
NSF Proposal Submission....

- Internal Items of Consideration
  - What is the information sheet and routing process
  - Who submits the proposal
  - ORS overview

- NSF Submission Process
  - General Comments
  - Types of Proposals
  - Deadlines

- NSF proposal Submission Portals
  - Grants.gov
  - Fastlane (primary focus)/Research.gov
  - Organizational/Internal Considerations

- NSF Proposal Contents
  - Format Guidance
  - Common Proposal Requirements and Issues-Tab by Tab

- Proposal Submission Actions and Special Notes
NSF Proposal Submission....

Internal Items of Consideration

- What is the information sheet?
  - Collection point for basic proposal info that is sent to ORS to give notice a proposal is being considered for submission (bunch of questions, just answer the best you can)
  - Starts the internal process and allows ORS to plan support for proposal

- What is routing?
  - Process that gives you official permission to submit a proposal
  - Only requires draft SOW/Summary/Abstract, budget on OU form, draft budget justification (and subcontract package)

- Who submits the proposal?
  - For NSF, except for a few LOI, it will always be ORS unless funds coming directly to you (like a special fellowship)
  - For non-NSF submissions usually it is ORS but if the sponsor has a portal for submission that is restricted to PI operation then it may be the PI (for example American Heart Association)
Internal Items of Consideration

- ORS Overview
  - Related to proposal submissions/awards - consists of 3 primary areas – Research Information Services, Proposal Development Specialists; and Sponsored Programs Coordinators
  - Post Award Financial Services is no longer a part of ORS
- Research Information Services (RIS) (Pre-Award)
  - Distributes some funding announcements; helps with registration for Community of Science-Pivot, assists with some compliance items like FCOI
- Proposal Development Specialist (PDS) (Pre-Award)
  - Helps with guideline interpretation, budget development, some special certifications and form, internal routing, submission
- Sponsored Programs Coordinators (Pre-Award)
  - Negotiates for OU, obtains signatures for agreements/contracts, sets up award accounts
NSF Proposal Submission....

NSF Submission Process - General Comments

- Most recent update to NSF guidance is NSF 19-1 effective 1/28/2019

  In 2017 NSF replaced the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) and Award Administration Guide (AAG) with a combined document called the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)

- Must follow PAPPG unless specific solicitation deviates or written approval from NSF assistant directors/Office head or designee

- Be aware when writing your proposal that you will need to use the specific solicitation and general guidance; make sure most current versions used.

- Unsolicited proposals fall under PAPPG

- Who may submit—Organization is normally considered the submitter except on a few proposals that are paid to individuals like some fellowships
  - Organization must have DUNS/UIN and SAM registration
We were just notified via a briefing at the FDP conference that the expected publication of NSF 20-1 (normally in Oct) has been delayed AND the expected effective date of NSF 20-1 (normally at the end of January) has also been delayed. No timeline has been issued; instructions are to continue use of NSF 19-1 until further notice. This has not been formally announced.
NSF Proposal Submission....

• NSF Submission Process - General Comments - Timing (Exhibit III-1)
  - NSF usually puts an announcement out at least 90 days before deadline
  - When a proposal is submitted to NSF it is normally reviewed within 6 months unless it is a particularly large or complex proposal
  - Program officer may request additional information from the PI during or after the review of the proposal
  - PO may notify the PI or organization of intent to award or request a revision with intent to award. Note this is not notification of award and any spending is done at own risk.
  - Division of Grants and Awards (DGA) is given the PO intent to award list once all actions with PI/organization are resolved. DGA usually makes decision to award or decline within 30 days after PO recommendation.
  - Special programs or event funding may be funded in a shorter cycle (for example RAPID)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• NSF Submission Process - Types of Proposals

• Letters of Intent (mainly COI/gauge interest at NSF)
  • Usually can be submitted by PI but some require SRO/AOR submission
  • Internal processes may vary depending on what is involved in the LOI
  • Some are required and some are requested
  • Some have hard deadlines

• Preliminary/Pre-proposal (COI use and go/no go indication)
  • Usually require less proposal documents to be uploaded than a regular proposal
  • May have a wide variety of special instructions
  • Often have a zero or $2 budget entry
  • Require submission by SRO/AOR
  • Usually have hard deadline
  • Increasing trend
  • Some are very complicated and may have detailed budgets

Pay close attention to solicitation! If required you must do!
NSF Proposal Submissions....

NSF Submission Process - Types of Proposals

• Both an LOI and a Preliminary proposal
  • may be required or requested/recommended
  • May be invite or not invite (decision final)
  • May be encouraged or discouraged (decision advisory)
  • Collaborative submission by multiple organizations – usually only do one LOI or Preliminary for the whole proposal

• Full Proposal (shows objectives and significance of research, qualifications of PI/team/organization, amount of funding, etc.
  • Some require LOI or Preliminary to submit
  • Most are in done by PI in response to call for proposals from NSF
  • Standard proposal tabs for full proposal will be covered later in presentation
Overview of NSF Submission Process - Types of Proposals

• Special proposals—
  • Usually deviate from normal full proposal instructions
  • May be a stand-alone submission or some may be done as part of a regular full proposal submission or may be tied to a prior submission
  • Some have specific budget and time limits
  • Examples: Rapid Response Research Proposal (RAPID); Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER); Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE); Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI); Ideas Lab; Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASED); Supplemental Funding; Conference Proposals; Equipment Proposals; Travel Proposals (recent change now allowed for domestic travel); Center Proposals; Research Infrastructure Proposal
  • Dear Colleague Letters (DCL) not considered a proposal and usually for information only but can contain proposal submission instructions
Overview of NSF Submission Process – Deadlines

- Deadline if date given is 5 pm local
- Target – proposal is accepted after deadline, but it may miss a review panel or meeting (consequential funding impact) (recommend consider target same as Deadline)
- Deadline – no acceptance after the deadline date; no exceptions except unusual circumstances (NSF closed, natural/anthropogenic disaster, organization unable to submit)
- Submission window – end date is the same as a deadline date
- If a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday it is extended to following business day
- Collaborative submission by multiple organizations must be submitted by all organizations before deadline or entire proposal is rejected.
- Some Divisions in NSF are going to no-deadline submissions (open window/rolling deadline) which means you can submit throughout the year – requires close communication with the program officer or you may miss a review panel.
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- NSF Proposal Submission Portals and related information
  - Grants.gov
  - Fastlane (primary focus); Research.gov
  - Organizational/Internal Considerations
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- Grants.gov submissions for NSF
  - Not all NSF proposals can be submitted via grants.gov but most can (Collaborative, updates, and revisions must be done through Fastlane).
  - Organization must have grants.gov log in; PI still needs Fastlane account set up.
  - Budget and subcontract budget is much harder to load.
  - Checklist form must be completed.
  - Be very careful with compatible adobe versions, file names and name length, and file extensions.
  - Types of files needed are same as Fastlane (Summary, description, etc.).
  - Access to submitted proposal cannot be done through grants.gov; submission will actually post into Fastlane.
  - **At OU we consider all NSF submissions as going in via Fastlane unless the PI tells us otherwise in advance.**
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• PI Starts Proposal in Fastlane
  • PI needs NSF ID number, password, affiliation with organization (only one id)
  • Organizations usually have a point of contact for limited Fastlane assistance such as affiliation and account set up (OU has link on the Grants section of VPR website)
  • All other Co-PIs will also need an NSF ID and password – the PI will use that ID (or their email) to add the Co-PIs to the Cover Sheet (they must set their id up and affiliate with their organization – not using OUs links)

• In Fastlane go under Proposal Functions, create your proposal
  • Cover Sheet AND Cover Sheet Continuation must be done
  • ORS has hand-outs to step you through this or you are welcome to visit and get one-on-one help
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• SRO Access/PINs
  • PI allows SRO Access (this means ORS can see it)
    • Options are Read, Edit, and Submit
    • Read and Edit are minimum if SRO is to help you
      • Different SRO offices will do different levels of assistance and the level of assistance possible may vary depending on deadlines and timing
    • Recommend do all three at one time but it is the PI’s option
    • PI will receive warnings and errors if items need to be loaded when you give access—just hit ‘proceed’
    • PI will still have access with SRO

• Assignment of Pin (if needed)
  • PI needs to assign pin
    • Pin needed for collaborative proposal from multiple organization
    • Useful if you want Senior Personnel or other people to review items loaded (with the proposal number and pin anyone in the world with Fastlane account can log in to see what you have loaded.)
NSF Proposal Submissions.…

- Research.gov is replacing Fastlane
- Essentially it is Fastlane part 2 – many of the features are the same or similar but there is improved file handling and error checking
- Reporting has been done in Research.gov for a couple of years now.
- Most submissions can now be done in either Fastlane or Research.gov (multi organization collaborations just went live so we recommend not doing those in Research.gov yet).
- In the past we recommended using Fastlane as much as possible while bugs were being worked out of the Research.gov website. If you have a simple proposal (especially without subcontracts) you might consider giving Research.gov a try.
- Indications at the FDP conference alluded to a possible 2-year phase out of Fastlane starting soon.
Organizational/Internal Considerations

• Regardless of submission system your organization needs to decide what internal permissions are needed to submit and what level of detail is needed (this varies by university) (at OU completion of the routing is what gives the PI and ORS the permission to submit any proposal)

• Be cognizant of submitting accurate subcontract and consultant information – is what you are submitting officially approved?

• Who has what level of access/authority in Fastlane for submission, reports, agreements, etc. (at OU submission and agreements are done by ORS, most reports are done by the PI but some may be submitted by ORS)

• Who is responsible for loading what parts of a Fastlane submission? (At OU the PI is responsible for loading all the parts except the Budget tab; however, the PDS will usually assist with loading other files developed by the PI as they are able [a lot depends on timing of request and workload])
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Limited Competition (solicitation limits numbers of submissions)

- If an organizational limit is specified in the solicitation it is normal for there to be some form of internal competition (and set deadlines for this competition)

- The solicitation may prescribe limits on how many proposals can be submitted by the organization (including subcontracts), by the PI, or by the PI as a coPI.

- At OU, internal competitions are conducted by ORS.

- Participation in subcontracts may also impact the organizational limits so be aware.

- If an organization (or PI) submits more than the allowed amount of proposals it can cause ALL proposals to be rejected or they may accept the first one(s) received (it is usually the PO’s choice).
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• NSF Proposal Contents
  • Format Guidance
  • Common Proposal Requirements and Issues – Tab by Tab
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• Format Guidance
  • Margins 1 inch all around
  • Limited typefaces and fonts
  • Measurements are also provided (and used by NSF)
  • Each section must be individually paginated (when Research.gov is used it adds page numbers automatically)
  • Usually best to pdf before loading but watch instructions; there are times the solicitation may instruct a certain format be uploaded or that Fastlane do the conversion.
    • If PDF conversion using Fastlane takes very long you should redistill or resave the pdf (this also usually resolves other file related issues); if you are trying to load an EXCEL file make sure the print area is set.
    • In Research.gov there is no PDF conversion/distilling

ORS has seen proposals rejected for using the wrong font or font size
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- Common Proposal Requirements and Issues – Tab by Tab
  - Page with tabs is called the Form Preparation page
  - Divided into basically 3 areas
    - Form
    - Supplementary Documents
    - Single Copy Documents
  - Normally you will load items in each of these areas as needed for the type of proposal being submitted
  - Most tabs will show you that a file is saved and last date saved but some don’t
# NSF Proposal Submissions

## Form Preparation

To prepare a form, click on the appropriate button below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Saved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover Sheet</td>
<td>09/06/18</td>
<td>Project Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References Cited</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biographical Sketches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgets (Including Justification)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Current and Pending Support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supplementary Documents

- Data Management Plan: 09/07/18
- Mentoring Plan
- GOALI - Industrial PI Confirmation Letter
- Project Summary with Special Characters
- RAISE - Program Officer Concurrence Emails
- Other Supplementary Docs

### Single Copy Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Copy Documents</th>
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<th>Single Copy Documents</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborators and Other Affiliations</td>
<td>09/07/18</td>
<td>Add/Delete Non Co-PI Senior Personnel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviation Authorization (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Change PI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Suggested Reviewers (optional)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Link Collaborative Proposals</td>
<td>09/06/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Single Copy Documents</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Natural or Anthropogenic Event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer/Awardee Organization Selection</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabs confirmed 9/25/2019
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Cover Sheet**
  - Cover Sheet must be done (select Program Announcement/Description Number [or general guidelines] and NSF Unit of Consideration); performance site must be filled in;
  - Cover Sheet continuation sheet must be done--includes title, Co-PIs, duration, **start date**, and other questions
    - Flag for proprietary info if needed
    - Human Subjects and Animal use flags (notation of pending usually acceptable)
    - International conference or work (indicate countries)
    - Collaborative (from single organization with subcontracts or multi-organization)

- **Issues/Tips**
  - Try not to enter budget amount as it clears link to budget tab entries
  - 4 CoPI allowed (anyone else use Senior Personnel tab)
  - Beginning Investigator Box (only for Biological Sciences Directorate but if you qualify you have nothing to lose by checking it)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Table of Contents**
  - Never loaded-Fastlane self-generates

- **Issues/Tips**
  - Normally not recommended to add a table of contents in project description
  - Sometimes supplementary documents can have a table of contents or list of sections/items
  - Collaborative proposal will have TOC for each organization
  - Recommend check to ensure project summary doesn’t have more than one page

- **Special tab – Classification (not on picture)**
  - Seen mainly on biological related proposals; contains questions/items the PI has to answer related to their research and the project.
Project Summary

*Instructions for Preparation of the Project Summary in FastLane*

Each proposal must contain a summary of the proposed project not more than one page in length. The Project Summary consists of an overview, a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.

The overview includes a description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge. The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes. The Project Summary should be written in the third person, informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. It should not be an abstract of the proposal.

Proposals that do not contain the Project Summary, including an overview and separate statements on intellectual merit and broader impacts, will not be accepted or will be returned without review.

What should I enter in each of the three text boxes?

**Overview:** Insert a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and include a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.

**Intellectual Merit:** Describe the potential of the proposed activity to meet the [Intellectual Merit criterion](#).

**Broader Impacts:** Describe the potential of the proposed activity to meet the [Broader Impacts criterion](#).

Information must be entered into all three text boxes, or the proposal will not be accepted.

What is the limit on the total number of characters allowed for the Project Summary (i.e., the sum of the three boxes)?

Project Summary should be limited to 1 page in length. Please ensure that the Project Summary is limited to 1 page prior to submission.

**What should I do if I have to use "special characters"?**

Most proposers will not need to use special characters, e.g., mathematical symbols or Greek letters. If special characters are required, then upload the Project Summary as a Supplementary Document and check the box to indicate this. The Project Summary may ONLY be uploaded as a Supplementary Document if the use of special characters is required. Project Summaries submitted as a PDF must be formatted with separate headings for the overview, statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Failure to include these headings may result in the proposal being returned without review.
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Overview:

Intellectual Merit:

Broader Impacts:
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• Project Summary
  • Can be entered two way - 3 block vs one page (can’t do both)
  • Can’t exceed one page (on either type of loading)
  • One page load only allowed if formulas or Greek symbols involved
  • Written 3rd person

• Issues/Tips
  • Circumventing use of the 3 block load
  • After loading and Save go back and check for conversion issues (there is a known issue of dashes and asterisks randomly changing to ?s; if it happens just correct and resave)
  • Solicitation may request other items be loaded such as title, key words, etc.
Project Description

PIs are cautioned that the Project Description must be self-contained and that URLs must not be used because: 1) the information could circumvent page limitations; 2) the reviewers are under no obligation to view the sites; and 3) the sites could be altered or deleted between the time of submission and the time of review. PIs also are reminded to comply with the instructions contained in the PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d (iii) on preparing the "Results from Prior NSF Support" section.

In addition to PDF files, users can now upload a variety of word-processor files and PostScript files. These files will automatically be converted to PDF format.

Follow this link for a list of Supported file formats (Opens new window).

Follow this link for New Upload Instructions (Opens new window).

Enter the name and location of the file to upload or click on the Browse button to select the file to upload

[Filename] [Browse...]

Upload File

Go Back
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- Project Description
  - Usually 15 pages but length can vary by type of submission and sometimes by solicitation) check PAPPG for specific info they are looking to see addressed
  - Broader Impacts and Intellectual Merit are required as separate sections
  - Results from Prior NSF Support (should have 2 sections-broader impacts and intellectual merit; also publications)
    - Include info for funding with start date within 5 years or most associated with proposal for each PI/CoPI; if none say so
  - No urls (unless solicitation specifically requests)

- Issues/Tips
  - Page limit not followed
  - Requirements not met on special items to cover (from solicitation)
  - Legibility of charts, figures, pictures (check print version)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

**Bio sketch**
- Specific format required
- 2-page limit
- Effective 1/25/2016 no section E
- Products vs Publications (Publications is now okay if that is all listed; products includes things like patents)
- Usually required for all PI, CoPI, and Senior Personnel but some solicitations may limit or may request additional Bio sketch in Supporting Docs
- **BIG CHANGES COMING; SHIFT TO SCIENCV**

**Issues/Tips**
- Incorrect headings (adding to format or not including a required heading)
- Watch ‘counts’ (specific numbers for entries)
- Some divisions will let you put like items together in Synergistic Activities (like one entry for all memberships)
- Don’t use NIH format/forms
- **Effective with NSF 19-1 Synergistic Activities is going to be limited to ONE specific item per entry – 5 entries total**
NSF Proposal Submissions....

• Current and Pending
  • Required for each person who is a PI, coPI or Senior Personnel
  • Entry for ‘this proposal’ is needed
  • Entry can be from form entry, form upload, pdf of excel, word doc
    • Must include same data as the form in Fastlane
    • BIG changes coming
  • Show all support/time spent (federal, non-federal, even internal funding, and unfunded)
  • Time is per year average (Research.gov is going to one block)

• Issues/Tips
  • No ‘this proposal entry’
  • Preferred one file loaded per person or use text box entry method
  • Don’t make a double entry (academic + summer is not also recorded as calendar; calendar entry is for a person with 12-month appointment)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Budget and Justification**
  - Funds must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable
  - Only allowed to load Senior Personnel receiving salary
  - Participant Support should have number of participants and can’t be organization employees (or employed on proposal)
  - Unless instructed otherwise subcontracts are entered twice—once as a number in the primary budget and then their own entry as another organization with their year by year entries and budget justification
  - Clerical/Administrative support is allowed but has to meet all criteria in the PAPPG (especially not covered in idc)
  - No voluntary cost share is allowed
  - Budget justification – 5 pages per organization allowed; total idc costs entry required.
  - Consultant info should provide reasonable compensation and their daily rate and number of days
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Budget (cont.)

Issues/Tips

• Save and when done check total on cover page continuation sheet (if not correct try resaving each tab; if still not correct type in block)

• After award NSF allows movement of funds into Participant Support but normally not out (so be aware of this for budgeting purposes)

• Save entire year before leaving form for that year

• Add a year by copying

• Equipment is 5k minimum per single item with a year’s life (or fabrication with end-result a single taggable item, value 5k+, life of over a year) OR capitalization level established by proposer. Includes mods, attachments, accessories (usually training and installation costs; warranty depends on solicitation and quote; good to check with Program Officer)

• Computer less than 5k for one unit is usually a supply; normally needs justification such as gra use, field use, etc. (most organization’s idc covers office use computers)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Facilities and Other Resources**
  - No page limit usually but check solicitation
  - Other resources section can include cost share and institutional commitments but should still not be quantified.
  - Subcontract facilities info should be consolidated with primary into one file (on a collaborative proposal each organization submits their Facilities)
  - Be cognizant of support at the organization that may benefit the proposal but may not be readily apparent such as supercomputer access.

  Note ORS has some example files to start you if you haven’t done one before; also talk to other active PI in your department.

- **Issues/Tips**
  - If you don’t feel the proposal has facilities or other resources to support it then load a file saying that. (you must have a file loaded to prevent error but do please hesitate in saying you don’t have anything to do the project with)
  - Be comprehensive but concise.
NSF Proposal Submissions....
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- References cited
  - Use common, accepted scholarly citations that are norm of the scientific discipline
  - URLs are okay
  - List all authors

- Issues/Tips
  - Incorrectly formatted
  - Too long (when page limit given)
  - Do not include parenthetical information to circumvent page limit
  - If including publications for Prior NSF support - identify them in some manner (separate section, asterisks, citation numbers, etc.)
  - Recommend NEVER cut and paste to load this section; always use a file upload (cut and paste may trigger the issue with the random ‘?’s being inserted in place of other punctuation)
  - Do list et al.
Supplementary Documents

- Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan
  - Plan is required if there is a budget entry on the post doc line of any budget
  - Must describe mentoring being offered to Post Docs supported by the project
    - Mentoring activities may include such things as: career counseling; training in grant preparation, publications, and presentations; guidance to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on collaborating; training in responsible professional practices

- Issues/Tips
  - May not exceed one page limit
  - One per proposal (so if collaborative from multiple organization it is loaded with lead organization)
  - If post doc is listed in section A and funded as a Senior Person no mentoring plan is required
Supplementary Documents

- Data Management Plan
  - 2-page limit
  - PAPPG has general guidance on contents if specific instructions are not in the solicitation or NSF Division websites may have specific information ([http://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp](http://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp))
  - May include a statement that no detailed plan is needed as long as it is clearly justified

Note at OU, the library has some information and examples on their website

- Issues/Tips
  - Do not exceed page limit
  - Solicitations may include additional information on what to include, format, or loading in a different manner
Supplementary Documents

• Two sections added to ensure they weren’t overlooked (these won’t concern you unless you are doing a GOALI or RAISE submission):
  • GOALI – Industrial PI Confirmation Letter
  • RAISE – Program Officer Concurrence Email

• Project Summary with Special Characters
  • Used to load summary as a one-page entry but only if it meets criteria (do not circumvent 3 block loading)
  • Do not exceed one-page limit
  • Ensure all sections of 3 block format are included
  • You cannot load two project summaries (one in the 3-block area and one in the one-page area) – it causes an Error at submission
Supplementary Documents

- Other Supplementary Docs (this is where you can put a variety of information)
  - Quotes for equipment purchases
  - Letter of Collaboration/Support
    - Recommended statement in PAPPG (but you can include more info if you want UNLESS prohibited by solicitation)
    - Must be specific to project; you cannot legally alter someone’s letter without specific prior approval, you can’t re-use old letters
  - Survey/Data collection tool examples
  - Specific files required by solicitation (Personnel List, MRI statements; PhD certification, transcripts, human subject info, etc.)
Other Supplementary Documents (cont.)

- **Issues/Tips**
  - Not including required items from specific solicitation
  - Including items when specific solicitation says no ‘other supplementary documents’ are allowed
  - Corrupted/illegible files
  - Letters too long
  - **Letters that are an endorsement and not a not support/collaboration letter** (what do the letters say they are providing for the project)
  - No appendices are allowed unless deviation authorized
  - Using section to include info that should be in project description or other parts of proposal (i.e. circumventing page limits)
  - Loading excessive and/or repetitive information (what is loaded should have value to the reviewers to look at --don’t just load something to have it there; If you are loading a quote see if the page is really needed --example don’t load 10 pages of terms and conditions for purchase when what you are trying to show is the parts and purchase price of the equipment)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Single Copy Documents

- Collaborators and Other Affiliations
  - IDs everyone there are conflicts of interest with (section e. from old bio sketch)
  - Loaded per person for all PI, CoPI, and Senior Personnel
  - Some solicitations provide additional areas of conflict such as finance, board involvement, marriage/family relationship

- Issues/Tips
  - Effective April 2017 you must use special form uploaded as XLS without pdfing (Fastlane does the conversion)—this format has been updated in April 2018 and at some point since then so download a new form
  - Instructions of the xls file say you MUST NOT modify or change the format other than adding additional lines.
  - Solicitation may say not to do this section or to do it AND a separate file or excel worksheet with COI information (sometimes with submission sometimes after)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Single Copy Documents

• Deviations Authorizations (if applicable)
  • Rationale for off-campus, etc.

• List of Suggested Reviewers (optional)
  • Some solicitations make an entry required
  • Many program officers like to see as it helps them build review panel
  • Reviewers probably not pulled for your panel
  • You can include people not to review; on the reason why listed you don’t have to be very specific --you can put ‘personal conflict; or ‘competing area of research’ etc.

• Additional Single Copy Documents
  • Normally only used if the solicitation tells you to load something special
  • Common item is a Conflict of Interest file (not to be confused with Collaborator file)

• Nature of Natural or Anthropogenic Event
  • Explanation-proof for deadline not being met (sometimes email from program officer giving the approval for not meeting deadline)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

**Single Copy Documents**

- **Add/Delete Non Co-PI Senior Personnel**
  - Cover page only allows 4 CoPI additional key personnel loaded here
  - Way to include biosketch for someone like consultant or advisor (if you don’t want to use ‘other supplementary docs)
    - It will drive loading Current & Pending and Collaborators tab also

- **Change PI**
  - For case where CoPI is taking over as PI
    - Must first load as CoPI then you can ‘switch’ roles (and if you need to then later drop the old PI who has changed to coPI)

- **Issues/Tips (for both sections above)**
  - Budget entries will erase for any person removed from Senior Personnel
  - Budget entries will erase for PI that is changed
  - On occasion the whole budget will erase
  - When you delete someone their bio, cp and collaborators files will delete too.
  - (We are hoping Research.gov will allow an option to ask for files and entries to be retained if the person’s position on the grant is changing such as from CoPI to Senior Person)
NSF Proposal Submissions

Single Copy Documents

• Link Collaborative Proposals
  • Used for multi-organizational collaborative
  • Prime organization loads temporary proposal number and pin of non-lead organizations to link the proposals together

• Performer Awardee Organization Selection – N/A
  • Used to change or add the primary place of performance (rarely if ever used)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Proposal Submission Actions

- Once everything is loaded the PI either contacts the SRO/ARO office that they are ready or if they haven’t previously allowed SRO submit access in Fastlane then they must go the SRO access tab and assign Submit access.
  - If SRO access is allowed early (before all files are loaded) the PI will usually see warnings and errors, just hit ‘proceed’

- Depending on time and SRO/ARO local policy there may be actions the SRO/ARO takes prior to submission (electronic check, spot check of tab contents, ensuring certifications or special permissions obtained, etc.)

- Different institutions have different policies regarding timing of submissions and internal permissions (ORS currently has no internal deadlines prior to submission; Special permission must be obtained if the proposal routing is not complete; NSF truncates at 5 pm local on the day of a deadline; ORS personnel are not allowed to work past their normal hours (normally 5 pm) in support of a submission without permission.)
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Proposal Submission Actions—At OU

• Process for submitting a proposal starts with the PI submitting info sheet – we prefer you do one as soon as you think you are submitting (we can always cancel it)

• PI must give Fastlane access to the proposal to ORS through the ‘assign SRO access’ button (to submit we need all three levels – read, edit, submit)

• The PI gives their PDS the draft summary/abstract, budget on OU format, and draft budget justification (plus subcontract package if needed); PDS sends out routing package for internal permission to submit

• PI and PDS load Fastlane tabs; when the internal routing is done the PDS notifies the PI; Once everything is loaded the PI either contacts the SRO/ARO office that they are ready; if they haven’t previously allowed SRO submit access in Fastlane then they must go the SRO access tab and assign Submit access.

PDS does final checks and submits the proposal then takes actions to close the routing package in Cayuse.
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **SRO/ARO Submits Proposal** (the PI doesn’t see this on their screens)
  - SRO/ARO logs in selects submit button
  - Screen for certifications comes up (provided there are no warnings or errors detected)
  - Selects button for continuing with the submission
  - Screen comes up saying the temporary proposal number has been replaced with a permanent number

Note at OU, your PDS will send you the permanent number; you will need this number if you contact the PO about your proposal

- There used to be a 5 day window after submission to request ARO electronic signature on the proposal but effective 1/25/2016 an ARO must submit and sign at submission.

**5pm local time deadline in effect for established deadline dates**
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals**
  - **Updates**
    - May be done without permission prior to deadline (usually auto-accepted)
    - After deadline usually allowed by Program Officer (PO) prior to proposal being pulled for review but you may need permission from PO before it can be initiated (do as soon as possible)
    - Minor corrections such as adding or replacing a supporting document; replacing entire project description without good reason might be seen as trying to circumvent the deadline
    - Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO/ARO (PI must make a change before it will allow SRO access)
    - Actual submission by SRO/ARO in ORS
    - May or may not be accepted by the Program Officer
    - No budget or budget justification change can be done in Update; you must use Revision function
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals
  - Revision
    - Usually done at request of PO (there are limitations on what they should request revisions to)
    - Normally for budget changes in consideration of a possible award action (non budget changes are usually via Update function)
    - Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO/ARO (PI must make a change before it will allow SRO/ARO access)
    - Actual submission done by SRO/ARO in ORS
    - Scope of change or amount of revision may require new internal permission to submit (i.e.. re-routing)
    - If your budget is substantially cut you need to consider modifying the work being done or how you are meeting the ‘gap’ in funding otherwise it looks like you initially asked for more money than what was needed.
NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals**
  - **Withdrawals**
    - May be done at initiation of PI or SRO/AOR
    - Copy before withdrawal if resubmitting (usually you lose all data)
    - Collaborative proposal -- withdrawal of any partner will ‘kill’ the collaborative entry (PI may be asked to do an Update instead or to contact the PO)
NSF Proposal Submissions:

- **Special Notes (Subcontracts)**
  - Subcontracts
    - Usually require official letter of commitment from institution (for internal purposes but may also be loaded with submission)
    - Usually require separate subcontract budget information to be loaded into budget tab of Fastlane (this may be done by the subcontract organization/PI or the submitting organization/PI)
    - If the primary PI/organization is loading the subcontract budget you may need the organization’s NSF ID number or DUNS number to ensure you have the correct organization.
    - If the subcontracting organization has personnel designated at Co-PIs, that Co-PI’s NSF ID (or email address) will be required to add them to the Cover Sheet
NSF Proposal Submissions:

- **Special Notes (Collaborative-multi organization)**
  - **Collaborative**
    - May or may not be allowed in solicitation
    - Funds are given to each organization involved
    - One organization is the lead and the other organizations are linked to it; only the lead loads the Summary, Description, References; DM Plan, and Post Doc Mentoring Plan (even if the prime doesn’t have the post doc)
    - Both organizations load their own Budget, Bio sketches, Current and Pending, Collaborators and Other Affiliations, Facilities, and possibly supporting documents (depends on what they are)
    - Lead does the linkage using the non lead’s proposal number and pin
    - Must be submitted near each other time-wise; all submitted by their deadline
    - Title must match
    - Once submitted both organizations can view all documents under print option
    - Benefit is reduction in paperwork and IDC savings
    - Negative in less control by primary PI for the project
    - Lead and non lead submit separate annual and final reports
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Special Notes--Common problems

• Title incorrect (collaborative; special types of proposals may specify certain information that must be in title)
• Incorrect file type uploaded (may not display or print after submission is done—Check print entire proposal before submit if you can)
• Items (especially charts and tables) not legible after submission
• Follow the guidelines; Make sure you are using a current copy (even a few months can be important to recheck for updates)
• Do not assume past familiarity with program requirements will stand you in good stead (there have been many changes lately)
• Some solicitations require submission of files or ppt soon after the submission via email or hard copy—usually with special instructions on format and with a deadline
• After submission you may be asked to provide supplemental information such as information on environmental impact. Sometimes this is done via Update function and sometimes via email to Program officer
Special Notes – Advice

- If possible PI should ask to be on a review panel and build a relationship with their program officers (some institutions help with this by travel to NSF – OU does on occasion)
- PO change at NSF on regular basis; ask questions if given strange instructions (they may be incorrect)
- Talk to program officers – ask if there are recommendations for budget limits, etc. (especially on Career proposals and if a wide budget range is given in a specific solicitation) Sometimes they will review white papers.
- Use proposal checklist (in PAPPG) – annotate it for your submission if specific instructions differ
- Get Fastlane id early and make sure CoPI are registered
- Do standard items like bio sketch, current and pending, collaborators early (you can always tweak later)

Watch for notices of overdue reports (PI and all coPI) – they may prevent review
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Special Notes – Advice

• When you log into Fastlane look for Advisory notices- they can involve deadline extensions, NSF closures, changes in solicitations

• Review NSF core strategies and objectives (some in PPAG and some on NSF website) and how your research can fit

• Mission of NSF is research and education this is why most Divisions like proposals with:
  • Workshops, REU’s, diversity, STEM, etc.

• Become familiar with the Division(s) that you will probably submit to—join their listservs if they have one

• Fastlane is transitioning to Research.gov
  • NSF/Fastlane id will work as log in
  • Many award reporting and financial actions have already transferred
NSF Proposal Submissions....

Getting Help

• When you have questions contact your local SRO/SPO office first (if you are a PI)
• Contact the ‘Point of Contact’ given in the solicitation and if none is given reach out to the Division that issued the solicitation.
• There is an NSF Fastlane ‘Help’ document on-line (Research.gov has some video help and screen/entries are very similar to Fastlane).
• If you are having a submission issue you can’t resolve contact the Fastlane Help Desk as soon as possible (at OU you would normally go through ORS)
• Don’t be afraid to contact the NSF Policy Office especially if the issue involves a possible conflict in normal procedures/instructions (at OU you would normally go through ORS).
NSF Proposal Submission....

During Submission

• The main people you will work with are the Proposal Development Specialists (PDS)
• The PDS are divided primarily by the last name of the faculty/staff they assist:

  **Bonnie VanWinkle** = A - D, plus all proposals from Center for Analysis and Prediction of Storms (CAPS) and Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies (CIMMS) (bvanwinkle@ou.edu // 325-6140)

  **Cathleen Rychner** = E – L (cathleenrychner@ou.edu // 325-3903)

  **Debbie Bergman** = M – R, plus all proposals submitted to or from the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (SC-CASC) (debbieb@ou.edu // 325-6054)

  **Matt Berry** = S – Z (mberry@ou.edu // 325-6131)

• We have two new PDS - Wendy Kent wmkent@ou.edu and Joanna Hall Joanna@ou.edu; they are primarily working Outreach related proposals at the moment

• If you need assistance, you can contact us by phone (we do not have voice mail) or email or you can call the main office number 325-3901/3902 and the administrative assistants will see if a PDS may be available to help you.