



**National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230**

FAQs about the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER)
Program for submission in years 2008, 2009 and 2010 ([NSF 08-557](#))

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the
Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program**

**Includes information on the NSF component of the
Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE)**

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Proposals must be submitted via FastLane or Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m., submitter's local time, on or before the applicable deadline date below:

2008

July 22: BIO, CISE, EHR

July 23: ENG

July 24: GEO, MPS, SBE, OPP

2009

July 21: BIO, CISE, EHR

July 22: ENG

July 23: GEO, MPS, SBE, OPP

2010

July 20: BIO, CISE, EHR

July 21: ENG

July 22: GEO, MPS, SBE, OPP

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the CAREER Program Solicitation. They are not intended to be a modification of the Program Solicitation. If there are any inconsistencies between the CAREER Program Solicitation and these FAQs, the information in the Program Solicitation prevails.

No. You may submit only one CAREER proposal per competition.

May I submit a CAREER proposal and another proposal to NSF in the same year?

Yes, but only if the research is substantially different. NSF will return without review a second proposal on a closely related research topic.

I will have a collaborator on my proposal. Can I include the collaborator as a Co-PI or other senior personnel on my budget?

No. You may provide funds for others to work on your research or educational activities, but they may not be listed as Co-PI or in the senior personnel section of the proposal--either in the primary budget or within a sub award to a collaborating institution.

What documentation can I submit to show any collaborative efforts?

Describe the collaborative efforts in the project description. You may also submit a short letter from each collaborator stating the nature of the collaboration or support. Scan the signed and dated letter(s) into the Supplementary Documents section. The letters should follow the departmental letter and only describe the planned collaborative effort(s). Letters of recommendation are not permitted and you will have to remove them from the proposal prior to review. Do not submit any other documentation such as biographical sketches or other NSF forms for collaborators.

I am interested in adding an international dimension to my proposal. How would I find out what kinds of activities are eligible for support?

Plans for international cooperative research and education activities are encouraged. The opportunity to collaborate with outstanding foreign researchers and educators, and to gain access to unique sites, equipment or facilities, may provide substantial benefits to the research and education activities proposed. For information on the types of activities that are eligible for support, contact your disciplinary program officer and the appropriate county program officer in the Office of International Science and Engineering (<http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/about.jsp>.)

How many pages should I devote to describing research and how many to education?

No number is specified. Use the 15 pages allowed for proposal Section C, Project Description, including any results from prior NSF support, to your best advantage. A major objective of the CAREER Program is to encourage the integration of research and education. The research and educational activities do not need to be addressed separately, if the relationship between the two is such that the presentation of the integrated project is better served by interspersing the two throughout the Project Description.

While excellence in both education and research is expected, activity of an intensity that leads to an unreasonable workload is not. For instance, teaching additional courses or taking on additional duties is not expected. A justification for released time may be appropriate for extraordinary curriculum development or education innovation. What is expected is a well-

argued and specific proposal for activities over a 5-year period that will build a firm foundation for a lifetime of integrated contributions to research and education. Refer to the CAREER Program Solicitation for representative examples of educational activities. CAREER proposers may also find the document “Merit Review Broader Impacts Criterion: Representative Activities” useful in preparing their CAREER proposals. <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf>.

What should be addressed in the departmental letter?

The departmental letter should demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, the effective integration of research and education as a primary objective of the CAREER award, and acknowledges institutional commitment to the professional development and mentoring of the PI. The departmental letter will be included as part of the consideration of the overall merits of the proposal and must follow the format prescribed in the CAREER Solicitation. A letter that fails to acknowledge institutional commitment to the professional development and mentoring of the PI may disadvantage an otherwise outstanding proposal. Department letters should be about one page in length.

I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 15-page limit on the length of the project description. Can I submit this as an appendix?

No. An Appendix is not permitted in a CAREER Proposal. As with all NSF solicitations, exceptions may be given in writing by the appropriate NSF Assistant Director, but these are rarely granted. This must be done before a proposal is submitted. A proposal submitted with an Appendix that does not include the required written deviation from the appropriate Assistant Director or designee may be returned without review.

I have additional information posted on my website I would like the reviewers to see. May I refer readers to my web site within the Project Description?

PIs are advised that the project description must be self-contained and are cautioned that a web site that provides information related to the proposal should 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 abolished between the time of submission and the time of review.

I would like to be considered for a PECASE award. What is the process?

Each participating Federal agency has its own nomination procedures. To be eligible for a PECASE award through NSF, you must submit a CAREER proposal and have certified you were PECASE eligible on the CAREER and PECASE Eligibility Certifications. In addition to meeting the CAREER eligibility requirements, PECASE nominees must be U.S. citizens, U.S. Nationals, or U.S. Permanent Residents who hold that status on or before their CAREER submission deadline. NSF will select its PECASE nominees from among the most meritorious PECASE-eligible CAREER awardees whose CAREER awards have been in effect for no more than two years. The number of nominees allocated to each directorate is proportionate to the

directorates level of participation in the CAREER Program. During the nomination process, NSF will request proof of citizenship status and information necessary for a security clearance from a potential list of nominees. PECASE awards at NSF are honorary and carry no additional funding.

If I held an NSF postdoctoral fellowship, do I need to include a "Results from Prior Support" section?

Yes, you must include a "Results from Prior Support" section whenever you have served as a PI or co-PI on any NSF grant within the last 5 years. This includes postdoctoral fellowships, grants in equipment programs such as Major Research Instrumentation, and educational grants. If you have received more than one prior award (excluding amendments), you must report on the award that is most closely related to the CAREER proposal. (See the GPG for the required information.)

Which programs in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) accept CAREER proposals and what are appropriate research plans for that Directorate.

All EHR divisions fund CAREER proposals. Research should be oriented toward laying the conceptual foundations and expanding the knowledge base necessary to support the enhancement of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education at all levels in both formal and informal settings from pre-K through adulthood. Please see specific EHR solicitations for program emphasis.

I am preparing a CAREER proposal for submission to the Office of Polar Programs. Whom should I contact?

For guidance on submitting information about fieldwork proposed in the Arctic or Antarctic, you should contact the program officer in the Office of Polar Programs who is associated with the program most closely aligned with the research being proposed. The Office of Polar Programs Web page can be found at: <http://www.nsf.gov/dir/index.jsp?org=OPP>.

C. CAREER PROPOSAL REVIEW

My work is multidisciplinary and I want to request that two different programs review my CAREER proposal. To which program should I submit my proposal and how will my proposal be reviewed?

NSF encourages multidisciplinary proposals and every attempt is made to ensure the best fit for these proposals. Proposals with a multidisciplinary focus are commonly reviewed by different programs, or by special multidisciplinary panels and/or ad-hoc reviewers. However, only one program can serve as the managing or primary program. Do not submit duplicate proposals. The primary organization you select on the cover page in FastLane should be the program that supports the main thrust of your proposed research. The deadline of the primary organization is the one in effect when submitting your proposal.

NSF may choose to have your proposal reviewed by two panels. Alternatively, the managing Program Officer might ask for names of reviewers from the second program.

In addition to the two NSF merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts), what other factors will be considered in the review process?

Reviewers are asked to address the two NSF merit review criteria, but they are also asked to note the effective integration of research and educational activities. Specifically they are asked to note how well the proposal addresses the following:

- A description of the proposed research project, including preliminary supporting data where appropriate, specific objectives, methods and procedures to be used, and expected significance of the results;
- A description of the proposed educational activities, including plans to evaluate their impact;
- A description of how the research and educational activities are integrated with one another; and
- Results from prior NSF support, if applicable

D. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAREER AWARDS

When will I be notified of the final decision on my CAREER proposal?

Most proposers will be notified within six months of submission. You can check the status of your CAREER proposal by accessing the FastLane website. If you have not received notification of a decision on your proposal by February and your proposal status is shown as "pending" in FastLane, you can contact the program or division to which your proposal was assigned to inquire about the status of your proposal.

E. POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Are the reporting requirements for CAREER awards the same as for other NSF awards?

In addition to meeting all of the requirements for annual and final reports that apply to other NSF awards, the reports for CAREER awards must summarize progress in both research and educational activities and indicate how well these activities are being integrated. Collaborative activities should also be described. In addition, annual reports for CAREER awards must include a note from the PI's department head, or equivalent, indicating the department's continued commitment to mentor the PI and support the integrated research and educational activities.

What types of supplemental funds are available for CAREER awards?

CAREER awards are eligible for supplemental funding as described in the GPG. Contact your disciplinary Program Officer to ask about supplemental funding opportunities for CAREER

awards.

What happens to my CAREER award if I leave my academic appointment?

CAREER awards must be relinquished if the principal investigator transfers any time prior to or during the duration of the award to a position that is not tenured, tenure-track, tenure-track equivalent and/or to an institution that is not CAREER-eligible. This includes transfer to a university or college outside the U.S. or to a non-academic institution.

In some cases if you leave an eligible position while the CAREER award is active, funding may be expended to allow the student(s) to continue to be supported on the award for the remaining funded year. The award would then terminate at the end of that funded year. Contact the disciplinary Program Officer as soon you know you will be leaving to inquire about this possibility. If approved, a substitute PI will be placed on the award for the remaining year of support. The substitute PI will not receive any salary support on the CAREER award.