



**National Science Foundation**  
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To: Dear Colleague

From: Luis Echegoyen, Director  
NSF Division of Chemistry

Subject: NSF Division of Chemistry Programs Realigned – Changes Effective July 2009 Proposal Submission Window

The NSF Division of Chemistry (CHE) is excited to announce a realignment of our programmatic structure to better reflect the way in which modern chemical research is organized, and to reduce the propensity of proposals to "fall in the cracks" between traditional subdisciplines (organic, physical, inorganic, analytical). This is the culmination of a careful and extensive study, prompted and guided by extensive community input (including guidance from both the 2004 and 2007 Committee of Visitors; see <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/advisory/cov.jsp> for the 2007 report). It advances aims outlined in our Strategic Directions 2008 – 2012 document, which in turn was developed with extensive community input; the document and its history are available at [http://www.nsf.gov/mps/che/CHE\\_StrategicDirections.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/mps/che/CHE_StrategicDirections.pdf).

The new structure reflects how chemistry research (not teaching) is currently done, and uses program names that are both clear to the community of Principal Investigators and mean something to the public. It addresses exciting opportunities at the interfaces between chemistry and materials, biology, engineering and earth sciences. The realignment was presented and discussed at numerous national meetings, and further comments were solicited to [chemplans@nsf.gov](mailto:chemplans@nsf.gov); the response from the chemistry community has been overwhelmingly positive.

The realignment has established eight new programs, which will accept proposals starting in July 2009. Four of these address broad-based fundamental chemistry, organized differently from the previous structure:

- Chemical Synthesis
- Chemical Structure, Dynamics and Mechanisms
- Chemical Measurement and Imaging
- Theory, Models and Computational Methods

There are also four new, interdisciplinary programs:

- Environmental Chemical Sciences
- Chemistry of Life Processes
- Chemical Catalysis
- Macromolecular, Supramolecular and Nanochemistry

Descriptions and contact information for the new programs are provided in a brochure available at [NSF 09-049](#). The new programs will be staffed by multiple Program Directors with diverse expertise.

The Integrative Chemistry Activities (ICA) program remains unchanged. The ICA Program administers Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI), Chemical Research Infrastructure and Facilities (CRIF), Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), American Competitiveness in Chemistry Fellowships (ACC-F), and Discovery Corps Fellowships (DCF). Additional information concerning ICA is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=CHE>.

Funding for the new programs will continue to be allocated according to proposal pressure, portfolio issues, and the quality of proposals. An assessment plan of the realignment is being prepared and will include Principal Investigator surveys. Metrics monitored will include numbers of new collaborative proposals, new principal investigators, co-reviewed and co-funded proposals, Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGERS), and

patents, plus diversity of principal investigators and success rates. Feedback will be sought from the 2010 Committee of Visitors (in February 2010), from those that serve on CHE panels in the coming year, and from the community through our email at [chemplans@nsf.gov](mailto:chemplans@nsf.gov).

A decision tree illuminating "Finding a Home for an Unsolicited Proposal" has been posted on our web site at <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/che/realign/decisiontree.pdf> to help you determine where to send your proposals. The last "limb" of that tree encourages you to call a Program Director if you need help; we welcome such calls. There is also a list of Frequently Asked Questions at <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/che/realign/faqs.pdf>.

Please spread the word to your colleagues about this important change in the Division of Chemistry. Although existing awards are unaffected, the changes are otherwise effective immediately; all proposals submitted to CHE during the July and November 2009 windows must target one of the new programs.