NSF Proposal & Award Policy Update

October 2019
Topics Covered

- PAPPG Implementation
- Proposed Changes to Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Support
- PAPPG Proposed Significant Changes and Clarifications
- Research Protection Policy Implementation
- NSF Policy FAQs
- Proposal Submission in Research.gov
- NSF Outreach
PAPPG Implementation Schedule

• Spring 2019 – Federal Register for public comment

• Comments were submitted by July 29, 2019 in response to proposed changes

• PAPPG is typically posted in October, with an implementation date in January
2020 PAPPG Implementation Schedule
What Do We Know?

• NSF received a significant number of comments in response to the draft PAPPG; approximately one-third of these comments related to coverage on Current and Pending Support (C&PS).

• The actual posting date and implementation date remain TBD.
NSF and SciENcv

• In the draft PAPPG, NSF announced that it will only accept PDFs for the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Support that are generated through use of an NSF-approved format.

• NSF announced that SciENcv was selected as an NSF-approved format for the biographical sketch and encouraged faculty to begin using the NSF template in SciENcv.

• NSF has been working with NIH to ensure that the biographical sketch template in SciENcv meets all NSF formatting and content requirements.

• NSF also is collaborating with NIH to develop a template for use in submission of Current and Pending Support information.
Biographical Sketch and SciENcv Resources

SciENcv FAQs

- What is SciENcv?
- Who operates SciENcv?
- How can our institutional systems interface with SciENcv?
- Where can I find the data schema for SciENcv?

What is SciENcv?

Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae (SciENcv)

What operates SciENcv?

SciENcv is a cooperative project requested by the Health and Human Services, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). In collaboration with FDP, the product is being built in partnership with the scientific community.

How can our institutional profile systems interface with SciENcv?

There is a plan to establish an interface with our institutional systems to provide a broad range of community members with an interface to SciENcv.

Where can I find the data schema for SciENcv?

The SciENcv data schema is available here.

SciENcv: Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae

Proposed PAPPG Clarification: Current & Pending Support

- An internal working group was formed to consider the feedback provided as well as to develop proposed responses. Each comment has been thoughtfully and thoroughly considered.
  - Based on the input, there will definitely be implications for the C&PS coverage in the PAPPG.
  - The recommended responses to the comments and the revised draft PAPPG are being considered by NSF senior management.
  - There will not be an October 2019 posting of the PAPPG on the NSF website, and there will not be a January 2020 PAPPG effective date.
Proposed PAPPG Clarification: Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR)

- RECR involves not only a responsibility to generate and disseminate knowledge with rigor and integrity, but also a responsibility to:
  - Conduct peer review with the highest ethical standards;
  - Diligently protect proprietary information and intellectual property from inappropriate disclosure; and
  - Treat students and colleagues fairly and with respect.
PAPPG Additional Proposed Significant Changes

• Submission of government-wide proposal representations and certifications
• Participant Support clarification
• Publication/Documentation/Dissemination Costs
• RAPID and EAGER proposals – how they may not be used and correspondence requirement
Research Protection – Dear Colleague Letter

• Committed to maintaining strength of US research and engineering enterprise.
• Risks associated with foreign endeavors to benefit without upholding openness, transparency and reciprocal collaboration.
• NSF is taking steps to mitigate risks in convert with other agencies and stakeholders
  ▪ Reminder of Federal ethics rules sent to NSF staff
  ▪ Sources of support (both foreign and domestic) are required of all senior project personnel
  ▪ Issued policy making it clear that NSF personnel may not participate in foreign government talent recruitment programs
Recent Questions to policy@nsf.gov

The approved RPPR format requires PIs and senior personnel to report changes in other active support in annual and final project reports. However, there is no mechanism in the NSF format in Research.gov to report this. How should we report this information?
The updated RPPR requires reporting of other support, your PIs should be following the NSF approved format in Research.gov which does not currently have a mechanism to report this addition. NSF is working with our technical team to make this and other necessary changes to the NSF RPPR format and anticipate these changes going into effect in 2020.

If a postdoc is listed as a co-PI in a proposal and is committing 100% effort to the project, does the 2-month rule apply?
The two month rule applies to all senior personnel. As a general policy, NSF limits the salary compensation requested in the proposal budget for senior personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year. This policy does, however, allow for flexibility to request more than two months of salary per year, when applicable. If proposers request more than two months, the needed salary support should be put on the proposal budget and will need to be very well justified in the budget justification. If more than 2 months is approved by NSF, it will be included on the award budget.
Recent Questions to policy@nsf.gov

Can you provide general guidance about the definition of a participant? Is the definition of a participant based on the primary purpose of the attendance or is it based on the length of conference attendance?

Speakers and trainers generally are not considered participants and should not be included in this section of the budget. However, if the primary purpose of the individual’s attendance at the conference is learning and receiving training as a participant, then the costs may be included under participant support. If the primary purpose is to speak or assist with management of the conference, then such costs should be budgeted in appropriate categories other than participant support. The determination of whether a person is a participant or not is based on the primary purpose of the individual’s attendance at the event. The length of time they are attending the event is irrelevant.

Our institution has two branch campuses. How would NSF consider this when submitting proposals that limit the number of proposals an institution can submit?

Let’s say the solicitation limits the number of proposals an institution can submit to three. NSF's long-standing stance on the definition of "organization" is that, in addition to having its own DUNS number and being registered in FastLane, organizations must have separate Sponsored Projects Offices that have the ability to submit proposals directly to NSF.
Recent Questions to policy@nsf.gov

The PI of a declined proposal left our institution. We would like to submit a similar proposal, however, we cannot access the reviews of the declined proposal. Does the intellectual property in this situation belong to the PI or the submitting institution?
The institution would need to look at their employment contracts with their professions/employees. Our understanding is that usually institutions allow the employee to own the IP with respect to things the employee has written, such as articles, etc., so that may apply to a funding proposal as well, but the contract could provide that funding proposal submissions belong to the institution. It’s a question the institution would need to answer.

If a grad student is appointed to an NSF funded grant is it required that they are a US Citizen?
Some solicitations may establish eligibility restrictions for students participating on NSF-funded projects and if so, the guidance in the solicitation must be followed. As a general rule, however, unless otherwise stated in the solicitation, NSF grantees are allowed to provide grant funds to non-U.S. citizens who are working on an NSF award.
Proposal Submission in Research.gov – Current and Upcoming Capabilities

- April 2018: Full Research Non-collaborative Proposals Enhancement
- Sept. 2018: Collaborative Full Research Proposals with Subawards Enhancement
- Feb. 2019: Collaborative Full Research Proposals with Subawards Enhancement
- June 2019: Collaborative Full Research Proposals with Subawards Enhancement
- Aug. 2019: Collaborative Full Research Proposals with Subawards Enhancement
- Sept. 2019: Collaborative Full Research Proposals with Subawards Enhancement
- FY 2020: Collaborative Full Research Proposals from Multiple Organizations

Future Development and Eventual FastLane Retirement

Research.gov Proposal System Release Timeline
Proposal Submission in Research.gov – Looking Ahead

**Future Development Activities**

- Additional proposal types (e.g., EAGER, RAPID)
- Additional submission types (e.g., Letters of Intent and Preliminary Proposals)
- Unique modules (e.g., SBIR/STTR, GRFP)
- Additional Single Copy Documents, proposal-specific documents and forms (e.g., Substitute Negotiator, DUE form), and solicitation-specific proposal sections

Note: the PAPPG is not being revised to incorporate specific proposal preparation and submission instructions for Research.gov.
Why Prepare Proposals in Research.gov?

You are helping to build Research.gov.

Here are some of the features that proposers are enjoying:

• Integrated compliance checks for fonts, margins, and line spacing

• Real-time compliance feedback and alerts, so proposers know a proposal section is compliant before moving on to another section

• Specific checks on the budget screens and for Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) uploads

• A few seconds to upload documents versus 30-90 seconds for each document upload in FastLane

• Embedded relevant sections of the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) and video job aids, so proposers don't have to go to multiple sites to access guidance and tools
Getting Help When Preparing Proposals in Research.gov

Project Description Upload Screenshot

Project Description (Including Results from Prior NSF Support)

Instructions to upload Project Description:

- Please refer to the Format of the proposal (PAPPG) or all margin and spacing requirements and the Proposal Preparation Site Document Upload FAQs for font type and size requirements.
- File cannot exceed 15 pages total, and the Results from Prior NSF Support section must be 5 pages or less. (Please note: Certain solicitations may provide different guidance to follow. In these cases, please follow the solicitation and use FastLane to prepare the proposal)
- Maximum file size permitted is 10 MB
- Only 1 document can be uploaded
- Accepted file types include: Adobe PDF
- Your file must include separate section headings for Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. If applicable, the section heading Results from Prior NSF Support must also be included. To be valid, a heading must be on the same line with another text on that line.
- Guidance should be followed on when to include Results from Prior NSF Support
- Hyperlinks (URLs) must not be used in the Project Description
- Your document should not contain page numbers, as they will be added automatically by the system.

Additional Resources and Information

- Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission webpage – Includes links to instructional videos and FAQs
- Automated Proposal Compliance Checks for Proposals Submitted via Research.gov - Effective June 24, 2019
- NSF Help Desk: 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM - 9:00 PM ET; Monday - Friday except federal holidays) or via email to rgov@nsf.gov
- Sign up for Research.gov and FastLane listserv updates. Send a blank email to system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov to be automatically enrolled
Research.gov Preparation and Submission FAQs

If I prepare a proposal in Research.gov, will it be available in FastLane and vice versa?
No, if you prepare a proposal in Research.gov, you will not be able to access or edit it in FastLane and vice versa. Also, it is not possible to transfer proposal information between Research.gov and FastLane.

What is the difference between an error and a warning when preparing proposals?
Research.gov runs compliance checks and an Error or Warning message will be displayed if the proposal fails the compliance check. Checks triggering an error will result in a hard stop and prohibit proposal submission. Checks triggering a warning will allow proposal submission.

Why is the "Prepare & Submit Proposals" section grayed out on the proposal?
This means you need to add the PI role and have it approved by your organization in order to prepare the proposal. Your organization’s AOR will submit the proposal. Please see the Account Management Guide - Add a New Role section for step-by-step instructions.

I have started my proposal but have selected an incorrect Division and Program. How can I update that?
Unfortunately, the solicitation and Division/Program information is not editable at this time. This will be an enhancement in the future. If you have run into this scenario, you should delete your incorrect, temporary proposal that is in progress, start a new proposal, and carefully select the correct Division and Program information for your proposal.

I cannot see where I can add the BIO classification form. How can I upload this in Research.gov?
The BIO classification form is no longer required for proposals submitted through Research.gov, Fastlane, or Grants.gov.
**Why is there a margin error for the PDF I am uploading? My margins are set to one inch.**
Word processors convert to PDF files differently, and this can affect the margins. Here are some things to do and check on your PDF: (1) Remove any page numbers and (2) Review inserted images or shapes. For additional guidance, please see the Research.gov technical file upload webpage.

**Why do I receive a font warning upon document upload when the font was set to an acceptable font type and size using “Select All”?**
Much depends on the particular word processor used because of how word processors export files to PDF. Please see the Research.gov technical file upload webpage for guidance.

**I am getting an error that I do not have a required document section heading (e.g., Broader Impacts) but it is included. What’s causing this error?**
A section heading must be on its own line without any other text in order for the validations to work.

**Where are the Academic and Summer months on the Budget?**
Proposers only need to provide the total number of calendar months of support being requested per project year in the Budget section of the proposal.

Additional information is available on the Research.gov Proposal Preparation Site Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpage and on the Electronic Research Administration (ERA) Forum website.
Upcoming FastLane and Research.gov Extended Outage

• Systems unavailable **Friday, November 8 at 8:00 PM EST until Tuesday, November 12 at 6:00 AM EST** (Veterans Day weekend)
  • No access to FastLane and Research.gov
  • Proposals cannot be prepared or submitted in FastLane or Research.gov
  • Project reports and cash requests cannot be submitted in Research.gov

• NSF is migrating its business applications to a modern and flexible platform, and making updates to correct text errors (e.g., special characters displaying as question marks in proposals and project reports)

• Subscribe to our System Updates listserv to stay in the know! Sign up by sending a blank email to: system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov to be automatically enrolled
NSF Outreach

- NSF Grants Conference
  - Nov 18-19 webcast registration available now

- PAPPG Update Webinars

- NSF Grants Conference Video Library

https://nsfgrantsconferences.com
For More Information:

Ask Early, Ask Often!

policy@nsf.gov