

Question Report
Question Details

#	Question	Answer
2	Panel Rating Categories: are these used across NSF or do these slightly vary, depending on directorate/division?	They do vary across NSF - some programs may use fewer categories or use them in slightly different ways. E.g., some panels may not discuss uncompetitive proposals so they'll use "Not Discussed" as a category. But generally at least 3 categories "High" "Medium" and "Low" are used.
3	If submitting in the 1st year of Asst Professorship, will the lack of prelim data be considered during evaluation? E.g., can feasibility data from related work be sufficient to inspire confidence?	live answered Yes, the panel composition is confidential information. But the reviewers will be your peers in the field. It's usually mix of reviewers (3-5 total as panelists and ad hocs) - some with broad/general knowledge of the field and some with specific expertise in the topical area and/or research approach. Beyond the science, we consider other characteristics; e.g., have panelists from a variety of institution types for a breadth of experience available to assess other issues like availability of resources, teaching load, access to students (e.g., UG access is difficult in med schools but core to PUIs).
4	When you say, "You wanna know your audience" ... we don't know who is on the review panel, right? How exactly do we do this?	
5	Okay, jk, I think you answered my question - you pick people based on what is proposed.	See typed answer as well.
6	Does getting a regular NSF grant influence your chances of getting a future CAREER award	Not at all.
7	If the proposal is about technology/method development, and the second and third aims are about using that technology to discover new biology - how to navigate the interdependence of aims problem?	live answered
8	I was told that it's a no go to show any medical impact beyond things that have been highlighted as important in special notices (i.e. covid). however it sounds like if it is linked in the broader impacts. did I correctly interpret what was said?	live answered
9	Do you have guideline for the eligibility of career grant?	The solicitation is linked here. It has all the eligibility requirements. You can also get more detail at the May 8 office hour. https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/faculty-early-career-development-program-career
10	Just to make sure - is it Okay to resubmit soon after I get the comments for the previous submission? Or do I have to wait (for a year)?	For no-deadline programs (such as MCB core programs), you can resubmit a proposal at any time after receiving the formal decline decision (when reviews are released).

11	From the summary review statement, how can one guess if the application is in the medium or low priority category? If reviews range from excellent to fair, could this still be in the medium priority category?	The summary statements for MCB panels indicate the panel ranking category. I'm not sure if that is the case for all NSF programs.
12	How can I find out which program director to contact? I work on plant biology.	Look for the Plant Genome Research Program web site. Also all programs in IOS/BIO or MCB/BIO or DEB/BIO etc. support research on plants. Look for the research area that's most appropriate.
13	If I have a specific aim page, where can I send it so I can learn if my proposed idea fits with NSF program goals...or which RFA to send it to? or program officers?	The best course of action is to peruse NSF program webpages and find the program(s) that may be most appropriate, and write to a program director listed on that site. Also see the relevant office hour.
14	Nowadays most BI proposals include outreach to under-represented communities. Is it okay to plan activities around underserved communities that are not underrepresented in STEM?	Absolutely. NSF does not prescribe or favor any particular broader impacts activities to benefit society. The key is to identify the problem/need/challenge and express why it matters (to you, to science, to society) that it be addressed, and how you will go about it, and how you'll assess success.
15	Thank you very much.	
16	How is "productivity" incorporated/considered in the review criteria (either Intellectual Merit or Broader Impact)? (in reference to the Bad/Ugly slides: "The PI has not been very productive either during or since the Ph.D.")	live answered
17	I haven't heard back from the program officer I've been working with for the last 3 months. He encouraged me to re-submit but hasn't responded to my last 3 email. Any advice?	Sorry that has been the case. We go through intensely busy periods at some times of the year.
18	So we can mention that future application (by others, societal benefits) of our research can be development of therapeutics?	Again, that aspect can be presented as potential for future benefit to society that is part of the broader impacts of the research.
19	This might be a convoluted question, but I'll give it a shot. I am a new PI. I've looked at (successful) NSF proposals from established PIs, and in meeting the 'page limit', they often refer to previous work that they've published. They don't talk about methods. I don't have such an extensive history (I've only had a lab for a year) and I think where they list what they've done, I instead discuss methods and rationale for that. I somewhat feel that doing this will bore the reviewers. What do you recommend?	live answered
20	could you give link to the slides..	We will post the recording of today's Office Hour, the slides, and transcript of the Q&A on our website next week on Wednesday: https://mcbblog.nsfbio.com/office-hours/2/
21	Where can we watch the recording of today's seminar? Thanks.	live answered

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22	How many Broader Impact activities should we include? How many is too many activities? What is the most common number?	live answered
23	What proposals should go through the EAGER mechanism? And is this still in effect despite some budget uncertainty?	live answered
24	How do you include undergraduate research in the proposal?	There are many mechanisms we see in proposals - research experiences in the PI's lab, in a lab course (e.g., CURE), etc.
25	Does the applicant have any influence over which review panel their proposal is reviewed in? Are there descriptions available for the different panels?	
26	nvm.. got it	
27	What is the time frame in which you should contact your PO after a decline? We want to be considerate of the PO's time but too late and the comments may be forgotten.	live answered
28	If I recruit high school students, what documents do I need to show this?	Letters from the school (teacher/principal, etc.) are helpful to establish that the plan has substance. A clear description of the plans is essential.
29	if the preliminary data are grounded in disease models (cancer, fibrosis) is that a problem for the proposal?	live answered
30	There was a solicitation last year on RNA Tools - is that still live?	We may have more information on that in a month or so. The decision has been delayed a bit due to the larger budget situation. You are welcome to check the Funding Opportunities site on the MCB Blog. If a funding call is renewed, the information will be posted on this site. https://mcbblog.nsfbio.com/funding-opportunities-2/
31	in the past there has been bias against people who are already funded by NIH. particularly when balancing the program portfolio. is this still the case?	I don't think that has specifically been the case, as by default. We have plenty of investigators who are funded by both NIH and NSF.
32	Do you support a drug screening proposal for biological phenomenon's like cell apoptosis or viral infection etc? Can you provide examples of successful projects that have been funded in the past that involve the application of mathematical and computational methods to biological questions? Additionally, I would like to	No drug screening.
33	mention that I previously contacted a program officer with a summary of my proposal but did not receive any communication back or feedback. Could you advise on the best way to follow up or ensure that my proposal is being considered?	Please do follow up with the PD (or try another in the same/related program) if it has been more than 2-3 weeks. All MCB programs welcome and fund projects that apply com/math approaches to biological questions. You may also wish to look at the Mathematical Biology program.
34	Do you know if Matthew Buechner is still there?	Yes. I suggest trying the group CDF email (see website) if you haven't heard back from him in a while.

35 Productivity may not necessarily mean that the work accomplished has had a broader societal impact. Will this impact the productivity aspect of a PI? live answered

36 Thank you!

37 Would you consider studies on aging “medical”? live answered

38 As a follow-up to that... does one HAVE to meet the page limit? Is it frowned upon if you are a page or two short? live answered

39 How many aims typically in an NSF grant? Is two typical in addition to the broader impacts section? 2-3 aims total is typical.

40 What fraction of the budget can be allocated for broader impacts? How much is too much? live answered

41 thanks!

42 Thank you for all your comments. I have a proposal that is a collaboration between a chemical engineering colleague and a biologist (me) - as you mentioned there are several areas NSF supports- do you recommend talking to POs in both areas to determine where best to send the proposal? live answered

43 If we are submitting multiple proposals can the Broader Impact activities be the same across these submissions? Are they required to be different? live answered

44 I work at an health institute but my expertise is in mathematics and computer science. Getting access to succesfull proposal in these areas is hard to find with other faculties here. Is there any repository/website with examples of successful proposals in different areas to compare, structure or get ideas for rephrase aims? live answered

45 So, training postdocs is considered "broader impact? live answered

46 I perform mathematical modeling and submitted a few NSF grants without success. The POs have always been supportive, but the reviewers seem to have substantial misunderstanding about my proposals. Are modeling proposals not favored in general? live answered

47 I mean a lot of comments are about things that cannot be known in advance. So I perceive that as a misunderstanding of how modeling works.

48 Is it ok to propose something related to my previous work but in a new field? It needs new theoretical method that has not been used in my publications but I can master in a few months? Absolutely. You could include a budget for a sabbatical or for collaboration. We have a specific solicitation for this purpose as well. Transitions: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/transitions-excellence-molecular-cellular>

49 do we need to use the new template for biosketch? Yes

50 I am planning to apply for the Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology (PRFB) in area 1 (Broadening Participation of Groups Underrepresented in Biology). As a latino working in cellular and seaweed biology, is this area appropriate for me? Or should I also include in my proposal some activities that include other minorities? It could well be. Please check the PRFB solicitation and contact the relevant PD. There is a PRFB VOH scheduled for September 2024 (registration link not up yet), but there is a recording from Sept 2023 on this site: <https://mcbblog.nsfbio.com/office-hours/2/>

- 51 Does your MCB also fund molecular evolutionary biology for understanding life origin? live answered
- 52 How much is expected in "Immediate results" section? live answered
- 53 Can postdocs be the sole PI or only co-PI of a grant? live answered
- We recieved some comments to our proposal but they sounded very naive and asking about what has been specfically addressed in the proposal. We could point to specific paragrapsh and headlines where it was addressed. Should we blame ourselves for not being "cathcy" or being boring? It takes another year to apply again. is there any way we can appeal or request consideration again? live answered
- 54
- 55 For "Project schedulling" section do you expect us to give exact dates?
- 56 By the chance, could you please also provide all the programs for calling for proposal for funding'