



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 21-095

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) Research Initiation Initiative (CRII)

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. What is the goal of the CRII program? Is it for all early-career researchers in CISE areas?
2. I have a startup package from my institution. Does that mean that I have "essential resources" and am therefore ineligible?
3. My startup package included funds that have expired without being spent, and are not eligible to be reinstated. Do I need to include those in the calculation of available resources?
4. Whom should I contact to discuss my ideas for a CRII proposal to be sure CISE supports the topic area?
5. I hold the title of Associate Professor. Am I eligible?
6. I hold a tenured position. Am I eligible to apply?
7. Are the eligibility criteria for CRII and CAREER the same? If I am eligible to apply to one of these programs, does that mean I am also eligible to apply to the other?
8. While finishing up my PhD, I started work as an Acting Assistant Professor on August 15, 2018 (pending conferral of my degree). On December 16, 2018, after my degree was conferred, I no longer was Acting. Am I eligible? OR I received my doctorate four years ago. Am I eligible to apply? OR After receiving my PhD, I worked as a research associate for three years, and just began my academic position last year. Am I eligible? OR After receiving my PhD, I was a postdoctoral fellow for two years, and just began my academic position last year. Am I eligible?
9. This year (2021), the CRII submission deadline is September 20. If I started my faculty appointment in August or even on September 19, may I apply?

10. This year (2021), the CRII solicitation notes that the PhD must have been granted within the past six years (i.e., since Sep 20, 2015), while in past solicitations the requirement was within five years. Is this change from five to six years a permanent change?
11. Am I eligible if I hold a dual appointment at a university?
12. I am in a shared appointment with my spouse. Both of us are in tenure-track lines, and I have the title Assistant Professor. Am I eligible?
13. I do not currently have a CRII-eligible appointment, nor do I have a signed contract for an appointment. I have applied for a position and may have a contract in place by January 1, 2022. May I apply?
14. My department (or organization) does not offer tenure, so I am not in a tenure-track appointment. Can I apply to the CRII program?
15. Am I eligible to apply if I work at a non-degree-granting organization such as a museum, observatory, or research lab?
16. I previously received an EAGER award from NSF. Am I eligible? OR I previously received an award from NSF as the PI on a non-lead proposal in a collaborative project. Am I eligible?
17. Do any of the following disqualify me from the CRII program: startup funds from my university, a subcontract from an award to another university, an award from my own university, an award from a private foundation, an award from a company, and/or an award from a state or local agency?
18. Do small awards (e.g., \$1,000) disqualify?
19. Am I eligible if I work at a two-year college or a community college? OR I am an assistant professor at an undergraduate institution that does not give graduate degrees. Am I eligible to apply?
20. I am a new faculty member at an institution that qualifies as an undergraduate institution under the provisions of the Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program solicitation. Is it possible to apply for the CRII program under the RUI provisions?
21. My institution offers PhD programs but not in computing fields. Am I eligible for CRII? What are the requirements for students?
22. Can I submit to the CAREER program and to the CRII program in the same year?
23. I have a doctorate in Computer Science Education. Am I eligible to apply?
24. I am an Assistant Professor in a Mechanical Engineering department (or Bioengineering, or Statistics, or other non-computing department). Am I eligible?

B.1. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

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25. What is the best place to start when preparing a CRII Proposal?
 26. How are proposals reviewed for compliance?
 27. What are some reasons why proposals might be determined to be non-compliant with the CRII Solicitation?
 28. The solicitation says that the PI must not have received a prior award as a PI. What happens if after I submit the CRII proposal, another proposal that I have submitted is selected for award?
 29. I understand that if one receives a CAREER award he/she cannot simultaneously or subsequently receive a CRII award, but is the opposite true?
 30. Are there abstracts from previous years that can be examined to get ideas for typical CRII proposals?
 31. The solicitation talks about mentoring graduate students. For faculty at two-year and community colleges as well as at primarily undergraduate institutions, can funding be allocated to supporting undergraduates?
 32. I have two possible projects. May I submit two CRII proposals?
 33. Could I put two different projects into one proposal?
 34. May I submit a CRII proposal and a regular research proposal on a similar topic to NSF at the same time?
 35. May I submit a CRII proposal and another proposal on a different topic to NSF in the same year?
 36. What documentation should I submit to show any collaborative efforts?
 37. I am interested in adding an international dimension to my proposal. How would I find out what kinds of activities are eligible for support?
 38. I have additional information posted on my website I would like the reviewers to see. May I refer readers to my website within the Project Description?
 39. I have a postdoctoral researcher budgeted on my proposal and I am required to submit a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan. Where in the proposal is the mentoring plan submitted and what must be included in the plan?
 40. What should be included in the Data Management Plan and where should I place this section?
 41. If I held an NSF postdoctoral fellowship, do I need to include a "Results from Prior NSF Support" section in the Project Description?

42. I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 10-page limit on the length of the Project Description. Can I submit this information as an appendix?
43. What information should be in the department chair letter?

B.2. BUDGET PREPARATION

44. What is an appropriate level of funding to request?
45. May the proposal be for a shorter or longer time than 24 months?
46. May I request academic year salary on a CRII proposal?
47. I am on a 12 month appointment, not a 8 or 9 month. Do I still need to request support from the CRII award?
48. How many students may be supported on a CRII grant? Is there a limit on dollars per student?
49. I will have a collaborator on my proposal. May I include the collaborator as a co-PI or other senior personnel on my budget?
50. I have a student who receives funding from outside the university (e.g., NSF GRFP, an industry fellowship, or funding from another country) which is paid directly to the student and does not go through the university. Does that count in calculating the level of support already available to me?
51. I have Teaching Assistants who assist me. Does their time count in calculating the level of support already available to me?
52. Is it advantageous or disadvantageous to request cloud access through CloudBank or other NSF-supported services?
53. What is the relationship between the "justification for funding request" and the explanation in the Budget Justification?

B.3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

54. Do I submit a proposal to just CRII or to a particular program at NSF, and how do I decide to which program I should submit my CRII proposal?
55. My proposal seems to fit in two different programs. What should I do to indicate which program(s) I want to consider my proposal?
56. What Solicitation, Division/Office, and Program should I select when submitting my proposal?
57. What if my proposal is submitted after the submission deadline?

58. I am having problems submitting my proposal and the CRII deadline is almost here. Who should I contact?
59. I just noticed a major problem with my CRII proposal. The CRII deadline has not passed so can I fix the problem?

B.4. PROPOSAL REVIEW

60. My work is multidisciplinary and I want to request that two different programs review my CRII proposal. To which program should I submit my proposal and how will my proposal be reviewed?
61. In addition to the two NSF merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts), what other factors will be considered in the review process?

C. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CRII AWARDS

62. When will I be notified of the final decision on my CRII proposal?

D. POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

63. Are the reporting requirements for CRII awards the same as for other NSF awards?
64. What types of supplemental funds are available for CRII awards? OR Can CRII awards receive Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) supplements?
65. What happens to my CRII award if I leave my academic appointment?

The following set of questions and answers refer to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the CRII Program Solicitation ([NSF 21-591](#)). They are not intended to be a modification of the Program Solicitation. If there are any inconsistencies between the CRII Program Solicitation and these FAQs, the information in the Program Solicitation prevails.

Before preparing CRII proposals, please read the CRII solicitation and refer to the general information about NSF proposal preparation and submission including the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) available at [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#). If choosing to submit via Grants.gov, please refer to the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide.

This document is organized into four sections: (A) Eligibility; (B) Proposal and Budget Preparation, Submission, and Review; (C) Announcement of CRII Awards; and (D) Post-Award Administration.

One or more webinars will be held in summer 2021 to answer further questions; information about the webinars will be posted on the CRII web page:

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504952. Recordings will be posted after the webinar.

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. What is the goal of the CRII program? Is it for all early-career researchers in CISE areas?

The CRII program seeks to provide essential resources to enable early-career principal investigators (PIs) to launch their research careers. For the purposes of this program, CISE defines "essential resources" as sufficient funds for 48 months of graduate student support, including at least 24 months of funds from CRII awards. Faculty at undergraduate and two-year institutions may use funds to support undergraduate students, and may use the additional RUI designation (which requires inclusion of a RUI Impact Statement and Certification of RUI/ROA Eligibility) - see https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5518 for additional information. In addition, submissions from all institutions may use funds for PI salary, postdoctoral scholars, travel, and/or research equipment. Therefore, this program is not appropriate for PIs who already have access to sufficient resources to initiate their research careers.

2. I have a startup package from my institution. Does that mean that I have "essential resources" and am therefore ineligible?

We recognize that levels of organizational support can vary widely. The CRII program aims to support full-time graduate students - a very important investment for early-career researchers in academia to help generate early research results or establish feasibility of future research. To be eligible for CRII, the proposer's level of organizational or other means of support, not including support requested through CRII, must not exceed 24 months of graduate student support. The CRII award must include at least 24 months of graduate student support. The two combined must not total more than 48 months of graduate student support. PIs at primarily undergraduate institutions (PUI) are exempt from the above requirements; see FAQ [#31](#) and [#45](#) for more information.

3. My startup package included funds that have expired without being spent, and are not eligible to be reinstated. Do I need to include those in the calculation of available resources?

Resources that have expired without being spent must be counted. However, unspent funds in a startup package that are canceled by the university without any reasonable likelihood of being reinstated do not need to be counted.

4. Whom should I contact to discuss my ideas for a CRII proposal to be sure CISE supports the topic area?

Your primary contact is a Program Officer in the division or program that is closest to your area of research. The CISE website and the CRII solicitation provide information about the various programs. The NSF staff directory (<https://www.nsf.gov/staff/>) provides contact information for Program Officers, by name and by organization.

5. I hold the title of Associate Professor. Am I eligible?

You may be. One of the CRII eligibility criteria is that you must be in the first three years of a tenure-track or research science or education position (or equivalent). Thus, the program is intended for faculty members who are at or near the beginning of their careers. While it is rare that such an individual will hold the position of Associate Professor, that in itself is not an issue, so long as you are not tenured.

6. I hold a tenured position. Am I eligible to apply?

No.

7. Are the eligibility criteria for CRII and CAREER the same? If I am eligible to apply to one of these programs, does that mean I am also eligible to apply to the other?

No, the eligibility criteria are different. You may be eligible to apply to one program but not the other. Please carefully read the requirements for each program and see if you meet them in order to determine your eligibility for that program. For more information about the goals of the CRII and CAREER, please see a Dear Colleague Letter ([NSF 20-092](#)) on this topic.

8. While finishing up my PhD, I started work as an Acting Assistant Professor on August 15, 2018 (pending conferral of my degree). On December 16, 2018, after my degree was conferred, I no longer was Acting. Am I eligible? OR I received my doctorate four years ago. Am I eligible to apply? OR After receiving my PhD, I worked as a research associate for three years, and just began my academic position last year. Am I eligible? OR After receiving my PhD, I was a postdoctoral fellow for two years, and just began my academic position last year. Am I eligible?

Yes, provided you meet all of the CRII eligibility requirements. CRII eligibility for proposals submitted in 2021 is limited to no more than six years after official conferral of

the PhD (with possible exceptions for family and medical leave). Working as a research associate or other non-academic positions is not disqualifying, so long as the six-year limit is not exceeded. Time spent as a postdoctoral fellow does not count toward the three-year eligibility requirement, but does count against the six-year limit.

9. **This year (2021), the CRII submission deadline is September 20. If I started my faculty appointment in August or even on September 19, may I apply?**

Yes. You must have started your appointment before the submission deadline.

10. **This year (2021), the CRII solicitation notes that the PhD must have been granted within the past six years (i.e., since Sep 20, 2015), while in past solicitations the requirement was within five years. Is this change from five to six years a permanent change?**

The change is in recognition of the hiring delays and cancellations that occurred in the wake of the COVID pandemic. For now, the change to six years only applies to proposals submitted in 2021.

11. **Am I eligible if I hold a dual appointment at a university?**

Yes. Generally, only one department will grant tenure. In that case, the chair of that department should write the departmental support letter that is required as part of Supplementary Documents. If applicable, the letter may be co-signed by the other department chair as well.

12. **I am in a shared appointment with my spouse. Both of us are in tenure-track lines, and I have the title Assistant Professor. Am I eligible?**

Yes, provided you meet the other eligibility requirements.

13. **I do not currently have a CRII-eligible appointment, nor do I have a signed contract for an appointment. I have applied for a position and may have a contract in place by January 1, 2022. May I apply?**

No. To be eligible, you must hold a CRII-eligible appointment at a CRII-eligible organization by the submission deadline specified in the solicitation.

14. **My department (or organization) does not offer tenure, so I am not in a tenure-track appointment. Can I apply to the CRII program?**

Yes, provided you meet the other eligibility requirements. Your department chair must verify that your position is CRII-eligible in the letter to be included as a Supplementary Document. Note that this is another example of a difference in eligibility requirements between the CRII program and the CAREER program.

15. Am I eligible to apply if I work at a non-degree-granting organization such as a museum, observatory, or research lab?

Yes. You may apply if you work at a non-profit, non-academic organization, such as: Independent museums, observatories, research labs, professional societies and similar organizations in the U.S. associated with educational or research activities.

16. I previously received an EAGER award from NSF. Am I eligible? OR I previously received an award from NSF as the PI on a non-lead proposal in a collaborative project. Am I eligible?

No. To be eligible, you must not have received any other grants in the PI role from any Federal agency, with certain exceptions as specified in the solicitation. On a collaborative proposal to NSF, the lead person from each institution is a PI, even if not from the lead institution. To be eligible, you must not have received any other grants (including research contracts) in the PI role from any Federal department or agency (such as NIH, DOE, DoD, etc.), with certain exceptions as specified in the solicitation.

17. Do any of the following disqualify me from the CRII program: startup funds from my university, a subcontract from an award to another university, an award from my own university, an award from a private foundation, an award from a company, and/or an award from a state or local agency?

No, the intention is that you have not received an award as the PI from any Federal department or agency.

18. Do small awards (e.g., \$1,000) disqualify?

The amount of the award is not relevant, so a \$1,000 Federal award would disqualify.

19. Am I eligible if I work at a two-year college or a community college? OR I am an assistant professor at an undergraduate institution that does not give graduate degrees. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes, as long as you meet the other eligibility requirements. NSF encourages submissions from two-year institutions and community colleges that award degrees in fields supported by NSF, as well as from primarily undergraduate institutions.

20. I am a new faculty member at an institution that qualifies as an undergraduate institution under the provisions of the Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program solicitation. Is it possible to apply for the CRII program under the RUI provisions?

Yes. If using the RUI designation, you must include the additional Certification of RUI

Eligibility and the RUI Impact Statement as supplementary documents. Proposals following the RUI provisions should submit using the RUI solicitation number [NSF 14-579](#), rather than the CRII solicitation number. On occasion, this is not possible; in that case, submitting to the CRII solicitation is acceptable.

21. My institution offers PhD programs but not in computing fields. Am I eligible for CRII? What are the requirements for students?

Faculty at institutions that do not offer PhDs in computing fields may apply for CRII. In some cases, the institution may be eligible to apply under the provisions of the Research for Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program, even if the computing department offers Masters degrees. For purposes of CRII eligibility, Masters students should be treated identically to undergraduate students, even if the institution does not qualify under the RUI program.

22. Can I submit to the CAREER program and to the CRII program in the same year?

No. Submitting a CRII proposal in the same calendar year as a CAREER proposal is not permitted. If both are submitted, the CRII proposal will be Returned Without Review (RWR).

23. I have a doctorate in Computer Science Education. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes. CISE supports educational activities, and associated research, that focus on computer and information science and engineering (and closely related fields).

24. I am an Assistant Professor in a Mechanical Engineering department (or Bioengineering, or Statistics, or other non-computing department). Am I eligible?

You could be. CISE funds research primarily on the basis of its relevance to our mission, not on the basis of the name of the department in which a given faculty member works. The topic of the CRII proposal must be one that fits into the CISE programs specified in the CRII solicitation. For CRII proposals submitted to the Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace (SaTC) program, or the Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) program, the proposed research must fit within the CISE topics of the SaTC/CPS programs. For research topics that may be questionable as to their fit for CISE research, you should contact a Program Officer in a division or program that is closest to your area of research to determine if CISE supports the topic area, and in particular if it is sufficiently related to computer and information science and engineering.

B.1. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

25. What is the best place to start when preparing a CRII Proposal?

Read the solicitation thoroughly before starting and refer to it often as you write your proposal. Discuss your plan with your department chair, personal and academic mentors, and individuals who have been successful in obtaining awards from NSF. We also encourage you to contact an NSF Program Officer, or the appropriate division contact for CRII listed at https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504952.

26. How are proposals reviewed for compliance?

CRII proposals will be checked for compliance with instructions in the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) available at [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) and the specific requirements of the CRII solicitation. Program Officers will not approve or accept proposal file updates after the deadline, unless there is a technical or print problem with the proposal.

27. What are some reasons why proposals might be determined to be non-compliant with the CRII Solicitation?

Some reasons include the following:

1. A co-PI is listed on the Cover Sheet or other senior personnel are listed in the budget.
2. The Project Description is more than 10 pages.
3. The PI is not in the first three years of a tenure-track or research science or education position (or equivalent) at a university or college in the US (please see the solicitation for additional limits), as of the deadline date for submissions.
4. The PI is more than six years from when the PhD was officially conferred for proposals submitted in 2021, or five years for proposals submitted after 2021.
5. The PI has already participated in two prior CRII competitions.
6. The PI has received other grants in a PI role from NSF or another Federal department or agency (please see the solicitation and questions #14-16 in these FAQs for exceptions and clarifications).
7. The primary division selected is not a CISE division.
8. The project description does not include a distinct section addressing Justification for Funding Requested, that describes why the funds sought in the proposal would help the PI achieve access to resources that are not available at the organization or elsewhere to the PI.
9. A letter from the department chair is missing in the Supplementary Documents, or does not follow the required template.
10. The budget does not include the minimum 1.0 month support for the PI or the required (minimum) 24 months of graduate student support over the 24-month award (faculty at PUI institutions are exempt from the student support requirement).

11. The CRII proposal does not follow one or more guidelines specified in the PAPPG or the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide.
12. The project duration is not 24 months.

28. The solicitation says that the PI must not have received a prior award as a PI. What happens if after I submit the CRII proposal, another proposal that I have submitted is selected for award?

At the time of the CRII submission deadline, you must not have received another award from any Federal department, agency, or institution as a PI. So long as the other award has not been made as of the CRII submission deadline, any subsequent awards will not affect CRII eligibility.

29. I understand that if one receives a CAREER award he/she cannot simultaneously or subsequently receive a CRII award, but is the opposite true?

Receiving a CRII award does not preclude an individual from receiving a subsequent CAREER award. On the other hand, a CRII award is not intended to be, and should not be viewed as, a prerequisite for a CAREER award. As noted in the solicitation, the CRII program is intended to provide faculty with resources to enable them to begin their research and achieve preliminary results that may, in turn, serve as the basis for future competitive research proposals. Please see [NSF 20-092](#) for further details.

30. Are there abstracts from previous years that can be examined to get ideas for typical CRII proposals?

You can find award abstracts from prior awards by visiting <https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch> and searching for CRII.

31. The solicitation talks about mentoring graduate students. For faculty at two-year and community colleges as well as at primarily undergraduate institutions, can funding be allocated to supporting undergraduates?

Yes. The proposal should explain how the PI will provide the undergraduate researchers with the necessary mentoring, as well as strategies for integrating them into a research group given their heavy course load.

32. I have two possible projects. May I submit two CRII proposals?

No. You may submit only one CRII proposal per annual competition.

33. Could I put two different projects into one proposal?

Successful proposals tend to focus on a particular theme, especially given the short duration of a CRII award (up to 2 years) and limited funding (up to \$175,000). The

general advice is to stay as tightly focused as you can, keeping your combined research and education plan doable in the context of a two-year award. If you have two separate projects in mind, consider discussing both with your mentors and/or an NSF Program Officer.

34. May I submit a CRII proposal and a regular research proposal on a similar topic to NSF at the same time?

No, submission of duplicate or substantially similar proposals concurrently for review by more than one program without prior NSF approval will result in the return without review of the redundant proposal.

35. May I submit a CRII proposal and another proposal on a different topic 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.

36. What documentation should I submit to show any collaborative efforts?

The CRII program does not permit allocating funding for collaborators from program budgets. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal (see Chapter II.C.2.i of the NSF PAPPG) and documented in a letter of collaboration from each collaborator. Such letters should be provided in the supplementary documentation section of the proposal and should be limited to stating the intent to collaborate and should not contain endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project. The recommended format for letters of collaboration is as follows:

"If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the proposal title] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal."

It is up to the PI to explain what is requested and approach the collaborator in a timely fashion to get these letters before the deadline for submission. Scan the signed and dated letter(s) into the Supplementary Documents section and place them after the departmental support letter. Do not submit any other documentation for the collaborators such as biographical sketches, appendices, or other NSF forms. You will not be allowed to submit these letters after the submission deadline, so please plan in advance.

37. 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 country Program Officer in the Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) (<https://www.nsf.gov/oise>).

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

In accordance with PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d.(ii), 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.

39. I have a postdoctoral researcher budgeted on my proposal and I am required to submit a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan. Where in the proposal is the mentoring plan submitted and what must be included in the plan?

In accordance with PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.j, each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must upload under "Mentoring Plan" in the Supplementary Documentation section the proposal, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. In no more than one page, the mentoring plan must describe the mentoring that will be provided to all postdoctoral researchers supported by the project, regardless of whether they reside at the submitting organization or any subrecipient organization. Proposers are advised that the mentoring plan must not be used to circumvent the 10-page Project Description limitation. Mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers supported on the project will be evaluated under the Broader Impacts review criterion.

40. What should be included in the Data Management Plan and where should I place this section?

Information about the contents and submission of data management plans can be found in Chapter II.C.2.j of the NSF PAPPG. Additional Data Management Guidance for CISE Proposals and Awards can be found at https://www.nsf.gov/cise/cise_dmp.jsp. All proposals submitted to NSF must describe plans for data management and sharing of the products of research, or assert the absence of the need for such plans. Proposals must include the plan as a Supplementary Document of no more than two pages. NSF systems will not permit submission of a proposal that is missing a Data Management

Plan.

41. If I held an NSF postdoctoral fellowship, do I need to include a "Results from Prior NSF Support" section in the Project Description?

Yes, you need to include a "Results from Prior NSF Support" section as outlined in PAPPG II.C.2.d.(iii). Recall that, as noted in Section A (Eligibility) above, to be eligible for CRII, you must not have received any other awards in the PI role from any Federal department or agency, with certain exceptions as specified in the solicitation.

42. I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 10-page limit on the length of the Project Description. Can I submit this information as an appendix?

No. The Project Description cannot exceed 10 pages (including Results from Prior NSF Support, which is limited to five pages). All visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 10-page limitation. Appendices are not permitted for CRII proposals.

43. What information should be in the department chair letter?

The proposal must include a letter from the PI's department chair/head that follows the template linked from the CRII solicitation. No changes to the format/layout/content of the letter template are permitted, except to fill in the blanks on the form and to place the text on university letterhead. No additional letters are permitted from the department chair/head.

B.2. BUDGET PREPARATION

44. What is an appropriate level of funding to request?

The CRII proposal budget request should be consistent with the proposed activities not to exceed \$175,000 for 24 months. See [#52](#) below for exceptions related to requests for cloud resources.

45. May the proposal be for a shorter or longer time than 24 months?

No. All CRII proposals must be for 24 months. In keeping with standard NSF policies, no-cost extensions may be available if the research is not completed within the 24-month period.

46. May I request academic year salary on a CRII proposal?

The proposal must include at least 1.0 month of support for the PI over the term of the proposed award. This may be academic salary (NSF does not distinguish academic

from summer salary). The bulk of the remaining funds should go toward the support of student(s).

47. I am on a 12 month appointment, not a 8 or 9 month. Do I still need to request support from the CRII award?

Faculty on 12 month appointments, regardless of the institution type, are not required to request support as part of the CRII proposal. This should be noted in the department chair letter.

48. How many students may be supported on a CRII grant? Is there a limit on dollars per student?

There are no limits specified for either the number of students or dollars per student, except that the total graduate student support, including existing graduate student support, must not exceed 48 months. However, supporting more than two or three students at one time is probably unwise when beginning an academic career.

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

No, you may not include any co-PIs or senior personnel - either in the primary budget, or within a subaward to a collaborating institution. However, you may provide funds for others to work on your research activities as consultants.

50. I have a student who receives funding from outside the university (e.g., NSF GRFP, an industry fellowship, or funding from another country) which is paid directly to the student and does not go through the university. Does that count in calculating the level of support already available to me?

No, any funds from outside the university that go directly to the student and do not go through the university do not need to be included in filling out the department chair letter. Students who are receiving funding from the university, whether from university funds or grant funds, must be included in the calculation.

51. I have Teaching Assistants who assist me. Does their time count in calculating the level of support already available to me?

No, funds that are explicitly limited to use in supporting teaching assistants (whether they are undergraduate or graduate) does not need to be included in the calculation. If the position is split between the teaching and research responsibilities, then the position is treated as one-half time per calendar month.

52. Is it advantageous or disadvantageous to request cloud access through

CloudBank or other NSF-supported services?

Cloud services such as CloudBank may be a useful resource for your research. CloudBank incurs a charge, and the cost of the CloudBank services must not be included in your submitted budget (but the maximum budget is reduced from \$175,000 by the amount requested in CloudBank services). Use of such services is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to your proposal; if they will provide a capability which will further the research, NSF encourages their use.

53. What is the relationship between the "justification for funding request" and the explanation in the Budget Justification?

The Justification for Funding Request, which is a required section in the Project Description, should explain how the funding will enable the PIs to accomplish their research goals, which could not otherwise be accomplished due to lack of resources. The Budget Justification provides detail on the specific line items in the budget, but does not explain how those line items relate to accomplishing the research.

B.3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

54. Do I submit a proposal to just CRII or to a particular program at NSF, and how do I decide to which program I should submit my CRII proposal?

CRII proposals must be submitted to a CRII primary program or unit through FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov, as specified in Section V.A of the solicitation. The title of the proposal should begin with the string "CRII:", followed by the acronyms for one or more from the following list of allowable divisions or programs (URLs provided or further information on each program):

Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure (OAC):

1. [OAC Core Research \(OAC\)](#)

Division of Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF):

2. [Algorithmic Foundations \(AF\)](#)
3. [Communications and Information Foundations \(CIF\)](#)
4. [Software and Hardware Foundations \(SHF\)](#)
5. [Foundations of Emerging Technologies \(FET\)](#)

Division of Computer and Network Systems (CNS):

6. [CNS Core \(CNS\)](#)
7. [Education and Workforce Program \(EWF\)](#)
8. [Cyber-Physical Systems \(CPS\)](#)

9. Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace (SaTC)

Division of Information and Intelligent Systems (IIS):

10. Information Integration and Informatics (III)
11. Human-Centered Computing (HCC)
12. Robust Intelligence (RI)
13. Foundational Research in Robotics (FRR)
14. Smart Health and Biomedical Research in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Data Science (SCH)

First, you should determine if the proposed research project falls within the realm of research that NSF's CISE Directorate normally supports. Then you will need to identify one or more of the above disciplinary programs related to your research goals. The CISE Directorate website (<https://www.nsf.gov/dir/index.jsp?org=CISE>) provides descriptions of the topic areas supported by the CISE programs.

If NSF determines that your proposal is more appropriate for a different program than the primary one you selected, the proposal will be reassigned to the appropriate organizational unit. NSF will make the final determination of where your proposal will be assigned and considered. Should the proposal be reassigned, you will be contacted, given reasons for the transfer, and be offered the opportunity to withdraw the proposal from consideration if desired. You can track your proposal's assignment and progress through Research.gov.

55. **My proposal seems to fit in two different programs. What should I do to indicate which program(s) I want to consider my proposal?**

You may designate more than one disciplinary program on the Cover Sheet, if you think two or more programs should jointly review your proposal, by including more than one program acronym in your proposal title (as described in the solicitation). It is very important that you select the most relevant program as the primary organization since that is the organization that is most likely to have primary responsibility for reviewing your proposal. Do not submit duplicate CRII proposals to multiple disciplinary programs. You are strongly encouraged to contact the NSF Program Officer most closely related to the subject matter when preparing a cross-disciplinary proposal.

56. **What Solicitation, Division/Office, and Program should I select when submitting my proposal?**

When you submit your proposal, please select [NSF 21-591](#) the most recent CRII solicitation.

You will be given a choice of selecting one of the three divisions (CCF, CNS, IIS) or the

office (OAC). You do not need to select a program, but the program acronym (see question [#54](#)) must be included in the title.

For example, to submit to Cyber-Physical Systems, select the "CNS division" first, and include "CPS" in the title. Some programs include program officers from multiple divisions; regardless of which division will review your proposal, you should select the division listed with the program above.

Exception: If you are submitting under the Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program, please select the RUI solicitation ([NSF 14-579](#)), and then select the program name.

57. What if my proposal is submitted after the submission deadline?

The proposal will not be accepted or it will be returned without review. A CRII proposal must be submitted in FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov by your organization by 5:00 p.m. submitter's local time on the deadline date. NSF systems will not allow submissions after 5:00 p.m. submitter's local time.

58. I am having problems submitting my proposal and the CRII deadline is almost here. Who should I contact?

Issues and questions related to the NSF FastLane or Research.gov systems should be directed to the FastLane and Research.gov Help Desk at (800) 673-6188.

You can also send an e-mail message to fastlane@nsf.gov or rgov@nsf.gov.

For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Support Center by phone at (800) 518-4726 or by email at support@grants.gov.

If FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov is unable to resolve the submission problem and you cannot submit your proposal by the deadline, please make sure to maintain documentation that demonstrates that you tried to contact these support centers prior to the deadline. For NSF to consider a deadline extension you must provide NSF with supporting documentation from FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov that there was a problem at the time of submission that could not be resolved in a timely manner. A possible slowdown of these systems due to volume is not a valid reason for an extension. PIs are strongly encouraged to submit their CRII proposals well in advance of the deadline to allow time to correct any problems that may occur in the submission process.

59. I just noticed a major problem with my CRII proposal. The CRII deadline has not passed so can I fix the problem?

Yes, if you see a problem prior to the deadline, you may use the FastLane Proposal File Update Module to replace files or revise other Proposal Attributes of a submitted proposal. An automatic request for a proposal file update will be accepted only if submitted prior to the CRII deadline and time. On rare occasions, a proposal may have technical issues due to PDF Conversion or printing problems. If the deadline has passed and you discover this problem, contact your disciplinary Program Officer to discuss whether NSF will approve a proposal file update. You should thoroughly review your proposal before it is submitted to provide sufficient time to identify any PDF conversion or printing problems. You are encouraged to download the final submitted version of your proposal from the FastLane site to ascertain that the version contains all the appropriate sections and that it is compliant.

B.4. PROPOSAL REVIEW

60. My work is multidisciplinary and I want to request that two different programs review my CRII 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 multiple program panels, or by special multidisciplinary panels and/or ad hoc reviewers. However, only one program may serve as the managing or primary program.

Do not submit duplicate proposals. If you think two or more programs should jointly review your proposal you may designate more than one disciplinary program on the Cover Sheet by including more than one program acronym in your proposal title (as described in the solicitation). The primary organization you select on the Cover Sheet in FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov should be the program that supports the main thrust of your proposed research. NSF may choose to have your proposal reviewed by two panels. Alternatively, the managing Program Officer might ask for names of suggested reviewers from the second program.

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

As described in the solicitation, reviewers are asked to address the two NSF merit review criteria when reviewing the entire proposal, but they are also asked to note any solicitation-specific review criteria. In the case of CRII, reviewers are specifically asked to evaluate:

1. the potential of the research initiation activities to produce sufficient preliminary results to serve as the basis for future competitive research proposals;

2. whether the activities are seen to be the necessary and critical steps for the PI to achieve research independence; and
3. whether the proposal as well as the department chair letter both adequately address how the request for funds matches the goals of this program, i.e., to help PIs obtain essential resources, in the absence of such resources at their organizations or elsewhere, in pursuit of their research goals.

Reviewers will also be asked to evaluate the information provided in the required Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal, which is used to assess the adequacy of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. In addition, the cognizant NSF Program Officer will review this information for programmatic and technical sufficiency. Reviewers will read the Letter from the Department Chair/Head certifying that the PI meets the eligibility criteria, including that he or she is in the first three years of a tenure-track or research science or education position (or equivalent) and it has been no more than five years since official conferral of the PhD.

The proposed mentoring activities, e.g., as described in the Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan submitted in the Supplementary Documents section of the proposal (if applicable), will also be evaluated as part of the merit review process under the Foundation's broader impacts merit review criterion.

The Data Management Plan will be reviewed as an integral part of the proposal, coming under intellectual merit, broader impacts, or both, as appropriate for the scientific community of relevance.

C. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CRII AWARDS

62. **When will I be notified of the final decision on my CRII proposal?**

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

D. POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

63. **Are the reporting requirements for CRII awards the same as for other NSF awards?**

Yes, all of the requirements for annual/final project reports, and the Project Outcomes Report that apply to other NSF awards also apply to CRII awards.

64. What types of supplemental funds are available for CRII awards? OR Can CRII awards receive Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) supplements?

CRII awards are eligible for supplemental funding as described in the NSF PAPPG ([NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#)). Contact your disciplinary Program Officer to ask about possible supplemental funding opportunities for CRII awards. CRII awards can receive REU supplements.

65. What happens to my CRII award if I leave my academic appointment?

CRII awards must be relinquished if the PI transfers any time prior to or during the period of the award to a position that is not tenured, not tenure-track, nor tenure-track equivalent and/or to an institution that is not CRII-eligible. This includes transfer to a university or college outside the US, or to another organization which is a non-CRII-eligible institution such as a for-profit company.

In some cases, if you leave an eligible position while the CRII 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 cognizant NSF 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 CRII award.