NSF Grant Proposal Guide
Summary of Significant Changes

Effective January 14, 2013

Proposals submitted to NSF via [FastLane](#) (electronic proposal submission system) should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf13001

As of January 14, 2013, NSF will make effective changes to the GPG. Below is a summary of the changes relevant to investigators from the 2011 version to the new 2013 version.

GPG Item	Prior Version (2011)	New Version (2013)	Why is this Important to You?

Project Summary	• Limited to one page
	• Written in 3rd person
	• Must explicitly label Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts as subsections within the summary.
	• Could upload as a single document or type into a box within Fastlane.
	• Proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the one-page Project Summary will not be accepted or will be returned without review.
		• Limited to one page
		• Written in 3rd person
		• Omits separate headings for the two merit review criteria. Rather, FastLane displays three separate text boxes for: 1) Overview, 2) "Intellectual Merit" and 3) "Broader Impacts". Because FastLane will enable the criteria to be separately addressed (still within one page), proposers will no longer need to include separate headings.
		• The boxes must be used for the summary unless special characters are required.
		• The character limit is 4,600 characters in total for all three text boxes. The proposer may determine how many characters to use in each text box, but the sum of characters across the three text boxes must not exceed 4,600.
		• Instructions are available in Fastlane, especially regarding special characters.
		• Proposals that do not separately address the overview and both merit review criteria within the one-page Project Summary will
			• With the change in format, your project summaries need to conform to the guidelines or <u>you risk having your proposal returned without review</u>.
			• There are several new rules:
			  • New format requires 3 subsections
			  • 4600 character limit across the 3 subsections
			  • Text is submitted via textboxes in Fastlane – you will not be able to use bold, italics, etc. in the summary
			  • There is an exception for special characters (see Fastlane) but font formatting does not qualify as special characters.
			  • Additional guidance, from Fastlane:
			    ○ The overview includes a description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.
			    ○ The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance

		be not be accepted or will be returned without review.	knowledge. ○ The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes. ○ The Project Summary should be written in the third person, informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. ○ It should not be an abstract of the proposal.
Project Description, specifically related to descriptions of Broader Impacts	• Applicants were instructed to address Broader Impacts within the project description, suggesting a subsection on Broader Impacts as well as Intellectual Merit. • Broader Impacts were not required to be addressed in descriptions of Results from Prior NSF Support.	The Project Description has been revised to implement changes related to the *Content* and *Results from Prior NSF Support* sections recommended by the National Science Board (NSB). • The Content instructions were updated to provide contextual information about proposal preparation and to include revised language related to broader impacts of the proposed activities from the ACRA and the Board's report. • In the past, the Project Description needed to include a description of broader impacts as an integral part of the narrative. • The Project Description must now contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. • This section also was updated to indicate that Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact activities <u>must be described</u> in two separate sections in the summary of *Results from Prior NSF Support*.	Broader Impacts are even more emphasized than in the past. • A separate section in the project description labeled "Broader Impacts" is now required. You may have been doing this already, but now it is required. • In the section for *Results from Prior NSF Support*, you need to describe the outcomes of Broader Impacts activities. This means you are being held accountable for the science and the broader impacts, so plan both carefully. • As before, if you have never received NSF funding, you still need to include a section heading for *Results from Prior NSF Support*, but then you will include a statement that you have not had NSF funding in the past.

		• *Results from Prior NSF Support* also was updated to indicate that information should be included irrespective of whether or not the support was directly related to the proposal, or whether or not salary support was provided.	
Biographical Sketch(es)	Biosketches follow a particular format as described in the Grant Proposal Guide. There are 5 major sections: A. Professional Preparation B. Appointments C. Publications D. Synergistic Activities E. Collaborators and Other Affiliations	• Biosketches have been revised to rename the "Publications" section to "Products" and amend terminology and instructions accordingly. • This change makes clear that products may include, but are not limited to, publications, data sets, software, patents, and copyrights.	Make sure to change the third section heading to say "Products" and if you have subheadings in the third section (e.g., five publications most closely related to the proposed project), make sure to use "Products" instead of "Publications"
Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources	This section, usually not utilized to its full capacity, requested that applicants describe office space, clinical, animal, computer, lab space, equipment, other resources and the like in different subsections.	• Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources has been supplemented to indicate that an aggregated description of the internal and external resources that are, or will be available to the project (both physical and personnel) should be provided. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable. • There are no longer sections (boxes in Fastlane) for office, lab, etc. • The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. • Proposals should specify that if there are no facilities, equipment and other resources information, a statement to that effect should be included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.	You now have more flexibility in providing information about the facilities, equipment, and resources available to your proposed project. As you describe these assets, you need to make sure that you describe why these resources are DIRECTLY RELATED to the proposed project. Do not just provide a basic boilerplate description without describing the relevance. This section should be used to give a positive impression of University resources and Institutional Support as well as resources contributed by organizations outside of OU. Do **NOT** use descriptions of investments with dollar values (e.g., the University has invested $20M in a new building…")
References Cited	References Cited should be part of every proposal. However, if no	• References Cited has been updated to specify that if there are no references cited,	This is pretty straightforward.

	references were required, it was less clear what should be submitted in that section.	a statement to that effect should be included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.	
Budget	When Senior Personnel are added to the coverpage or through the section in Fastlane for Senior Personnel, the budget had limited flexibility in terms of adding or deleting names.	• Budget has been updated to describe a new functionality in FastLane regarding senior personnel and the budget. • If no person months and no salary are being requested for senior personnel, they should be removed from Section A of the budget. This change was made for consistency with NSF's cost sharing policy.	The Office of Research Services (ORS) will provide guidance as needed for this modification.
Budget: Participant Support	Generally, indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on participant support costs. The number of participants to be supported must be entered in the parentheses on the proposal budget. These costs also must be justified in the budget justification section of the proposal. Some programs, such as Research Experiences for Undergraduates, have special instructions for treatment of participant support.	Participant Support has been augmented with language explaining that an allowance for indirect costs associated with participant support costs may be established or negotiated in advance when circumstances indicate that the grantee could be expected to incur significant expenses in administering participant payments (guidance moved from Indirect Costs).	The Office of Research Services (ORS) will provide guidance as needed for this modification.
Budget: Subawards to foreign entities	Little to no guidance	Subawards has been amended to state that foreign subawardees are not eligible for indirect cost recovery unless the subawardee has a previously negotiated rate agreement with a U.S. Federal agency that has a practice of negotiating rates with foreign entities.	The Office of Research Services (ORS) will provide guidance as needed for this modification. This information is relevant for faculty to understand when they are discussing partnerships with international colleagues.
Budget: Indirect Costs	• NSF budgets are calculated using the negotiated indirect cost (F&A) rate determined for each institution. • Sometimes different rates	• Indirect Costs has been modified to clarify that, except as noted in GPG II.C.2.g(v) and II.D.9 or in an NSF program solicitation, the applicable indirect cost rate(s) negotiated by the organization with the	Do **NOT** expect a reduction in indirect costs as part of institutional support or cost sharing.

	were requested or used on some budgets.	cognizant negotiating agency must be used in computing indirect costs (F&A) for a proposal. • The section now provides a hyperlink to instructions for preparing an indirect cost rate proposal. (in case you ever want to know this) • A statement also has been added that foreign grantees are not eligible for indirect cost rate recovery unless the foreign grantee has a previously negotiated rate agreement with a U.S. Federal agency that has a practice of negotiating rates with foreign entities.	
Special Information and Supplementary Documentation	Fastlane wouldn't prevent submission of a proposal if the Postdoc Mentoring plan, when required, was absent.	• Special Information and Supplementary Documentation, has been updated to include language regarding evaluation of postdoctoral mentoring plans (moved from Chapter III). • If a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan is required, FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal if the Plan is missing. • 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, irrespective of whether they reside at the submitting organization, any subawardee organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative project.	If you are paying for postdocs, you are required to have a postdoc mentoring plan. CRPDE can provide guidance on these plans.
Proposals Involving Vertebrate Animals	Less guidance	• Proposals Involving Vertebrate Animals has been supplemented to include guidance on review of wildlife research protocols. • Also, instructions have been clarified for	Additional guidance is helpful but this is only required in the context of involving vertebrate animals.

		submission of IACUC approval information.	
Proposals for Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops	Little to no guidance	The section on Proposals for Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops was supplemented to clarify what information should be included in different sections of the proposal.	Additional guidance is helpful for submitting conference/workshop proposals.
NSF Proposal Processing and Review (Chapter III) - Introduction	There has always been language regarding the mission and strategies within NSF as part of Chapter III.	**Chapter III** has been revised to insert language in the introduction to Chapter III, regarding NSF core strategies. The purpose of this change is to reiterate the importance of integration of research and education and broadening participation as core strategies, as outlined in NSF's strategic plan. (in other words, make sure this is part of your approach when writing your proposals)	This represents a clarifying of NSF's priorities and you SHOULD discuss in all of your NSF proposals how you are integrating research and education/training and how you are committed to broadening participation and in what ways.
Merit Review Principles and Criteria	• Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts are the two review criteria and guidance was given in multiple places on the NSF website and within the Grant Proposal Guide. • Postdoc mentoring plans are required if a postdoc was budgeted in the proposal.	• This section has been revised to incorporate recommendations from the National Science Board (NSB). • New language has been added on merit review principles, and revised merit review criteria language was inserted. • Language regarding evaluation of mentoring plans for postdoctoral researchers has been moved from the GPG Chapter III to the Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan instructions in Chapter II.C.2.j. • References to the document containing examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts have been deleted. This was done to eliminate confusion over the document, which was often viewed as a prescriptive list of additional requirements instead of illustrative examples.	For everything you ever wanted to know about NSF merit review, please explore: http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/