NSF Proposal Checklist

This checklist was developed based on guidance from the February 2014 NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). Proposals to NSF are submitted through their FastLane system. GFCR will help with any and all aspects of your NSF proposal, so please be in touch if you are planning to submit a NSF proposal.

- Contact GFCR to set up a FastLane account if you do not already have one.
- To create a new proposal, log in to Fastlane and select “Proposal Functions,” then “Proposal Preparation.” At the next screen, select “Prepare Proposal,” and then “Create Blank Proposal.” You will see a list of proposal components for your new proposal, each with its own “Go” button. More instructions about completing these sections appear below.
- Once you have created your new proposal, click the “Go Back” button until you get to the screen that lists your new proposal in a small box labeled “Temporary Proposals in Progress.”
- From this screen, you will select “Allow SRO Access.” SRO is the abbreviation for Sponsored Research Office, which at Macalester is GFCR. By allowing SRO access to your proposal, GFCR is able to see, edit, and submit your proposal.
- Clicking on “Allow SRO Access” will bring you to a proposal errors/warning screen, which will tell you that you have not yet completed all parts of your proposal. No need to be alarmed – since you have only just started your proposal, of course there are sections missing/incomplete. You can click the “Proceed” button. This will bring you to a new screen with a few access options, and unless you have objections to GFCR having editing access to your proposal in the system, we would recommend selecting “Allow SRO access to view, edit and submit proposal.”

Sections of the Proposal: The sections described below represent the body of a proposal submitted to NSF. Except where noted in the GPG or your program solicitation, all sections are required. See the GPG for detailed guidance for each of these sections.

- Cover Sheet – information on the program and about your project
- Project Summary – three sections not to exceed 4600 characters total: Overview, Intellectual Merit, Broader Impacts
- Table of Contents – automatically generated
- Project Description – 15 pages maximum
- References Cited – no page limit
- Biographical Sketch(es) for all senior personnel – limit two pages per person
- Budget – GFCR will help you draft and finalize your budget, and can enter it into FastLane
- Budget Justification – 3 pages maximum
- Current and Pending Support – required for each Senior Personnel member
- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources – no page limit
- Supplementary Documentation
  - Data Management Plan (DMP) – two pages maximum; Specific NSF-program solicitation guidance available here
  - Other Supplementary Docs, if applicable
    - Examples:
      - RUI Impact Statement
      - Certification of RUI eligibility
      - Documentation of collaborative arrangements