

NSF Proposal Preparation Checklist

This checklist was developed based on guidance from the most recent [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (NSF-PAPPG 19-1). Proposals to NSF are primarily submitted through the NSF FastLane system and at times through the NSF Proposal Preparation System (Research.gov). 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 your NSF ID](#) and 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 NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide or your specific program solicitation, all sections are required.

- **Cover Sheet** – There are four major components of the Cover Sheet:
 - Awardee Organization/Primary Place of Performance
 - Program Announcement/Solicitation/Program Description Number
 - NSF Unit of Consideration
 - Title, Budget, Duration, PI information, Previous NSF Award, etc.
- **Project Summary** – **Not more than one page** and consisting of three sections: Overview, Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. Per NSF-PAPPG, “The *overview*

NSF Proposal Preparation Checklist

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 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”.

- **Table of Contents** – Automatically generated.
- **Project Description** – **15 pages maximum** and **must contain**, as a separate section within the narrative, a section labeled "Intellectual Merit" and a section labeled “Broader Impacts”.
 - **Results from Prior NSF Support:** Per NSF-PAPPG, “The purpose of this section is to assist reviewers in assessing the quality of prior work conducted with prior or current NSF funding. If **any PI or co-PI** identified on the proposal has received prior NSF support including:
 - an award with an end date in the past five years; or
 - any current funding, including any no cost extensions,information on the award is **required for each PI and co-PI**, regardless of whether the support was directly related to the proposal or not. In cases where the PI or any co-PI has received more than one award (excluding amendments to existing awards), they need only report on the one award that is most closely related to the proposal.
 - URL’s **must not be used**.
- **References Cited** – **No page limit**. Each reference **must include** the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
- **Biographical Sketch(es)** – **Limit two pages per person**. **Do not** submit any personal information in the biographical sketch.
- **Budget** – GFCR will help you draft and finalize your budget, and can enter it into FastLane.
- **Budget Justification** – **Five pages maximum**. The amounts for each budget line item requested **must be** documented and justified. See this section of the NSF-PAPPG for specific budget headings.

NSF Proposal Preparation Checklist

- [Current and Pending Support](#) – **Required** for the PI, Co-PI and for each Senior Personnel.
- [Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources](#) – **No page limit**. Per NSF-PAPPG, “Proposers should describe only those resources that are directly applicable. Proposers should include an aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded. The description should be narrative in nature and **must not** include any quantifiable financial information”.
- [Special Information and Supplementary Documentation](#)
 - [Data Management Plan](#) – **Two pages maximum**. NSF-program solicitation guidance available [here](#).
 - [Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan](#) – **No more than one page (if applicable)**. If funding is requested to support a postdoctoral researcher, then the request must include the requisite mentoring plan. See [Chapter II.C.2.j](#).
 - Single Copy Documents – “Collaborators and Other Affiliations:” this [NSF Excel file](#) **must be** filled out and uploaded. [Link to FAQ for this document](#).
 - Other Supplementary Documents–(if applicable) Examples:
 - RUI Impact Statement – **Five pages maximum**
 - Certification of RUI eligibility – (Supplied by GFCR)
 - Documentation of collaborative arrangements