

TIGER TIPS

RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS

Improving NSF Intellectual Merit & Broader Impacts

The Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts sections of an NSF proposal are some of the more troubling components of the proposal. So what exactly are they?

Intellectual Merit (IM): This section details the proposal's potential to advance knowledge, if awarded.

Broader Impacts (BI): This sections details the proposal's potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes, if awarded.

NSF Review Panel Questions

1. What is the potential to:
 - Advance knowledge and understanding (IM)?
 - Benefit society/advance societal outcomes(BI)?
2. Do the activities explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan well-reasoned, well-organized, rational? How are results assessed?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization?
5. Are there adequate resources?

Broader Impacts

Intellectual Merit –Ask yourself

- Is the research generating new knowledge or improved understanding and how?
- Does the research use novel research methods or investigate a novel topic to better understand an aspect of STEM education?
- Is the research transformative, bringing about extraordinary or revolutionary change?

- 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.
- Broader impacts may be accomplished...
 - through the research itself
 - through activities that are directly related to specific research projects
 - through activities supported by, but are complementary to the project

One tool you may find helpful is the [**Broader Impact Wizard**](#), created by COSEE NOW, to help you develop a broader impact statement that will satisfy NSF Criterion II and fulfill your interest in communicating your science. The quick and easy five-step process will produce an outline of important points to include in your BI statement and will help frame discussions with your BI partners.

Please visit our website, <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/psfs/tigertips>, for more helpful tips and tools.