

TIGER TIPS

RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS

Planning for Your NSF CAREER Submission¹

The Office of Proposal Services & Faculty Support, in conjunction with Hanover Research, will be facilitating a webinar to help answer questions related to the NSF CAREER program. This free webinar will be held on March 1, 2019 from 1pm – 2:15pm and can be accessed from any location (log-in information to be shared to all registrants on/before February 25, 2019).

Webinar Registration: https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29oqhE9b5yJBUvX

The following is a suggested proposal production schedule for developing an NSF CAREER proposal as shared in the January 2019 [Research Development & Grant Writing Newsletter](#). Be sure to check-out each month's newsletter for articles like this and others that highlight grant writing tips and guidance.

January:

- Identify which NSF program to which you plan to apply (or candidate programs if you're unsure or are considering more than one topic), and program officer(s). If you're not sure how to do that, see this [video](#).)
- Write a short summary of your proposed research project, including: 1) your project goal; 2) research questions/hypotheses/challenges; 3) main objectives and short summary of your approach (and how it's innovative, if applicable); 4) expected outcome and impact.
- Write an email to the program officer, asking if you can schedule a time to talk to her/him (either on the phone or in person), and including your short summary, included in the body of your email.

February:

- Work on your Education component. Talk to potential collaborators. Research the literature related to your Education component topics. Work on logistics. (If you're not sure what you want to do for your Education component, this is the time to decide! Talk to others at your campus who are doing education and outreach for ideas.)
- Let your [College-level designee/Sponsored Programs representative](#) and your department head or chair know that you plan to submit a CAREER proposal. Not only will this help them plan, but they may also have suggestions for resources and support that may be available.
- Talk to your Program Officer. Choose the NSF program (or possible programs, if you plan to apply for co-funding) to which you will apply and be sure you understand the priorities of the program and the likely range of backgrounds of reviewers.

¹ Excerpted from the January 2019 Research Development & Grant Writing Newsletter

March:

- Participate in PSFS webinar!
- Outline your Project Description. Think about what arguments you need to make in each section. You may identify literature you need to find and additional preliminary data you need to generate.
- Decide on your Education component activities. Seek advice on logistics and evaluation, if needed.
- Recruit internal reviewers. Ask colleagues and mentors with backgrounds that range the spectrum of what you expect in your panel if they would be willing to review your proposal draft in June.

April:

- Start writing the first draft of your Project Description. This draft may be pretty rough, but it will allow you to put your ideas on paper and identify gaps.
- Work on addressing gaps and questions. This may require thought, research on the literature, more experiments or discussions with mentors.
- Develop a first draft of your budget. Work with your [College-level designee/Sponsored Programs representative](#). This first budget draft will allow you to determine if you've scoped your project appropriately. Don't forget to include funding to support your education and outreach activities.

May:

- Finish writing the first draft of your Project Description. Focus especially on refining the first section of the Project Description, which provides an overview of your project, including intellectual merit (typically 1.5 – 2 pages). Ask for feedback from mentors and colleagues.
- Meet with your department head/chair regarding the departmental letter. Provide them with a summary of your research and education plans so that those details can be included in the letter.
- Ask collaborators to provide a letter of collaboration, if applicable. For NSF CAREER, the letter of collaboration is a very short form letter saying they will do what is described in the Project Description. For this reason, it's a good idea to also provide your collaborators with a draft of the text describing their activities that will go in the Project Description.
- Finalize other required documents. These include your biosketch, current & pending form, list of collaborators and other affiliations, and postdoctoral mentoring plan (if applicable). Be sure to follow PAPPG directions!

June:

- Write your second draft of the Project Description. This draft should include all required information.
- Send your second draft to your internal reviewers. These are the colleagues and mentors you recruited in March. Give them a week to provide feedback.

- Finalize your budget. Be sure to make sure your budget aligns with your Project Description. If you include an activity, be sure you include funding to support that activity.
- Write your budget justification. The budget justification should provide enough detail to demonstrate to reviewers that you have thought out your project thoroughly. Note that you are now allowed five pages for this component.
- Obtain the final version of the departmental letter.
- Write your Project Summary. Look for the best sentences in your Project Description to include in your Summary.

July:

- Finalize the Project Description.
- Collect all required documents.
- Work with your [College-level designee/Sponsored Programs representative](#) obtain required approvals and check and upload all documents. When uploading through Fastlane, Grants.gov, or Research.gov, be sure to check that all figures and tables look good after uploading.
- Give your [College-level designee/Sponsored Programs representative](#) the OK to submit.
- Submit at least 1 day before your deadline. If you find some problem with the proposal after submission, you can retract and change it as long as it's still before the deadline.