

ERA Forum March 2021 Webinar – Questions & Answers

This document contains the questions and answers about *Research.gov Modernization Updates and Proposal Preparation Demo Site: Available Functionalities for Proposers, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)* discussed during the ERA Forum Webinar on March 31, 2021.

For further questions and ongoing feedback about Research.gov proposal preparation and submission, click the Feedback button at the bottom of the [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) homepage, email rgov@nsf.gov or call 1-800-381-1532. For questions regarding NSF proposal and award policies and procedures, please see the [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) (NSF 20-1) or email policy@nsf.gov.

Biographical Sketch

	Question	Answer
1.	Can “et al” be used with the NSF approved fillable PDF as it is in the author section of publications? If so, is it being accepted for current submissions?	Yes. "Senior personnel who wish to include publications in the products section of the biographical sketch that include multiple authors may, at their discretion, choose to list one or more of the authors and then "et al." in lieu of including the complete listing of authors' names. Reference: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/NSFPDF-FAQs.pdf
2.	Does the Biographical Sketch bibliographic references need to be in APA format?	No. That is not an NSF format requirement.
3.	From the list of available degrees, may we add “Certification” or something similar? [in SciENcv]	NSF will consider this request, and, if appropriate, we will work with SciENcv to add a certification option. In the interim, the user may select "Other".
4.	Once an extra field is added for an author, the tool does not allow the user to remove it, which results in having to start over from the beginning of the entry. Will NSF offer the ability to delete an extra author field? [in SciENcv]	NIH SciENcv would need to make this change. We will pass this on to them for feasibility review and prioritization.

Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Support

	Question	Answer
5.	After upload of the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Support, if an error or non-compliance is detected with the updated templates, will that cause the application not to complete the upload? In Research.gov, what capability will be provided if there are any errors/warnings with the Biographical Sketch and/or Current and Pending Support sections?	The NSF-Approved Formats for the Biographical Sketch page (https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/biosketch.jsp) and NSF-Approved Formats for Current and Pending Support page (https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/cps.jsp) include links to FAQs and other important information about completing and upload these documents.

Biographical Sketch and COA

	Question	Answer
6.	My team has noticed technical issues when submitting proposals on Research.gov. These issues primarily include error and warning messages regarding Biographical Sketches and COAs, which are sometimes inaccurate. In addition, COAs were often uploaded blank and/or missing certain cells. Is this a widely known issue and has it been addressed?	Refer to the Biographical Sketch FAQs to ensure the Biographical Sketch is being populated, downloaded, and saved correctly to avoid error messages. A technical fix was implemented to resolve the warnings that were displayed for Biographical Sketches uploaded in Research.gov. If the formatting of the COA template is altered, that can cause issues such as the template appearing blank when uploaded and warnings being generated. We recommend to not alter the formatting of the COA template to prevent the template from appearing blank and warnings from being generated.

Biographical Sketch NSF Fillable Format

	Question	Answer
7.	When will the Biographical Sketch forms be fixed? -- There needs to be more space under Other Significant Products or Synergistic Activities. -- There needs to be room for full citations; citations get cut off.	A second page will be added to the Biographical Sketch this fall.

Budget

	Question	Answer
8.	In cases where a proposal is submitted through FastLane and funded, do budget changes have to be submitted through Research.gov? If so, please provide additional information on this requirement.	For a proposal originally submitted in FastLane, a budget revision would be created and submitted in FastLane.
9.	On the budget tab, if there are 3 senior personnel (PI and 2 co-PIs) and one of the co-PIs has zero month in year one and three months in year 2, should zero be entered in the budget total for that individual? Previously in Fastlane, users were not able to have a Senior Personnel with no funding.	A co-PI must have months and dollars in at least one budget year. A budget can include years without months and dollars for a co-PI. All senior personnel on the project without funding in at least one year are to be included in Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources.
10.	Please advise on how to handle a PI that is not being paid. Do you want his Current & Pending? To give it to you we have to pay him \$1. If we put him in Facilities... then we can only give you the CV at the appendices? Please give us a clear direction on this case. It is common for a PI with significant input to not be paid on one proposal.	On a Research.gov proposal budget, click the [manage] link next to Senior Personnel. In the "Manage Senior Personnel Shown in Budget" modal, move the PI to the "Removed from Budget" list. The Senior Personnel Documents for the PI will still be required.
11.	Will there ever be a reminder that NSF requires 2.0 months in the personnel budget, or what the PAPPG states to do if you request more, just as a reminder?	Research.gov includes validation checks on the Months field for the values entered in the budget.

Current and Pending Support

	Question	Answer
12.	Could you please clarify how projects should be listed in the Current & Pending Support? Does the project being applied for appear first, followed by current then pending? Or does it begin with current, then the project being applied for followed by other pending projects? Thank you.	While the PAPPG does not state a required order, status of support is identified in the NSF approved formats as: *Current *Pending *Submission Planned *Transfer of Support If you are using the NSF Fillable Form, this order is not enforced. If you are using NIH SciENcv, regardless of the order you enter the status of support, the downloaded PDF will include the support in the order identified above.

	Question	Answer
13.	Does NSF require non-paid effort to be shown on the fillable Current and Pending Support form?	Yes. Non-paid effort is a type of support. And their name and the estimated amount of time to be devoted to the project should be identified in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. Reference: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/papp/pappg20_1/faqs_cps20_1.pdf
14.	In a case where a PI has an active grant with no effort, and the information is entered as such in the Current and Pending Support, the system does not allow the user to advance to the next entry because it requires the person months information. The same issue occurs for proposals that have cost sharing. How should the user handle these cases?	Individuals should only include projects to which they are committing time/person months. Reference: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/SciENcv-FAQs.pdf
15.	In some instances, an institution's fiscal year runs from July to June, so it spans two calendar years. Based on the FAQs, the latter of the two calendar years should be used in the "Year" field on the Current and Pending Support document. However, the system will not allow this if the fiscal year used falls after the last project year. How should this situation be addressed? For example: The last three months of the project 07/2024-09/2024 fall within our fiscal year 2025, but the system errors when the year 2025 is included.	NSF will discuss this issue further, and, if appropriate, we will speak with NIH about the validation for this instance. In the meantime, the user should use calendar year.
16.	In the past, some solicitations requested "additional" information on the Current and Pending Support. How will this affect the format going forward?	Solicitations are being reviewed with this in mind going forward; except where approved as part of NSF's internal clearance process, additional requirements in the Current and Pending Support section will not be permitted.
17.	Is there any way to edit the C & P that will not require uploading blank pages?	The NSF fillable format is a static document and blank pages should not be deleted. Any edits to this document will result in a non-compliant document that will prevent proposal submission in FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov.
18.	Must the total award amount be equal to the amount listed on the Notice of Award, or the amount available to a specific PI/co-PI?	Yes. The total award amount requested or received by the sub-awardee organization must be provided. The award budget attached

	Question	Answer
	For example: If an institution is a subaward, should the total award to the prime institution be listed, or should the amount allocated to the institution be listed?	to the Notice of Award would identify the amounts intended for sub-awardees.
19.	On Current and Pending Support, The Proposal / Award Number field will not accept slashes, spaces, or semicolons. Some award numbers include these, or there may be two award numbers—one from the sponsor, and one from the lead institution issuing a subaward to our institution. Would it be possible to change this field to allow slashes, spaces, etc.?	The 'Proposal/Award Number' field in the Current and Pending Support in NIH SciENcv only allows for letters or numbers in the field. NIH SciENcv would need to make an update to allow for other types of characters.
20.	When a user is entering information in the Current and Pending Support Summary in SciENcv, the Project / Proposal Title and the Proposal / Award Number can sometimes be too long to fit in the space provided. Is it possible to increase the number of characters allowable in those fields?	The 'Project/Proposal Title' allows for 196 characters. The 'Proposal/Award Number' allows for 20 characters. NIH SciENcv would need to update the character limit of these fields.
21.	When the PDF of the Current and Pending Support Summary document is downloaded, the downloaded name is “cv-xxxxx.pdf” (where the “x” stands for numbers) for example. This is easily confused with the Biographical Sketch because it also downloads with “cv-xxxxx.pdf” as the name. Would it be possible to change the Current and Pending Support Summary to show “cp-xxxxx.pdf” when it downloads?	The format of 'cv-xxxxx.pdf' applies to both Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Support PDF files that are generated from NIH SciENcv. NIH SciENcv would need to make an enhancement to change the filename when the Current and Pending Support is downloaded and saved.
22.	When using the NSF fillable Current and Pending Support document, if only the first (2) pages of the document are needed, does the user have to keep all 15 pages? For example: A recently submitted a Collaborative Proposal for 23 participating institutions yielded over 500 pages for Current and Pending Support. If the ability to delete blank pages was available, it would have been so much more manageable. The proposal ended up being a total of 1,010 pages for the entire combined PDF.	The NSF fillable format is a static document and blank pages should not be deleted. Any edits to this document will result in a non-compliant document that will prevent proposal submission in FastLane, Research.gov or Grants.gov. Reference: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/NSFPDF-FAQs.pdf
23.	Can someone please explain the "In Kind Contribution" section of this form?	An item or service given with the expectation of an associated time commitment is not a gift and is instead an in-kind contribution and must be reported to NSF. If the in-kind contribution is not intended for use on the project/proposal being proposed to NSF but has an

	Question	Answer
		associated time commitment, the information must be included as part of the current and pending support section of the proposal. If the in-kind contribution is intended for use on the project/proposal being proposed to NSF, the information must be included as part of the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal and need not be replicated in the individual's current and pending support submission.

Directorate of Biological Sciences Proposal Classification Form

	Question	Answer
24.	Can you please clarify whether, as we were told around 18 months ago, the Directorate for Biological Sciences has indeed scrapped the Proposal Classification Form (or that it plans to do so soon) and, if so, when we might expect to see that decision reflected in guidance documents and on the NSF website? This question has come up recently on the RESADM-L listserv, and I know there is one that has several of our investigators worried about whether they should use either system-to-system or Research.gov for submitting their proposals (both of which we are actively encouraging wherever possible) or continue to use FastLane.	The Biological Sciences Directorate has considered this issue further and has determined that the BIO Classification Form needs to be retained. We are considering how that information impacts PSM in the near-term.

Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

	Question	Answer
25.	If a report is added to FAPIIS as past due, once submitted, will it be removed or marked as submitted?	Once reported to FAPIIS, the record remains in FAPIIS for five years. There is no mechanism to remove a submission. Organizations are able to add comments to a record once the record is created by the Federal entity.

Font Compliance

	Question	Answer
26.	When submitting the narrative, a font type error appears. The user has verified several times that the font type is Times New Roman 11 for the text and Times New Roman 10 for figures labels, and for equations Cambria Math. According to the guidelines these two font types are allowed. The user has verified that all figures are inserted as objects, so the file is in agreement with font guidelines, but the error warning is persistent. If a user submits with this warning is there the possibility that the narrative will not be revised due to the error in the font?	The automated compliance check for font type was turned off in the Research.gov November 2020 Release. NSF is exploring alternative approaches to compliance checking. Proposals must continue to comply with NSF requirements.

Grants.gov

	Question	Answer
27.	Through which system does NSF draw down their Grants.gov submissions? Is this still through FastLane, or is this now via Research.gov?	It is currently through FastLane, but we plan to integrate with Research.gov in the near future.
28.	If a proposal is submitted via Grants.gov using system-to-system, how would we submit a Proposal File Update (in Fastlane or Research.gov)?	Currently submitters that used Grants.gov will need to go to FastLane to perform PFUs. This will change in the future, but that date is not determined.

LaTeX/Compliance

	Question	Answer
29.	Can NSF allow a more robust LaTeX PDF format since most of the users in science use LaTeX, or can NSF provide a LaTeX version template with detailed requirements for figures and tables?	At this time NSF does not have any plans to provide a LaTeX version template; however, we will take this request into consideration for future development.
30.	Research.gov is rejecting LaTeX generated PDFs for margin issues. Users have double-checked the margins on the PDFs, and the margins have been one inch all the way around, 8.5x11 documents, with no pagination. Research.gov would not accept the document for upload. This has happened multiple times with different LaTeX users. Ultimately, user have had to make the margins greater than one inch,	The removal of the font type and font size warnings does not apply to the margin warnings. We encourage you to access the Research Proposal Prep Document Formatting FAQs available on the Research.gov About page sections. There are tips to help you identify some possible causes of margin issues.

	Question	Answer
	or switch to Fastlane. Will this be corrected as part of the removal of the font warnings/restrictions, or will users continue to see this error since it is related to the margins?	
31.	There are always margin errors even when the margins are 1 inch. When will the Research.gov Proposal Preparation and Submission system be able to handle PDF files creating using LaTeX?	We are working to enhance the algorithm to include LaTeX PDF format. We encourage you to access the Research Proposal Prep Document Formatting FAQs available on the Research.gov About page sections. There are tips to help you identify some possible causes of margin issues.

Overtime Pay

	Question	Answer
32.	Does NSF allow for overtime pay on sponsored projects. If so, can the total overtime pay be charged to one grant or does it have to be proportionally paid across all funding sources?	Compensation policies must comply with organizational policies and procedures and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 CFR § 200.430.

PI Transfer

	Question	Answer
33.	If a PI is transferring a grant out of an institution, will that institution receive a termination notice?	If the project is to be continued at the PI/PD's new organization, and if NSF and both organizations agree, formal notification of the impending transfer can be electronically initiated by either the PI/PD or the PI/PD's organization. The NSF has plans to notify the original awardee upon the approval of the transfer. No deadline for this enhancement has been set.
34.	When will PI Transfers be available in Research.gov?	PI Transfers will be available in Research.gov before FastLane is retired.

Post-Submission (after due date change)

	Question	Answer
35.	If a program officer gives permission to edit an application after the opportunity closes, should we use the Withdrawal function to edit and resubmit the revised application? If not, how should the application be revised? Can the SPO office revise it or only the PI?	No, you do not need to Withdraw a proposal if the due date has passed for an opportunity. If you have additional revisions, you can perform a Proposal File Update (PFU) or a Budget Revision (BR). As long as reviewers are not assigned to the proposal submitted, you should be able to do a PFU/BR. If there are reviewers assigned, you can only do a BR. Once you perform the PFU action, you can share proposal access with the SPO/AOR.

Project Reports

	Question	Answer
36.	Everything entered in Project Outcomes was suddenly lost even though I had saved it a couple of times. This also happened earlier in entering information into a Project Report. Very frustrating! Can you just save everything that is typed in?	There is no auto-save feature in project reporting. However, if you are experiencing save issues, please call the NSF Help desk.
37.	For an RPPR, should international conference travel be included here? What percentage of the award’s budget was spent in foreign country(ies)? Describe what percentage of the award’s budget was spent in foreign country(ies) for this reporting period. If more than one foreign country was involved, identify the distribution of funding between the foreign countries. U.S.-based recipients should provide the percentage of the budget spent in the foreign country(ies) and/or, if applicable, the percentage of the budget obligated to foreign entities as first-tier subawards. Recipients that are not U.S.-based should provide the percentage of the direct award received, excluding all first tier subawards to U.S. entities. If applicable, provide separately the percentage of the budget obligated to non-U.S. entities as first-tier subawards.	NSF is discussing this issue internally and will consider development of an FAQ to respond more broadly.

	Question	Answer
38.	There is currently a proposal that is in the process of being submitted for the NSF 20-591 funding opportunity, using the FastLane platform. Will changes need to be made, or will the proposal need to be re-entered in Research.gov?	Proposals initiated in FastLane will not be available in Research.gov for submission. If you want to submit a proposal in Research.gov, then you will have to initiate a new proposal. Reference: https://web.acpt.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/Project%20Report%20Getting%20Started%20Guide.pdf
39.	Many PIs are experiencing difficulty in getting PDF documents accepted in Research.gov. Specifically, the error message indicates margins are not in compliance, while it is set to 1" margin all around in MS Word correctly. Are there any recommended ways or application for preparing PDF documents for upload, to prevent such "glitches" from happening?	The Research.gov "About" section, "About Proposal Preparation and Submission" includes an FAQ on uploading documents with information on the causes of margin errors.
40.	Why users are unable to change the funding opportunity in a Research.gov proposal like in FastLane?	Research.gov relies heavily on the rules of the funding opportunity.
41.	If a solicitation allows for a 20-page project description (as opposed to the traditional 15-page limit), can the proposal be submitted in Research.gov or will the compliance checks not permit the file to be uploaded? If they are not currently supported in Research.gov, will they be in the future?	Research.gov will not allow upload of a project description that is more than 15 pages. This may be a future update.
42.	When preparing a proposal via Research.gov a user is not able to edit the directorate or division once a proposal is started. Often times there are multiple directorates that need to be selected; and while this option exists during proposal input, this is not editable in case this step was forgotten or missed. The solicitation and proposal type may predict the workflow and required documents within the system, but can this specific field be made editable? It would be incredibly helpful if the directorate selection feature could be modified after proposal creation.	No. For the units of consideration, a selection has to be made before you go to the next step in the Research.gov proposal setup wizard, and a user cannot change the Units of Consideration (UoC) after the proposal has been created. We do not have any plans to change this functionality.
43.	I frequently receive notices that my session will expire and that I will be signed out of Research.gov. This happens when I am still actively in Research.gov and making changes or going between multiple items	No. In Research.gov, there is a two-hour session limit regardless of whether the user is active. The user will need to re-authenticate after two hours.

	Question	Answer
	and proposal actions. Is there a way for Research.gov to not automatically sign me out when I am actively using the system?	
44.	How will supplemental funding requests be handled in Research.gov? For existing awards that were approved in Fastlane, will the supplemental funding request feature remain in Fastlane for the duration of the award (i.e., next 5 years) or will those transition to Research.gov as well?	Supplemental funding request functionality is not enabled in Research.gov. It will be available in the near future.

System to System (S2S)

	Question	Answer
45.	Will Research.gov support system to system submissions?	Yes. S2S submissions will work the same as it does now.

SciENcv

	Question	Answer
46.	A bio has been created for faculty PI in SciENcv. The PI is currently the Director of a federally funded, University-supported institute and has been since 2017. This is the appointment the PI prefers to be recognized as his/her current position title and employment, so it has been marked as such. The PI is also currently a member of an industry advisory committee, more recently (2020). As a result, the appointments section is not in reverse chronological order as SciENcv is maintaining the position marked as "Use this entry as the position title and current employment" as the foremost entry in this section. How should this be corrected?	Professional preparation and appointments must be provided, in reverse chronological order by start date of all the individual's academic, professional, or institutional appointments, beginning with the current appointment. See PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.f(i)(b) for complete information. Users with overlapping or concurrent appointments may need to manually reorder their professional preparation entries by hovering over the appointment and clicking "up" or "down" for that entry. The generated PDF will reflect the order displayed on the screen. Reference: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/SciENcv-FAQs.pdf
47.	In many instances the post-award staff are in charge of maintaining the faculty OS and Biographical Sketch reports. Is there a way for post-award staff to access the faculty's OS and Biographical Sketch without using their (the faculty's) login information? [in SciENcv]	You can delegate access. Any My NCBI account holder can set up one or more delegates for their My NCBI account. Once a delegate has accepted their invitation, the delegate(s) has the ability to view, edit, and create profiles in the original account holder's SciENcv, as well as edit the account holder's My Bibliography information.

	Question	Answer
		Reference: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/SciENcv-FAQs.pdf
48.	Is it possible to update degree information that populates, in the SciENcv system, or does the PI need to update first in ORCID? If the latter, will the PI need to re-populate SciENcv before finalizing the CV?	Information imported from various sources can be edited in SciENcv.

General

	Question	Answer
49.	Is there a way to do an advanced search of proposals and awards submitted by my organization? I am interested in a report of all Career awards submitted by Dartmouth and which have been funded. Would I do this in Research.gov, Fastlane?	You can search on awards by organization and keyword at: https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/advancedSearch.jsp