NSF Research.gov Update Q&A

Question: Will the blank current and pending support pages be trimmed before submission, meaning the PI can see this on the screen during proposal development or after submission to NSF?

Answer: The trimming service for the fillable C&PS is triggered in FastLane and in Research.gov when the document is uploaded. For Research.gov and FastLane proposers, yes, you can see the trimming prior to submission to NSF. As soon as the file is uploaded in FastLane or Research.gov and the PI navigates to view from either the preview link or print entire, the PI will see the C&PS has been trimmed. For Grants.gov, no, you cannot see the trimming until after submission. You can see your submitted Grants.gov proposals in FastLane.

Question: Will we be able to edit the proposal, like changing Funding Opportunity or Proposal Type in the future? Currently we have to delete and start a new proposal.

Answer: Unfortunately for now, yes, you must create a new proposal if you need to change Funding Opportunity or Proposal Type. The reason is that the logic in the proposal submission modules is heavily relying on the choices you make in the proposal setup wizard. Updating the Funding Opportunity and Proposal Type after proposal preparation will be assessed for consideration as a future enhancement.

Question: When we enter effort in the Budget in Research.gov, there is only one place and it defaults to calendar. Will we be able to enter as Summer or Academic like in FastLane?

Answer: As a general policy, NSF limits the salary compensation requested in the proposal budget for senior personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year. It is the organization's responsibility to define and consistently apply the term "year", and to specify this definition in the budget justification. Please see PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.g.i.a. for additional information.

Currently, when a printable PDF of the proposal is displayed in Research.gov, the academic and summer month labels will display as blank fields. In the future, these fields will also be removed from the Research.gov print view.

Question: Are UTF-8 characters are not allowed in titles? This is odd since betas and other special characters are important in science.

Answer:

This is not an all-inclusive list:

Characters not allowed ' Apostrophes, ^, ~, {}

Some characters allowed ! @ # $ % & * ( ) / \

Question: In Research.gov, is it possible for a central Research Administrator to create a new proposal under our own login, then change the PI to the actual PI? I believe you can do this in FastLane but didn't see that function in Research.gov.

Answer: Research Administrators cannot create proposals in FastLane or Research.gov, only the PI can. However, Research Administrators with a PI Role for that organization can create proposals under their own name. Once created, the Research Administrator must share the proposal with the administrative staff with edit permissions. Once shared, the Research Administrator can add the actual PI as a co-PI, then delete themselves (the original PI) from the temporary proposal. The co-PI (the actual PI) will become the PI. It is important to do this as early as possible. Once documents for senior personnel have been uploaded, it is very difficult to swap PIs without moving around the personnel documents. In FastLane swapping PIs is easier with one click, but this feature is not yet in Research.gov. Having an easier way to swap PIs with co-PIs is on our roadmap.

Question: For the project description narrative, are all paragraphs limited to no more than 6 lines?

Answer: The PAPPG states that for font, spacing and margin requirements that you may have no more than 6 lines per vertical inch. The PAPPG does not specify the number of lines per paragraph.

Question: In thinking about what was stated about additional funding for a conference, can you tell the user when you are selecting that a decision is 'critical' and cannot be changed or when it is possible to change later? It seems to require 'special knowledge' to navigate the system as it showed on screen.

Answer: Thank you for this feedback. We will consider adding warning messages when people cannot edit a particular field after a selection is made.

Question: Does the industry co-PI need to already have an account or will it send an info email for them to create an account?

Answer: Yes, the industrial PI needs to have an NSF ID. Please see the Research.gov Account Management page for information about obtaining and NSF ID and requesting a PI Role.

Question: Can margin errors result if the first line of your document has scientific characters?

Answer: Correct, if you have special characters, equations, or objects on the first line of a page, it will cause margin errors. See the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page for FAQs. The Uploading Documents topic includes margin and line spacing FAQs.

Question: Is there an easy way for an institution to find out how many submissions were in FastLane versus Research.gov? Knowing which system was used will help administrators get our users to transition...we need to know how many users are still using FastLane.

Answer: Currently there is not an easy way to find out how many submissions went through FastLane versus Research.gov. However, there is a backlog item to add this column to the Proposal Status Module in Research.gov.

Question: Do proposals submitted via Grants.gov ultimately land in Research.gov? Is there any drawback to submitting via Grants.gov, especially for institutions with system-to-system capability?

Answer: Today (September 2021), proposals submitted via Grants.gov land in FastLane, but there are plans to move this to Research.gov. Drawbacks are from a troubleshooting perspective. Submission and receipt of proposals are not done in real time but in batches, and there are more points of failure than submitting in Research.gov or FastLane. Grants.gov also does less compliance checking and cannot accommodate separately submitted collaborative proposals. It takes a little more monitoring to ensure things went through correctly and issues take longer to troubleshoot. Otherwise, from NSF's side, the proposals look the same.

Question: Is there a plan to have the SPO role in the demo site? It would be helpful to have a role in the demo site for sponsored projects offices so we can train our folks in the demo site too. Agree it's not as important as having the PI role, but maybe a wish list item for later?

Answer: There are currently no plans to add the SPO role to the demo site, but we have noted this request.

Question: For a proposal with a PI and a co-PI, can the co-PI do all of the uploading of documents to Research.gov?

Answer: Yes, the co-PI can perform all the uploads for a Research.gov proposal.

Links Shared During the Session:

Important Notice 147: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in147.jsp?org=NSF

Automated compliance checks: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/autocompliance.jsp

Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page: https://www.research.gov/research-portal/appmanager/base/desktop?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=research_node_display&_nodePath=/researchGov/Service/Desktop/ProposalPreparationandSubmission.html

Bio sketch page: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/biosketch.jsp

C&PS page: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/cps.jsp

System Updates listserv: Please sent a blank email to system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov to enroll

PAPPG (22-1) guidance for GOALI proposals:
https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIE5

PAPPG (22-1) guidance on planning proposals:
https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIE1