

ERA Forum Webinar Series: Q&As

This document contains questions and answers about Proposal Submission Modernization (PSM) concepts (Budget, Budget Justification, and a new “Personnel” proposal section) discussed during the second ERA Forum webinar. The webinar was held on September 28, 2016. For further questions about PSM, please send an email to nsferaforum@nsf.gov. For questions regarding NSF proposal and award policies and procedures, please send an email to policy@nsf.gov.

1. Related to the Proposal Initiation Workflow and Proposal Forms page:

- a. Would you be required to complete the Impact section if submitting a proposal through the new proposal initiation interface as a Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI)?

NSF is planning to tailor the proposal interface to reflect the requirements of a given funding opportunity. For RUIs, an Impact statement is required.

- b. Is the intent that the wizard will be the “only” way to prepare a new proposal?

The proposal setup wizard encompasses the different screens associated with the proposal initiation process. It will be the only way to start a proposal as it enables NSF to customize the proposal interface and compliance rules to a given funding opportunity, proposal, and submission type. The wizard will not be present during later proposal preparation activities.

- c. If we start a proposal as a "Research" type of proposal but realize that it is actually another type, can that be changed?

Yes. NSF anticipates that users will be able to change selections after they are made.

- d. Will users be able to compliance check proposal sections as they are completed?

Yes. While not final, NSF is currently reviewing and testing functionality that enables users to perform compliance checking as proposal sections are completed.

- e. Is it possible for the SPO to be notified via email when a PI initiates a proposal rather than waiting for the PI to allow SPO access? At least initially have view access and let the PI allow edit / submit?

Possibly. AOR/SPO access is being reviewed. Feedback during the Forum session and the subsequent survey are helpful inputs to NSF’s analysis and review.

ERA Forum Webinar Series: Q&As

- f. Will the Results from Prior NSF Support section no longer be included within the Project Description?

We are currently evaluating this possibility. Since Results from Prior NSF Support is a person-specific requirement per the PAPPG, removing it from the Project Description would allow for data pre-population and enhanced compliance checking. However, a final decision on this change has not been made.

2. Related to the Senior Personnel Documents section:

Would it be possible to expand and collapse by a single person to determine if their sections are compliant or non-compliant?

Though still under review and development, the concept would enable the user to quickly scan for compliance on a person-by-person basis.

3. Related to the Budget and Budget Justification sections:

- a. Will there be a capability to enter Senior or Other Personnel as a fraction or percentage of FTE for the Budget data entry?

Yes.

- b. Will each category in the Budget section be required to have a separate Justification?

While a final decision has not yet been made, the Budget Justification concept shared during the Forum would require a Budget Justification for each associated Budget category. This helps reviewers and NSF program staff understand the justification for the dollar value requested.

- c. What will be the data entry limit for the Budget Justification?

Currently, there is a three page limitation for the Budget Justification; however, if NSF moves forward with a section-by-section Budget Justification concept, the Foundation would need to reconsider how to administer a compliance check.

- d. Could there be a concept in which completion of the Budget Form auto-triggers a form for the Budget Justification?

While this may be possible, a decision on the Budget Justification functionality has not yet been made. This could be a design consideration. We will need to confirm the approach.

ERA Forum Webinar Series: Q&As

4. Other questions:

- a. Will the Current & Pending Support section be auto-populated from previous proposal submissions?

Options for pre-population are being evaluated as part of the future design approach.

- b. Will special characters be allowed in Project Summary data entry?

Yes. Modern text editors with the ability to handle special characters are being investigated for PSM.

- c. Will there be separate logins for FastLane Research Administrators versus PIs in Research.gov?

No, there will be a single sign-on location. The system will determine the appropriate access based on a user's specific assigned role(s) and login information.

- d. Can the proposal Biosketch(es) section be pre-populated from NIH's system, SciENcv?

SciENcv offers an NSF Biosketch template which allows a user to create the Biosketch in SciENcv and save it as a PDF for upload to NSF.

- e. Based on FastLane functionality today, would an SPO be able to log in to Research.gov as a PI?

This is still being considered. Survey results will also be used to glean insights based on differences among users.

- f. Will there a way for an SPO to lock a proposal for final review from further edits?

This is a design option that will be investigated further and considered.

- g. What are the expectations of "pagination" moving forward? Can that be something that the system does automatically? It can be challenging to paginate certain sections of the proposal like PDFs in the Supplementary Documents.

This issue is currently under consideration.