

Fall 2022 - ERA Forum Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

No.	Questions	Category	Response
1	If Arial 10 font does not work with the required line spacing in Research.gov, shouldn't it be removed from the PAPPG as an option?	Font	No, Arial 10 point font will work with the required line spacing, but it requires forcing the line spacing in the word processing software. Most software including Microsoft Word automatically adjust the line spacing of text after a header and text in a paragraph. Details on how to force the 12 point line spacing are found in Research.gov FAQs. Other alternatives include using other 10 point fonts such as Courier New and Palatino Linotype.
2	I would like to view copies of previously submitted proposals. This feature was previously available in Fastlane. In Research.gov, while I can view the reviews/panel summaries in one place, I cannot view the actual submitted proposals. In that section (under "submitted"), nothing comes up. Is it possible to view my previously submitted proposals?	View Submitted Proposals	Yes. You can view proposals submitted in Research.gov by clicking "Prepare and Submit Proposals" on My Desktop, and then clicking "View/Update Submitted". Proposals submitted in Fastlane can be viewed in Fastlane until September 29, 2023.
3	I am a program administrator at a university and would like to see fully submitted proposals. Is there a way to do that on the website?	View Submitted Proposals	Yes. You can view proposals submitted in Research.gov by clicking "Prepare and Submit Proposals" on My Desktop, and then clicking "View/Update Submitted". Proposals submitted in Fastlane can be viewed in Fastlane until September 29, 2023.
4	Completing the COA template was difficult to do without having Excel on my computer. Are there alternative approaches that do not require Excel?	COA Template	No, the COA form requires the use of Microsoft Excel. If you do not have access to Microsoft Excel, please contact the IT Help Desk.
5	My organization uses the fillable forms for Biosketch and Current and Pending Support and they work well, but we have formatting trouble with the Collaborators and Other Affiliations template in Excel. Could that also be available as a fillable form?	COA Template	No, the COA form is only available as a spreadsheet. The challenge for a fillable form is that people may have hundreds of affiliations to disclose.
6	Will more roles be added to the Proposal Submission System demonstration site? We would like to be able to try out all the roles rather than just the PI role.	Demo Site	No, there are no plans to add more roles but we will consider this in the future.

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7	In Fastlane, a submitted proposal status showed much more than "pending", but they included the date a panel was scheduled convene. This indicated to the PIs the timeline for a decision and eliminated the need to pester the PO. Currently, Research.gov has identified a proposal I submitted in April as "Pending" and even upon emailing the PO, he wrote a response indicating simply that it was "Pending". All this, when our scheduled project start date September 1st. Is it possible re-add the old functionality that was in the Fastlane system?	Proposal Status	No, there are no plans to add more detail to where the proposal is in the process. Research.gov currently indicated whether a proposal is under review. We will consider a future enhancement.
8	Project Descriptions prepared using LaTeX (pdftex) may fail to be accepted by the online submission system, even if all formatting requirements (e.g., margins, font size, page limit) are satisfied. Does NSF have any future plans to make the Research.gov form for the Project Description more robust so that it can accept PDF typeset with standard pdftex engines? Can official guidelines be given on precisely what PDF types (e.g., PDFX-4) are acceptable?	LaTeX	Please refer to the NSF LaTeX Sample website at https://github.com/nsf-open/nsf-proposal-latex-samples . Questions not addressed there can be sent to syee@nsf.gov .
9	Currently, only the PI and SPO can see error messages, and the PI is not always available to log in and run a check. Will NSF consider an option for non-PIs (i.e., OAUs) to check for errors?	Role Permissions	An OAU has the same edit and upload permissions as the PI and will see the same warning and error message per section. You are correct that there is not a summary page of warnings and errors for compliance checks outside of a section (for example, Due Date) available to an OAU. We will consider adding this feature as a future enhancement.
10	Concerning Supplemental Funding Requests, is there a minimum, maximum, and average award amount that could inform the dollar amount of a request?	Supplemental Funding Requests	It depends on the project and the specific request. Communication with the cognizant program officer is key.
11	Are there deadlines for submission of a supplemental request, and if so, are those linked to the project implementation period of performance? Stated another way, is it imprudent to ask for a supplemental award if the parent award project was implemented within the past few months?	Supplemental Funding Requests	There may be deadlines for supplemental funding requests that are communicated via Dear Colleague Letters. Communicate with the cognizant program officer for these types of questions as the answers will be specific to the award and available funding resources.

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12	With the impending decommissioning of Fastlane and the fact that Fastlane proposals are not being moved to Research.gov, some institutions are facing the task of individually downloading hundreds of proposal files from Fastlane. Are there any options available for institutions to work with NSF to obtain proposals in a more bulk form?	Submitted Proposals	NSF is providing advanced notice of the retirement of Fastlane proposal preparation module so the community can collect data before it is inaccessible. Currently there are no plans to provide a bulk download to Fastlane files. In-progress proposal data are not considered records and are not subject to FOIA requests. There is no guarantee that records will be available past the NSF Records Retention Schedule listed on https://www.nsf.gov/policies/records/retention-schedule.jsp
13	Will electronic signatures be needed alongside the certifications on the new fillable forms for Current and Pending documents and Biosketch documents?	New certifications	The fillable PDFS that will be released January 2023, will not require an electronic signature.
14	Please describe how the certifications work for the fillable versions of the Biosketch and Current & Pending Support forms until the SciENcv versions become mandatory in October 2023.	New certifications	The fillable PDFS that will be released January 2023 will have a field where the user must type in their name and indicate the date to capture their certification of that document.
15	For the new Biosketch and Current and Pending Support certifications, is it correct that the certification language has not yet been added to SciENcv or the NSF fillable template? If so, can the research community continue to use the current versions of these forms (without the certification languages) until October of 2023? If not, please clarify.	New certifications	The certification language has not yet been added to SciENcv or the NSF fillable template. The new language will be available for updated versions of the forms in early January 2023 and you will be required to use the new versions for proposals due on or after January 30, 2023.
16	When in January will changes to the Current and Pending Support document go into effect, and when will those templates be available?	Current & Pending Support	Updated versions of the forms will be available in early January 2023 and you will be required to use the new versions for proposals due on or after January 30, 2023.
17	What is the purpose of submitting Current and Pending Support at time of submission and after award is made?	Current & Pending Support	Current and Pending Support will be submitted a) at the time of proposal submission; b) prior to award recommendation; and c) if there has been a change since the award was made or since the last annual report. This is to ensure that the PI, co-PI and/or senior personnel have the capacity to work on the project as proposed.
18	Can SciENcv add in templates/options to format the Biosketch and CV for other sponsors, like NOAA and NASA?	SciENcv Biosketch	While no formal agreements are currently in place at this time, additional agencies are reviewing if SciENcv fits their grant application needs.
19	Please clarify, for small non-profit organizations without significant capacity or who has partners without significant academic experience, how user-friendly is SciENcv? Often the complex NSF documents are a challenge for our community partners.	SciENcv	SciENcv was developed to make it easier to fill out these forms!

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20	Can users bulk upload (in .xml or other format) Current and Pending Support information? A huge burden exists as long as information has to be entered manually, as we do currently for NSF. Most institutions track the required data internally and can export the data in the correct format automatically. Making us re-enter the information on SciENcv is a major hassle.	Current & Pending Support	Thank you for your feedback. We are currently exploring options to facilitate data transfer from institutions to SciENcv.
21	I noticed that in NSF LaTeX sample 1, they use the Times package to get Times New Roman font. However, if you examine the resulting pdf (in Acrobat, for example), it is shown as Nimbus Roman No9 font instead since the actual Times New Roman is proprietary. I was told by the policy office in 2020 that Nimbus is not acceptable, and it had to be actual Times New Roman. Has that changed?	LaTeX Font	Currently Research.gov has suppressed the font and margin checks. When these checks are re-enabled, we will ensure that the LaTeX samples are re-tested to meet the PAPPG requirements.
22	If an institution is the prime on an NSF award that has multiple ALNs and there are also subcontracts, should only the prime ALN be listed on the FDP subcontract form? Also, for the FSRS reporting where there are subs over \$30K, should only the prime ALN be listed as well for that reporting?	Project Report	For all reporting purposes, NSF recommends using the Assistance Listing Number (ALN) for the predominant funding source. NSF's award notice now include an indication of the predominant funding source.
23	SciENcv is an excellent tool. But administrators have difficulty telling whether an investigator is overcommitted at any point. Is there software that can help with this type of analysis? We want to quickly check to be sure no one is overcommitted at time. Does SciENcv plan to develop something like this?	View awards per PI, co-PI	Thank you for your feedback. We currently have no plans to support this functionality in SciENcv. Structured data is attached to the PDF forms generated by SciENcv, so it would be possible for your institution to analyze this data before submission.
24	Can the submitting AOR view the proposal review notes/panel summary?	Panel Review	Only the PIs can see proposal review notes and panel summaries.
25	If an institution with an award has an issue with the annual SAM.gov registration renewal where registration lapses while the issue is worked out, how does that affect the award?	Sam.gov Registration	If an organization's SAM registration lapses, it will negatively impact proposals and awards for the organization. New proposals cannot be submitted to NSF and any previously submitted/pending proposals cannot be approved for award. Also for any and all active awards that the organization has, NSF cannot approve any award amendments (funding or non-funding) as long as the registration is not active. Additionally, the organization will not be able to draw down funds via ACMS for expenses incurred until the registration is active. While NSF does not control the SAM process, please reach out to your Program or Grants and Agreements Officer if your SAM registration lapses.

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26	Why is it not possible to add additional Personnel in the “Manage Personnel and Subaward Organizations”? The revisions will only go to the personnel who were included on the original proposal submission, and that is often NOT the same AOR at a larger university.	Adding Personnel	You may add additional Personnel at any point in the proposal's life cycle up to submission, and post submission with PO approval, if it has not been assigned to reviewers. Proposal File Updates must be shared again with the AOR office prior to submission, and emails are sent to people with active AOR Role at that time.
27	Recently, NCE notifications have not been received, but it can be seen in Research.gov that they were approved. Per the Helpdesk, it is up to the NSF PO to click a button to send the notice. Will this be a mandatory feature in R.gov?	No Cost Extension notification	We are aware of an issue that is impacting a few larger institutions where NCEs notifications are failing to send. We have identified a solution and this will be fixed in the January 2023 release. Your institution may be impacted if you have more than 50 AORS and SPOs recipients combined.
28	Is it correct that the last day to submit new proposal in FastLane is January 27, 2023, except for Postdoc Fellowship applications (May 2023)?	FastLane last date to submit	All proposals including Postdoctoral Fellowships will be disabled January 27, 2023 and are only available in Research.gov or Grants.gov.
29	The presentation referred to the ability to submit ALL proposal types in Research.gov. Does this include BAA responses, which most recently were submitted in the separate BAAM system? Is the intention to continue to maintain the BAAM system, and could you possibly address any planned improvements to BAAM (access by multiple users/SRO access, etc.)?	BAAM	Research.gov can be used for all proposal types, including BAAs if there is a published solicitation or program description. BAAM was developed as a pilot for use with BAAs. Over the next several months, NSF will be evaluating the pilot results and determining next steps, including plans for the future of BAAM and any additional system enhancements.