

NP Office Hours: Proposal Preparation Tips and Shortfalls

Office of Nuclear Physics
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

[Energy.gov/science](https://energy.gov/science)

Office of Science Code of Conduct

The DOE Office of Science (SC) is fully and unconditionally **committed to fostering safe, diverse, equitable, and inclusive work, research, and funding environments that value mutual respect and personal integrity.**

The SC mission is to deliver the scientific discoveries, capabilities, and major scientific tools to transform our understanding of nature and to advance U.S. energy, economic, and national security.

The DOE SC does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind, including sexual or non-sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, violence, threats of violence, retaliation, or other disruptive behavior in the federal workplace, including DOE field site offices, or at national laboratories, scientific user facilities, academic institutions, other institutions that we fund, or other locations where activities that we support are carried out.

SC expects the scientific community, particularly those engaging in SC-sponsored activities, to always **conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful, ethical, and professional.**

The DOE policies and procedures for the prevention of discrimination and harassment:

<https://science.osti.gov/SW-DEI/DOE-Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-Policies/DOE-Policies-Prohibiting-Discrimination-and-Harassment>

Proposal Basics

Proposals need to be submitted to the proper funding opportunity.

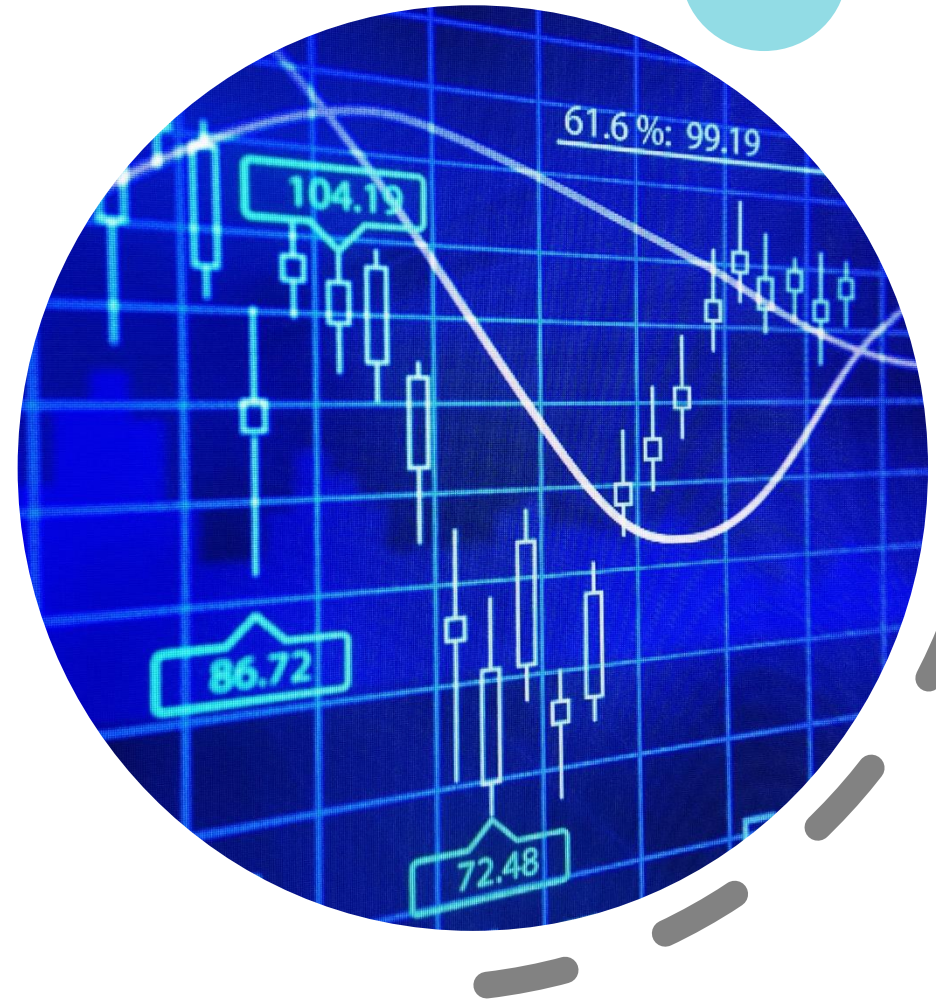
- Failure to do so may result in a proposal decline.

All research projects supported by NP undergo regular peer review and merit evaluation based on procedures set down in [10 CFR Part 605](#):

- extramural grant program, i.e. universities
- analogous process for the laboratory programs and scientific user facilities

Conference proposals/ Field Work Proposal (FWP):

- must be submitted at least 6 months prior to the start of the conference.
 - Proposals not meeting this requirement may be declined without further review.
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- For a complete description of the types of Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) and corresponding guidelines and requirements please view the [Office of Science's Funding Opportunities](#) web page



Proposal Basics

The NP peer review and merit evaluation procedures are described within the following documents:

- [Office of Science \(SC\) Merit Review System](#)
- [10 CFR Part 605](#)

NP's Comparative review:

- Merit review is done on a comparative basis, competition for funds.
- Proposals for new efforts to be supported through the open FOA should be submitted to grants.gov no later than:
 - **November 15th** for the Fundamental Symmetries, Nuclear Structure/Nuclear Astrophysics, Heavy Ions and Nuclear Theory subprograms
 - No later than **September 30th** for the other NP subprograms.
 - These NP specific dates are independent of possible changes to the dates for the closure of the open FOA and its replacement with a successor.



Note that Open FOA is released at the **start** of the fiscal year: **Oct 1st**

Basic Review Standards

Applications/proposals are received by the Grants and Contracts Division, assigned to project manager (officer) who will initially screen for the following standards **before merit review**:

- **Sufficient** technical/scientific content and merit.
- **Completeness** based on 10 CFR Part 605 or an SC Research Opportunity Announcement.
- **Program Policy and Priorities.** Must be relevant to SC's missions and be of sufficient interest to warrant funding.
- **Sufficient funds must be available.**
- **No unnecessary duplication or overlap.** i.e. already being supported by DOE or other Federal agencies; generally will not be subjected to formal merit review unless there is a cogent programmatic reason to do so.



Merit Evaluation Criteria 10 CFR Part 605.10

- DOE NP evaluates applications based on the **following main criteria** which are listed in descending order of importance:
 - Scientific, technical **merit**;
 - Appropriateness of the proposed **method or approach**;
 - **Competency** of applicant's personnel and adequacy of proposed resources;
 - Reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed **budget**;
 - **PIER Plan**
 - **Other** appropriate factors established and set forth by the DOE Office of Energy Research (ER) or in a specific solicitation.



Merit Evaluation Criteria



➤ Other Considerations:

- Available advice or information as well as **program policy factors** such as ensuring an appropriate balance among the program areas
- Recipient's **performance** under the existing award during the evaluation of a renewal application.

➤ Selection of applications for award will be based:

- **Findings** of the technical evaluations,
- **Importance and relevance** of the proposed application to SC's mission
- **Funding availability.**

➤ **Cost** reasonableness and realism will also be considered

TIPS

- Get familiarized with the appropriate FOA.
- Look at the applicant and awardee [resources](#)
- The DOE has several links to help proposals prepare criteria. See for example
 - ✓ Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research ([PIER](#)) Plan
 - ✓ [FAQs](#)
- Become a merit [reviewer](#).
- Diversify the [FOA](#) application strategy if relevant.
 - ✓ Look at past FOAs if the current FOA is not yet released
- Understand that not all proposals submitted will be funded.
 - ✓ Address comments received by the merit review on your next try.



Common Shortfalls

- Scientific merit and methods read like a peer-reviewed paper. Panels are composed of experts of several sub-fields, a proposal must address a reasonable radii of experts.

Give sufficient details that a broad panel of field experts can access.

- Mentoring record or workforce development record.

Keep in mind that this career length based.

- Missing list of students/postdocs partially or fully supported by the grant.

List all relevant personnel supported and mentored.

- Unrealistic budgets.

Request should be consistent with the scope and competence record.

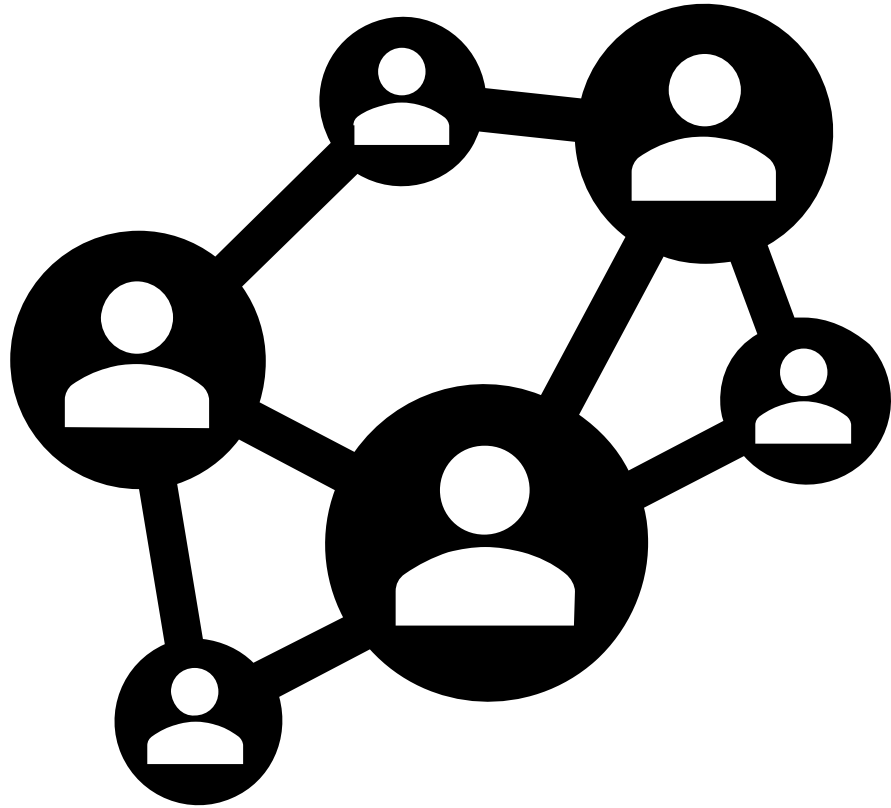
- Performance with respect to peers of similar or identical sub-fields.

When in large collaborations, clearly indicate significant and leading contributions.

- PIER plan is a copy-paste of university policies.

Tailor the plan to the research proposal.





NP Office Hours

- Past slides, recordings, and future NP Office Hours can be found here:
- <https://science.osti.gov/np/officehours>
- July 1st : Nuclear Structure and Nuclear Astrophysics sub-program

THANK YOU!

