Solicitation

The FOA can assist you with:

• Purpose – what is important for funding
• Directs content
• Directs language
• Review criteria

• As well as the format, submission dates, budgets, etc.
CAREER: The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program is a Foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation's most prestigious awards in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization. Activities pursued by early-career faculty should build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research. NSF encourages submission of CAREER proposals from early-career faculty at all CAREER-eligible organizations and especially encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and persons with disabilities to apply.
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Expectations

A Principal Investigator (PI) may submit only one CAREER proposal per annual competition. In addition, a Principal Investigator may not participate in more than three CAREER competitions.

Regardless of what others may tell you, it is generally recognized that first submissions are not funded at a high rate.

First impressions and initial scores DO MATTER
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This program is a Foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation's most prestigious awards for faculty members beginning their independent careers. The intent of the program is to provide stable support at a sufficient level and duration to enable awardees to develop careers not only as outstanding researchers but also as educators demonstrating commitment to teaching, learning, and dissemination of knowledge. NSF encourages submission of CAREER proposals from eligible early-career faculty at all CAREER-eligible organizations, especially women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and persons with disabilities.
Solicitation

Checklist: you must address these

1. Develop research career
2. Develop education career
3. Demonstrate commitment to teaching, learning
4. Demonstrate commitment to dissemination of knowledge
5. Mission of the department
6. Mission of the organization
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courages all applicants to think creatively about the reciprocal relationship between the proposed research and education activities and how they may inform each other in their career development as both outstanding researchers and educators.

These plans should reflect the proposer's own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the needs and context of his or her organization.

Because there may be different expectations within different disciplinary fields and/or different organizations, a wide range of research and education activities may be appropriate for the CAREER program.
Proposers are encouraged to communicate with the CAREER contact or cognizant Program Officer in the Division closest to their area of research to discuss the expectations and approaches that are most appropriate for that area (see https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/career/contacts.jsp for a list of CAREER contacts by division).
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Project Description:
The Project Description section should contain a well-argued and specific proposal for activities that will, over a 5-year period, build a firm foundation for a lifetime of contributions to research and education in the context of the Principal Investigator's organization. The proposed project should aim to advance the employee's career goals and job responsibilities as well as the mission of the department or organization.
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Successful applicants will propose creative, effective research and education plans, along with strategies for assessing these components. The proposed activities should help applicants develop in their careers as both outstanding researchers and educators. While excellence in both education and research is expected, activity of an intensity that leads to an unreasonable workload is not. The research and educational activities do not need to be addressed separately if the relationship between the two is such that the presentation of the integrated project is better served by interspersing the two throughout the Project Description.
NSF recognizes that disciplinary boundaries evolve with time and that inter-, multi-, trans-disciplinary approaches are often needed to push the frontiers of research and education. We invite proposals from early-career investigators who wish to pursue research and education activities that cross disciplinary boundaries.
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Checklist: you must address these

1. Develop research career
2. Develop education career
3. Demonstrate commitment to teaching, learning
4. Demonstrate commitment to dissemination of knowledge
5. Mission of the department
6. Mission of the organization
7. Communicate expectations of the organization
8. Integration of research with education
9. Strategies for assessing impacts of research and education components
10. Best if they cross interdisciplinary boundaries – but this is not absolutely required
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Checklist: you must address these

1. Note the “demonstrated commitment”

2. Do you think you are showing commitment to your education plan if you have not shown it in the past? Would you believe someone that has not shown interest in it in the past?

3. As stated before, you are unlikely to get funding upon first submission. Yet, you should use the time before you do get funded to have at least some educational outreach that demonstrates your commitment.
Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in Building the Future: Investing in Discovery and Innovation - NSF Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018 – 2022. These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.
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In other words: you also need to learn what the current interests of NSF and your directorate are – so that you align.

Having said this: be sure this aligns with your mission too. THIS IS IMPORTANT. This is YOUR career. You will spend 5 years pursuing it. Be sure it is something you have interest in.
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Checklist: you must address these

1. Develop research career
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7. Communicate expectations of the organization
8. Integration of research with education
9. Strategies for assessing impacts of research and education components
10. Best if they cross interdisciplinary boundaries – but this is not absolutely required
11. Align with mission of NSF directorates
12. Qualifications of the research team
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Review criteria

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:
Solicitation
Review criteria

**Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and

**Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.
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Review criteria

• What is the potential for the proposed activity to:
  • a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
  • b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?

• To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? Contrast is key
Solicitation

Review criteria

3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?

4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?

5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?
Recommendation

- I highly suggest reading the program announcement from start to finish at least once – before progressing.

- I then suggest reading the sections relevant to content and language and relative to review criteria at least once every few weeks.

- Once you have a draft of your proposal, use the checklist to include content and language that makes it clear you are addressing the purpose of the CAREER program.
Plan to Reapply

SUCCESS RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBE</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HER</td>
<td>9%</td>
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Biological Sciences (BIO)
Computer and Information Science and Eng (CISE)
Education and Human Resources (EHR)
Engineering (ENG)
Geosciences (GEO)
Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS)
Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE)
Office of Polar Programs (OPP)

Can apply to more than one program with POs’ OK