National Science Foundation
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NSF 06-011

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Ethics Education in Science and Engineering (EESE) (NSF 06-011)

The following FAQs pertain to the Ethics Education in Science and Engineering (EESE) program.

COLLABORATION

- What type(s) of inter-organizational collaborations is NSF encouraging?
- If multiple organizations are cooperating in the proposed project, what are the mechanisms for submitting a proposal?
- One of the organizations involved in our project is in an EPSCoR state. How do we get EPSCoR certification?
- My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- What organizations are eligible to apply?
- Are government laboratories or for-profit organizations allowed to submit EESE proposals?
- The Engineering College in my university would like to submit a separate proposal from one being developed in the College of Arts and Sciences. Is this allowed?
- Can organizations outside the U.S. apply?
- Are graduate students or unaffiliated researchers eligible to apply?
- Will proposals addressing medical or biomedical ethics be considered?
- Is a program for graduate students of pharmacy (or veterinary medicine) eligible for EESE support?
- Will proposals addressing ethics and the social and behavioral sciences be considered?
- Will proposals addressing issues of ethics and international science and engineering be considered?
- I have not incorporated a plan to test the educational activities in my project at another institution. Will my proposal be eligible for consideration?
- My ethics center has indicated an interest in working with me on a seminar series as part of the project, but we have not yet determined how many sessions would be useful or what the subjects would be. Can I submit with this left undetermined?
- My question is not on this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

FINANCIAL/BUDGET/START DATE

- How will the EESE funds be divided across the NSF directorates and different subject areas of the solicitation?
- Is there a limit to the amount of funds I can request for my proposal?
- Can funds be used for graduate stipends or tuition waivers?
- When will the announcement of the grant awards be made, and how soon afterward would you expect a program to begin?
- My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

PANEL PARTICIPATION

- Can I be a member of the panel that will review EESE proposals this year?

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

- What needs to be included in the Project Summary?
- Some of the work on our proposal is being done by a graduate student who will not be a co-PI. How should that work be reported?
- Our project has an advisory board with members representing three neighboring institutions. Would cross-listing the course that we develop satisfy the requirement for testing in more than one institution, or would we have to rotate it among the institutions?

COLLABORATION

Question: What type(s) of inter-organizational collaborations is NSF encouraging?

Answer: The EESE Program expects that proposers will put together the best team possible to carry out the project. Simultaneously, EESE encourages research-intensive and -extensive universities to partner with other types of colleges and universities, especially ones serving underrepresented minority populations.

Question: If multiple organizations are cooperating in the proposed project, what are the mechanisms for submitting a proposal?

Answer: NSF has two mechanisms for submission of proposals from multiple organizations: as a single proposal, in which a single award is being requested (with subawards administered by the lead organization); or by simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations, with each organization requesting a separate award. In either case, the lead organization's proposal must contain all of the requisite sections as a single package to be provided to reviewers (that will happen automatically when procedures below are followed). All collaborative proposals must clearly describe the roles to be played by the other organizations, specify the managerial arrangements, and explain the advantages of the multi-organizational effort within the project description.

These collaborative proposals are described more fully in Section II.D.4 of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) (http://nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg). The GPG also includes instructions for submission of these types of proposals.

Question: One of the organizations involved in our project is in an EPSCoR state. How do we get EPSCoR certification?

Answer: Certification is no longer required as part of the EPSCoR co-funding process. Eligibility for co-funding is automatic if a collaborative proposal involving an organization located in an EPSCoR jurisdiction is submitted according to the instructions provided in Section II.D.3.b of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (http://nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg).

Question: My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Answer: Send e-mail to: eglinert@nsf.gov.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Question: What organizations are eligible to apply?

Answer: Only accredited U.S. colleges or universities or U.S. professional associations are eligible to apply to this program. Other types of organizations can be included only as non-lead collaborators or sub-awardees. In addition, U.S. colleges and universities and U.S. professional associations can be non-lead collaborators or sub-awardees. Professional associations include non-profit organizations like science or engineering societies and educational consortia. Trade associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are not professional associations, and are not eligible to apply. Trade associations

and NGOs may be involved as sub-awardees or in consultant or advisory roles in proposals.

Question: Are government labs or for-profit organizations allowed to submit EESE proposals?

Answer: Only accredited U.S. colleges or universities and U.S. professional associations may submit proposals for this competition.

Question: The Engineering College in my university would like to submit a separate proposal from one being developed in the College of Arts and Sciences. Is this allowed?

Answer: No. This violates the restriction of one proposal per organization. If we receive more than one proposal from an organization, the organization will have a week from notification to select one for consideration. If one is not selected in that time, all proposals will be returned without review. An organization may be included as a non-lead collaborator or sub-awardee on any number of proposals.

Question: Can organizations outside the U.S. apply?

Answer: The EESE Program encourages international collaborations. The topic of ethics education in science and engineering crosses national boundaries. Many international students come to do graduate work in science and engineering in U.S. universities. The typical expectation is that investigators on a project team will receive funding from their own countries' funding agencies. especially if the international collaboration is with researchers in developed countries (e.g., Europe, Britain, Japan) that have substantial resources of their own. The eligibility rules for submission to EESE do allow researchers outside of the U.S. to apply indirectly - either as consultants on a lead proposal or as subawards. In both cases, justification is required of the unique capabilities offered or the specific research needs that will be accomplished. No indirect costs are allowed for foreign organizations. In addition, it is expected that the international budget will be small, relative to the overall size of the project budget.

Question: Are graduate students or unaffiliated researchers eligible to apply to EESE?

Answer: Graduate students and unaffiliated researchers may be included on EESE proposals. Graduate students should not be included as PI, co-PI, or senior personnel. Unaffiliated researchers need to go through an eligible organization to be involved in the EESE competition. (See the answers to the previous questions.)

Question: Will proposals addressing medical or biomedical ethics be considered?

Answer: No, the EESE program will not consider proposals focused on ethics for medical students or in medical education. The EESE program does, however, encourage proposals that address ethical issues related to medical informatics or systems engineering. EESE will not consider proposals that will start or provide incremental improvements to formal or informal educational activities responsive to Federal mandates for research integrity or human-subjects training requirements.

Question: Is a program for graduate students of pharmacy (or veterinary medicine) eligible for EESE support?

Answer: NSF does not support research in clinical aspects of this field, so a project focused primarily on this audience would be of lower priority for NSF support.

Question: Will proposals addressing ethics and the social and behavioral sciences be considered?

Answer: Yes, the EESE program considers proposals focused on ethics and the social and behavioral sciences. It considers proposals focused on any of the areas in science or engineering that NSF supports. This includes history and philosophy of science, science and technology studies, and studies of ethics and science, engineering, and technology as well as studies of policy, science, engineering and technology.

Question: Will proposals addressing issues of ethics and international science and engineering be considered?

Answer: Yes. The EESE program will consider proposals focused on ethical issues in graduate education in science and engineering in an international context. These involve ethical issues for international students and faculty in U.S. graduate education, ethical issues in graduate education for international careers, and issues of ethics arising in the context of international practice.

Question: I have not incorporated a plan to test the educational activities in my project at another institution. Will my proposal be eligible for consideration?

Answer: Yes, it will be eligible. But panelists will be asked to keep in mind the criterion of testing at another institution in evaluating the submissions. They are likely to assign better ratings to otherwise similar proposals with these plans.

Question: My ethics center has indicated an interest in working with me on a seminar series as part of the project, but we have not yet determined how many sessions would be useful or what the subjects for the sessions would be. Can I submit with this left undetermined?

Answer: Yes, you can submit. However, reviewers are likely to assign better ratings to otherwise similar proposals with carefully worked-out plans that specify project team members' responsibilities, what the educational activities will be, who will undertake them, and how the results will be evaluated.

Question: My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Answer: Send e-mail to: eglinert@nsf.gov.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET/START DATE

Question: How will the EESE funds be divided across the NSF directorates and different subject areas of the solicitation?

Answer: We do not make a priori funding decisions across the subject areas. EESE is an interdisciplinary activity involving many Directorates, and many awards receive funds from several Directorates. Decisions about funding are made after the proposals are reviewed, and after all Directorates have a chance to determine which proposals are the most interesting and promising to them. If the proposals in some particular area are of unusually high quality, that area may attract more money than expected in advance.

Question: Is there a limit to the amount of funds I can request for my proposal?

Answer: There is no official limit. The budget for this competition is $3 million, and the program expects to make around 6 to 10 awards, with amounts not exceeding $300,000. Investigators should be aware that if they submit proposals with requests that far exceed that amount, reviewers and NSF program officials may question the feasibility of their doing the project with less funding. Projects that include partnerships (for example, between universities and scientific societies) for the purpose of disseminating best practices in graduate ethics education will be eligible for a maximum award amount of $400,000.

Question: Can funds be used for graduate stipends or tuition waivers?

Answer: Yes, EESE proposals may request support in all the usual NSF budget categories.

Question: When will the announcement of the grant awards be made, and how soon afterward would you expect a program to begin?

Answer: We plan to communicate with successful applicants by July and expect awards under this solicitation to be made by end of summer. Grantees would have some flexibility in when they actually start their grant-supported activities; you should request a starting date that makes most sense to you. That is one item that can be negotiated if necessary after the proposal has been reviewed.

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Answer: Send e-mail to:eglinert@nsf.gov.

PANEL PARTICIPATION

Question: Can I be a member of the panel that will review EESE proposals this year?

Answer: If you are on an EESE proposal submitted this year, then you cannot be a panelist this year. If you did not submit an EESE proposal this year in response to the current solicitation, you may volunteer to be a panelist. If you want to volunteer, notify the Program Officer in the list of contacts

who is closest to your field of research. Include a URL for your biosketch and a brief description of your research expertise in your e-mail. The program officer will contact you if your area of expertise is relevant and we need panelists in that area. If you don't see anyone in the list of contacts who you feel is appropriate, send the information to eglinert@nsf.gov.

Question: What needs to be included in the Project Summary?

Answer: The NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) (available at http://nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg) specifies that the Project Summary must clearly address, in separate statements within the one-page limit, both the broader impacts and the intellectual merit. Proposals that do not address both merit-review criteria in separate statements in the project summary will be returned without review. The GPG also states that the broader impacts must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

Question: Some of the work on our proposal is being done by a graduate student who will not be a co-PI. How should that work be reported?

Answer: Graduate students should be involved as project assistants as well as recipients of program activities or subjects of research. Therefore, whether or not the student will participate if your project is funded, it may be advantageous to include this student and her/his contribution to the proposal in your description of the project team.

Question: Our project has an advisory board with members representing three neighboring institutions. Would cross-listing the course that we develop satisfy the requirement for testing in more than one institution, or would we have to rotate it among the institutions?

Answer: The requirement for testing educational activities in more than one institution is intended to ensure that NSF-supported activities are exportable beyond the institutional context in which they were developed. It also includes collecting and analyzing data that will provide measures of success. If one faculty member or a team developed the course and offered it at one institution, and students at all three institutions could sign up, that would not constitute a sufficient test, even if there were evaluation plans. An appropriate test might offer it independently at one or more of the other institutions, with previously uninvolved faculty members and students. It would include assessment plans. Merely rotating the course among the three institutions, with substantially the same group of faculty members offering it and assessing results at each institution, might not constitute a sufficiently independent test of its feasibility and effectiveness beyond those institutions.

Question: Would testing a project activity at another college in the same institution satisfy the statement in the solicitation that project activities should be tested in more than one institution?

Answer: Testing the activities at several colleges (or perhaps even departments) in one institution would be better than doing it just at one, but all other things being equal the proposal is unlikely to receive as high priority for support as would one that satisfies the requirement for inter-institutional testing.

Question: Can a project propose to create an ethics-training program that leads to a graduate degree?

Answer: Yes, provided that there is a clearly stated plan to test the program's feasibility, or that of relevant program components, at more than one institution.

Question: Can a project include developing a Web site (or augmenting an existing one)?

Answer: Yes, provided that the work performed is in line with the objectives set out in the solicitation. Proposals solely to develop or expand Web sites are unlikely to be competitive. Competitive proposals would incorporate Web-site development (if that is an aspect of their plans) with other outreach and dissemination activities.

Question: Do citations and references count against the Project Description page limit?

Answer: No. They should be included in the References Cited section of the proposal.

Question: May I submit the same proposal to EESE and to another NSF program?

Answer: No. A unique proposal can be submitted only once to NSF. If the proposal is a duplicate of or

substantially similar to a proposal already under consideration by NSF, it will be returned without review.

Question: Can I request an extension of time to submit a proposal?

Answer: No.

Question: What if FastLane or my university computer is unavailable on the submission deadline?

Answer: Please avoid this problem by submitting early. If you choose not to submit until the last minute, it is at your own risk.

Question: What if there is an earthquake, fire or other disaster?

Answer: Please contact us at eglinert@nsf.gov immediately. We will make determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Question: What if listing my five most recent relevant papers would take more than two pages because these papers have many authors?

Answer: The two-page limit dominates over the need to include the entire list of authors for your relevant publications. If your publications include large numbers of co-authors and you choose to list all of the co-authors, you likely will be able to list only a few papers. Instead, you may want to list only the first few authors and add text reference to additional authors, such as "Jane Doe, Soo Kim, and 26 other authors, including <Your Name>."

Question: How do we submit supplementary documents?

Answer: Supplementary documents that are in accordance with the solicitation should be scanned into the Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section of the FastLane proposal.

Question: Why is the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) the only one to appear as an option on the NSF cover sheet in FastLane? I normally apply to Geosciences and my proposal deals primarily with Geosciences.

Answer: The SBE Directorate is coordinating the management of all proposals submitted to EESE. Program Officers from all Directorates will participate in the management of EESE proposals that fall into their areas of expertise. They will participate in the panelist-selection and proposal-assignment processes.

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