



National Science Foundation
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Arlington, Virginia 22230

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (SPRF) Program

1. I am a doctoral student at University X, and I am planning to work with Professor Y at University Z. Which university should submit my SPRF proposal?
2. I received my Doctoral degree in 2011. Am I eligible to apply to the SPRF program?
3. Can I have more than one Mentor?
4. If I have more than one Mentor, then who should write the Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan?
5. Can I submit Letters of Recommendation?
6. I have collaboration with Laboratory X, which has agreed to allow me to use their resources and equipment. Should the Director of the Lab write a letter to show this commitment?
7. Can I submit the proposal as an Individual, not going through any university or institution?
8. Can I choose a foreign institution (and a mentor at that site) for my postdoctoral work?
9. My project is interdisciplinary, but it also fits in with the Broadening Participation Track because I have a lot of activities toward that goal. Which track should I choose to submit it to? Is one track better than the other in terms of success rate?
10. My project does not require any data collection or analysis. Do I still need the Data Management Plan?

1. I am a doctoral student at University X, and I am planning to work with Professor Y at University Z. Which university should submit my SPRF proposal?

The submitting university should be the one where you would be working as a Postdoctoral Fellow, which is University Z. Consult with your mentor (Professor Y) and the Sponsored Projects Office at that university to determine the details of the submission.

2. I received my Doctoral degree in 2011. Am I eligible to apply to the SPRF program?

It depends on the date of your official degree conferral. If that date is within 36 months of your SPRF application deadline date, then you are eligible.

3. Can I have more than one Mentor?

Yes, but you need to choose one as the Lead Mentor and have your proposal submitted from his/her institution. The other Mentor(s) can be put as additional co-PIs on the proposal's Cover Sheet.

4. If I have more than one Mentor, then who should write the Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan?

The Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan should be written jointly by your Mentors and it should present the roles of each Mentor clearly.

5. Can I submit Letters of Recommendation?

No. Letters of Recommendation will not be accepted.

6. I have collaboration with Laboratory X, which has agreed to allow me to use their resources and equipment. Should the Director of the Lab write a letter to show this commitment?

Yes. A Letter of Commitment, detailing what resources they are allowing you, should be submitted. However, it is very important that this letter NOT contain any recommendation for your project.

7. Can I submit the proposal as an Individual, not going through any university or institution?

No. Your SPRF proposal must be submitted by the institution where you will be performing your research.

8. Can I choose a foreign institution (and a mentor at that site) for my postdoctoral work?

Yes, but you must select a US institution to submit your proposal from, and your Lead Mentor (Sponsoring Scientist) must be from that US institution. Your work at the foreign institution can involve a co-Mentor from that institution, and this co-Mentor can be added to the proposal as co-PI, if desired.

9. My project is interdisciplinary, but it also fits in with the Broadening Participation Track because I have a lot of activities toward that goal. Which track should I choose to submit it to? Is one track better than the other in terms of success rate?

It is up to you to decide which track is best for you. Consult with your Mentor(s) and read the solicitation carefully to determine what suits you the best. The success rate for each track depends on multiple factors, and cannot be pre-estimated.

10. My project does not require any data collection or analysis. Do I still need the Data Management Plan?

Yes. NSF now requires that all proposals include a Data Management Plan in the form of a supplementary document that is no more than two pages. For more information, consult the [Data Management Plan for SBE Proposals](#) web site.