

The background features a complex pattern of white lines and arrows on a blue field. The lines include solid straight lines, dashed lines, and curved paths. Some arrows are solid with heads, while others are dashed with heads. Small white circles are scattered throughout the pattern, some at the ends of lines and others in open spaces.

PREPARING FOR THE NSF CAREER PROPOSAL

Presented by the
UB Office of Research Advancement

The CAREER proposal submission deadline is
July 25, 2022.

 **University at Buffalo** The State University of New York

What makes the CAREER Award different?

- A CAREER proposal details how you will use NSF funds to enhance your career development as a researcher and educator. It is ***not*** a standard research proposal.
- A CAREER proposal highlights what you ***uniquely*** bring to your field and how the proposed work will help you achieve your long-term goals.
- You describe your career plan as a research ***path*** (your lifelong research goals), not a research ***project***. Your proposal should envision the start of an independent, long-term academic research trajectory.
- PIs may apply for the CAREER no more than three times.
- Co-PIs are not allowed for CAREER proposals.
- A letter from department chair is required to confirm eligibility and to detail commitment from the school to support the PI's research path.

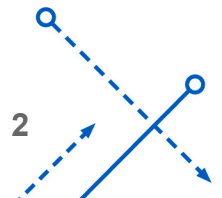


National
Science
Foundation

**Review the
FOA here**

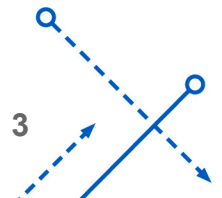
NSF PAPPG

**START
EARLY!
It is a long
process!**



The Educational Plan – not optional!

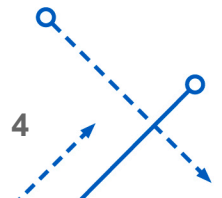
- Well-articulated educational goals and how these goals fit with your overall academic plans are key. ***Poor educational goals are the #1 reason for why an otherwise good CAREER proposal fails.***
- **Integrate activities.** Education, mentoring, teaching, and outreach are part of a successful academic career. You must integrate your education and outreach activities in a meaningful and sensible way with your research activities.
- **Be creative!** There is no single approach to the educational component – consider your personal goals and research, as well as those of UB and your department, and how these might be most impactful.
- As with all NSF proposals, you must have a strong Broader Impacts section, as well as your research and educational plans. Remember, though, that Broader Impacts are not the same as your educational plan!



NSF CAREER Budget Basic\$

- Total cost minimum of \$400,000 for 5 years for CISE, EHR, GEO, MPS, or SBE disciplines
- Total cost minimum of \$500,000 for 5 years for BIO, ENG, or OPP disciplines
- Your requested budget should be close to the total cost minimum provided by NSF
- Speak to the Program Officer about the planned budget
- Work with your department's SPS Specialist to create your official budget

[Find your SPS Specialist HERE](#)



Talk to Program Officers – know you're on the right path

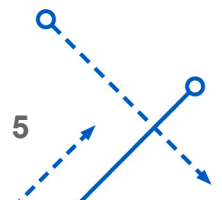
NSF strongly recommends ***talking with your disciplinary program officer or your Division CAREER contact early.***

Prepare a **one-page** summary of your CAREER proposal plans and email it to the program officer or division contact for the directorate you intend to apply to.

The PO will provide feedback on whether your proposed research is a good fit for that directorate, let you know if your planned budget is appropriate for that directorate, help you understand reviewer comments from a previous submission, and offer resources to enhance your current proposal plans.

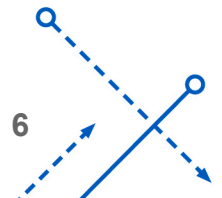
Remember – **they want to talk to you!**

[Click here to find contact info for all NSF CAREER Directorates](#)



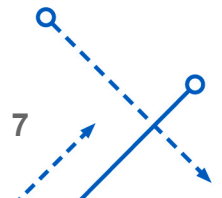
Tips for a Successful CAREER Proposal – Make a Plan

- **Know the literature and the current activity in your field.** Do a thorough literature review for the theoretical and experimental work covered by your proposal.
- **Be realistic** in both your research goals and budget. You should propose an amount of work that will be appropriate and well-received rather than proposing an impossibly large amount of work. You must express a compelling scientific question and a clear, reasonable research plan to answer this question.
- **Why you, why now?** Why are you the right person for a CAREER Award and why is now the time to do it?
- **Remember, it's a competition.** Distinguish your application from the rest. Be persuasive, not just descriptive. Is it clear? Is it exciting? Will the work make a difference? [Review funded CAREER Awards here.](#)
- **Tell a story.** Write clearly, concisely with a beginning, middle and end; keep your reader in mind at all times.



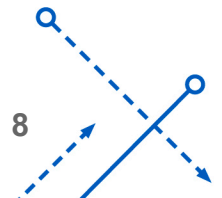
Tips for a Successful CAREER Proposal – Write for your Audience

- **Address merit review criteria.** Be sure that you've addressed each criterion clearly and explicitly.
- **Understand the reviewers' perspective.** Reviewers will have limited time to review your application.
- **Anticipate questions** that may arise and address these in your narrative. Be explicit, do not assume that reviewers know what you mean, show them. Address any limitations and provide alternative approaches.
- Include an **assessment plan**. You must include an evaluation plan that outlines how you will assess your proposed activities, including your educational activities. **Click [HERE](#) for ORA's assessment tips.**
- **For Resubmissions** – carefully consider all **reviewer comments** from previous submissions, and make appropriate changes.



Tips for a Successful CAREER Proposal – Polishing your Proposal

- **Know and follow the rules.** Read and follow the NSF CAREER solicitation carefully!
- Know the process for submitting a proposal at UB. Watch the [UB Research Fundamentals youtube videos here](#).
- **Looks matter.** Present an attractive package. Organize your application according to the guidelines – including use of headings, white space, and graphics.
- **Edit until the proposal is clear.** Have a mentor, someone in your field or a colleague in a different field to review your draft, or work with an ORA editor. Then, revise, revise, revise to ensure you've addressed all concerns.
- **START EARLY.** DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!



Next Steps

Register for
the ORA
CAREER Q&A
here

Click here to
contact ORA

Click here to
access the
ORA's NSF
toolkit

Watch the
2021 NSF
CAREER
Webinar here

Click here to
view CAREER
eligibility
criteria

Find other
early career
funding
opportunities