CAREER PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Note: This checklist is intended to be a supplementary aid in the preparation of CAREER proposals, and is not intended as an all-inclusive repetition of the requirements specified in the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) and the CAREER Program solicitation (NSF 02-111), including the required proposal contents, associated proposal preparation guidelines, and overall checklist found in Appendix A of the GPG. It is, however, meant to highlight certain critical items so they will not be overlooked when the proposal is prepared. Please refer to the GPG, the CAREER Program solicitation, and the CAREER FAQs (NSF 03-031) for complete instructions.

✓ **PROPOSAL PREPARATION ORDER**

- **Prepare (and save) the proposal cover sheet first.** Entering the CAREER Program Solicitation Number (NSF 02-111) on the cover sheet will ensure that you have the correct forms for CAREER proposals.

✓ **PROPOSAL MARGIN AND SPACING REQUIREMENTS** (see the GPG, II.B.2)

- **Page Margins** - Proposals must have 2.5 cm margins at the top, bottom and on each side.
- **Type Size and Spacing**

  The type size used throughout the proposal must be clear and readily legible, and conform to all of the following three requirements:

  1. the height of the letters must not be smaller than 10 point;
  2. type density must be no more than 15 characters per 2.5 cm; (for proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 characters per 2.5 cm); and
  3. no more than 6 lines must be within a vertical space of 2.5 cm.

✓ **FONTS**

- Use **True Type** fonts to ensure accurate conversion to .pdf and avoid printing problems at NSF.

✓ **REMINDERS**

DO NOT INCLUDE APPENDICES. Without prior written approval from the appropriate NSF Assistant Director, proposals with appendices will be returned without review. Note that such approvals are rarely granted (see the GPG, II.C.2k).

REVIEW CRITERIA. NSF will return without review proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts) within the one-page Project Summary (see the GPG, II.C.2b).

Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program
Program Solicitation NSF 02-111
Submission Requirements Checklist
FastLane Help Desk 1-800-673-6188

FastLane (FL) Form	Items to be Contained in FastLane (FL) Form		Submission Method
PI Information	Information Requested in Standard FL Form		Automatically generated by FL.
Cover Sheet	Announcement No.	NSF 02-111	Submission is required. Entered using standard FL form. The cover sheet (NSF Form 1207) must either be signed electronically at the time of submission by an AOR or the AOR has 5 working days after submission to electronically sign the proposal. PI signatures are no longer required for proposals submitted to NSF.
	Org/Unit	Select NSF program(s) from displayed list	
	Co-PIs	Not allowed in competition	
	CAREER Eligibility	Certify eligibility by checking the applicable criteria boxes.	PI certification of eligibility for CAREER program is required.
	PECASE Eligibility	Select **either** "I wish to be considered" **or** " I do not wish to be considered"	One PECASE eligibility box must be selected. Note: this information is only used after a CAREER award has been made, and is not a factor in the review.
Project Summary (Limited to One Page)	Summary of integrated education and research activities of the proposed career-development plan, not to exceed one page in length.	PI **must** separately address both merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts) within the one-page Project Summary	Submission is required. **Cannot exceed one page.** Enter as text, by typing or by uploading a word-processor, PostScript, or PDF file. (See **Note** below.)
Table of Contents	Automatically generated by FL		Automatically generated by FL. Proposer cannot edit this form.
Project Description (Limited to 15 Pages)	Career-Development Plan, including Results from Prior Support (if applicable)		Submission is required. **Cannot exceed 15 pages.** Uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)
References Cited	References for **both** research and education activities		Submission is required. Entered as text or uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)

NOTE: In addition to PDF files, users can upload a variety of word-processor files and PostScript files. These files will automatically be converted to PDF format.

FastLane (FL) Form	Items to be Contained in FastLane (FL) Form		Submission Method
Biographical Sketches (Limited to TWO Pages)	Information Requested in Standard FL Form	For PI, include **BOTH** research and education activities and accomplishments	Submission is required. To upload the biosketches as a file, click on the PI's name and then the "Transfer File" button. Entered as text or uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)
Budgets (Including Budget Justification)	Information Requested in Standard FL Form See the GPG, II.C.2g, the CAREER Solicitation (NSF 02-111) Section V.B., and the CAREER FAQ's (NSF 03-031)		Submission is required. Budget: One budget for each year of support requested. The Cumulative Budget is automatically generated by FL. Entered using standard on-line FL form and/or uploaded excel spreadsheet (available for down-load in the FastLane Proposal Preparation application). No salary support for any senior personnel other than PI is permitted, either in the primary budget or within subawards. Budget Justification: Not to exceed three pages. Entered as text or uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)
Current and Pending Support	Information Requested in Standard FL Form		Submission is required. You can upload all Current and Pending Support items of your proposal as one file by selecting the PI's name and editing an existing form or creating a new one. Entered as text or uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)
Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources	Information Requested in Standard FL Form		Submission is required. Entered as text or uploaded as a file. (See **Note** below.)

NOTE: In addition to PDF files, users can upload a variety of word-processor files and PostScript files. These files will automatically be converted to PDF format.

FastLane (FL) Form	Items to be Contained in FastLane (FL) Form		Submission Method
Supplementary Docs	Departmental Endorsement	The proposal must include one (and only one) endorsement letter from the applicant's department head (or equivalent organizational official) which: • Includes the statement, "I have read and I endorse this career-development plan. I attest that the PI's career-development plan is supported by and integrated into the educational and research goals of the department and the organization. I personally commit to the support and professional development of the PI."; • Describes the support that the department/organization will provide. • Verifies the CAREER eligibility information that the PI self-certified in the proposal submission process. The PI's department head (or equivalent organizational official) must sign the letter. The official's name, title, and date must appear below the signature. Recommended length is one page.	Submission is required. Scan the documents and convert to PDF files. Upload the PDF files. Do not mail paper copies to NSF, unless specifically instructed to do so.
	Letters of Commitment	Letters that describe planned collaborative efforts. Letters should be short and only describe the planned collaborative efforts.	
List of Suggested Reviewers (Optional)	Information Requested in Standard FL Form		Submission is optional. Entered as text. File Upload is not an option.
Deviation Authorization (If applicable)	"GPG Section II.A." Exemption	Full text of approval from the cognizant **NSF Assistant Director** must be submitted.	Submission is required, if applicable. Entered as text.
	"Eligibility Criteria" Exemption	**No eligibility exemptions are allowed.**	
Link Collaborative Proposals	Not applicable		Not applicable
Add/Delete Non PI/Co-PI Senior Personnel	Not applicable		Not applicable

Summary of NSF Rules for PDF files:
(https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/pdfcreat.htm)

- **Do not use Adobe Acrobat PDFWriter**
- **Always embed all fonts**
- **Always use embeddable Type 1 or True Type fonts**
- **Always check your results**
- **If using TeX or LaTeX, subset your fonts at 100%**

PDF Reminder for PI's and SPO's:

Software to Use to Create PDF Files:

- **Adobe Acrobat Distiller (3.x or higher) or Ghostscript (6.5 or higher)**

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VERY IMPORTANT SCANNING INFORMATION

Size of Scanned Document
Once your document is scanned and converted to PDF format, open the file using Adobe Reader. Look at the bottom of the document and you will see the file size. It should be 8.5 x 11. If it is something other than 8.5 x 11 (even if it is close), your document may not be able to be printed at NSF. You need to rescan the document and make sure the file is 8.5 x 11. Some scanners allow you to set the output size, otherwise read the instructions in the scanner's manual OR, if you use Adobe Distiller to convert your files to pdf, use the following instructions:
If you use Distiller 3.0: Open Distiller and go to the "Distiller" Menu and select "JobOptions". Under the "General" tab make sure under "Device Settings", "Default Page Size", Width is 8.5 and Height is 11.0 INCHES.
If you use Distiller 4.0: Make sure you have downloaded the FastLane JobOptions (https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/pdfcreat.htm and scroll to Joboptions) Open Distiller. Go to the "Settings" Menu and choose "JobOptions". Under the "Advanced" tab make sure under "Default Page Size", Width is 8.5 and Height is 11.0 and Units is INCHES.

Orientation of file
Please remember to keep the pages of your file in portrait (8.5 x 11) orientation. NSF has experienced problems with files in landscape (11 x 8.5) orientation. These problems occur more often when you have various orientation combinations within one file. For example, page 1-5 is portrait, page 6-7 is landscape, and page 8-15 is portrait.

Resolution
Do not scan at the highest resolution. In most cases, this will cause your files to become very large. NSF is only concerned with being able to read the document. The file does not need to be in color. Some scanned files at a lower resolution may look "fuzzy," but as long as they are readable, NSF will be satisfied. The larger the file, the longer it will take to transfer the file over the Internet; and you may not even be able to upload the file into FastLane! Moreover, if a file is very large, it will take longer to open the proposal in FastLane, causing the Internet to "time out" before the proposal can be opened.

Adobe Photoshop Hints
If you scan your documents into Adobe Photoshop (Illustrator and Framemaker also apply), you still need to convert them to PDF files using Adobe Distiller. The PDF output from Photoshop (Photoshop PDF *pdf) is not the same output you achieve when using Distiller-even though both products are made by Adobe. (The Photoshop PDF uses PDF Writer which does not work with FastLane.) Please save your Photoshop file as "Photoshop EPS" and then use Distiller to convert to PDF.

If you do use Adobe Photoshop, make sure your document is not inverted (black background and white text). If the file is inverted, click on the "Image" menu and select "Adjust" and then "Invert."

FastLane Blocked PDF Producers
FastLane cannot currently accept PDF files from the following document producers:

Canvas/Deneba PDF filter
Dvipdf(m)
FrameMaker
GhostScript versions prior to 6.5
Hewlett-Packard Intelligent Scanners
PDFWriter
PhotoShop
PStill

While the errors vary for each producer, the root issue is that PDF files created by these producers, while appearing fine as standalone documents, have one of the following problems:

1. They cannot be easily concatenated with PDF files created by other producers.
2. They have problems with they manner in which they embed fonts into PDF documents

Please see the following FastLane web site for more information: https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/PitstopBlockedPDF.html

Do Not scan and save as TIFF

Do not save your file as TIFF. Sometimes TIFF files produce an error message and FastLane is unable to read the file. TIFF files usually include an EOFB (end of data) command that indicates where each file's image information stops. Some applications insert the EOFB command before the last line of the file when they create TIFF files. For example, if the TIFF file contains 4400 lines, the application may insert the command at line 4368. Acrobat viewers will return an error message when they read an EOFB command before the actual last line of a TIFF file. Photoshop creates TIFF files with an EOFB command on the last line of the file so that Acrobat viewers can open these files without error.

ALWAYS PREVIEW

Preview your scanned document to make sure no characters were inserted into the document. This happens when you scan using OCR technology.