National Science Foundation: Rejected Proposal Issues

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NSF GUIDE (NSF 15-1) took effect for proposals submitted or due on or after, *December 26, 2014*
Proposals Not Accepted

A proposal WILL NOT be accepted or WILL be returned without review by NSF for the following reasons:

The proposal:

- does not meet NSF proposal preparation requirements, such as page limitations, formatting instructions, and electronic submission, as specified in the Grant Proposal Guide, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide or program solicitation

- is submitted with insufficient lead-time before the activity is scheduled to begin

- is a full proposal that was submitted by a proposer that has received a "not invited" response to the submission of a preliminary proposal

- is a duplicate of, or substantially similar to, a proposal already under consideration by NSF from the same submitter
Form and Format

- Project Description did not include a separate section labeled *Broader Impacts of the Proposed Work*
- Font used was too small; there were more than six lines of text per vertical inch
- Margins were less than one inch
- Use of *et al* in Biosketch & References sections
Biographical Sketch

The proposal deviated from the NSF approved Biosketch format to include unapproved sections such as:

- **Awards and Honors**
- A reference to the PI’s total number of publications
- Undergraduate advisees listed
- Not including up to 5 other products
Program Announcement: Required Deviations

- Special requirement in program announcement asked for a one sentence personnel role description to be included in biosketch; PI included a two sentence description that resulted in proposal being rejected.
Letters of Collaboration

- Collaborator provided a letter of support instead of a letter of collaboration (previously called letter of commitment)

- NSF wants to see a letter that is limited to stating the intent to collaborate and should not contain endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project
Proposals Not Accepted: File Update Requested

- NSF may request a file update for proposals that need minor corrections or an updated budget.

- Changes allowed are limited to those specifically requested by NSF. All other sections should remain as they were in the original submission.
Dear Dr. [Name],

I am writing to inform you that the proposal you submitted to the Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS) division at NSF, [Proposal Number], [Title of Proposal], will be returned without review. The reason for this decision is that the proposal is not compliant with the IOS solicitation 13-600 nor with the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG).

Specifically, the proposal lacked a section in the Project Description that is explicitly required by both the solicitation 13-600 and the GPG. The relevant requirement is described in the solicitation NSF 13-600:

“Section II. Project (This section is limited to four pages. The use of the sub-sections listed in the solicitation is recommended, organized as appropriate.)
5. "Broader Impacts" (This section is now explicitly required in the GPG)"

The relevant statement in the GPG 15-1 is:

“The Project Description must contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities.”

In addition, your proposal was not compliant with the font and margin requirements outlined in both the solicitation 13-600 and the GPG. The relevant statement in NSF 13-600 is:

“Ensure that your final submitted pdf conforms to the typeface size limits (at least 10-11 pt depending on font), line spacing maximum (no more than six lines of text per vertical space of one inch) and margins (at least one inch on all sides of page) specified in the GPG.”

Your proposal had 7 lines of text per inch and the margins on all sides of the page were significantly below the 1” requirement.

Sincerely,
Irwin N. Forseth, Jr., Ph.D.,
Cluster Leader & Program Director
Questions?