

Conformance with Instructions for Proposal Preparation

It is important that all proposals conform to the instructions provided in the GPG. Conformance is required and will be strictly enforced unless an authorization to deviate from standard proposal preparation requirements has been approved. NSF may return without review proposals that are not consistent with these instructions. See GPG Chapter IV.B for additional information. NSF must authorize any deviations from these instructions in advance of proposal submission. Deviations may be authorized in one of two ways:

1. through specification of different requirements in an NSF program solicitation; or
2. by the written approval of the cognizant NSF Assistant Director/Office Head or designee. These approvals to deviate from NSF proposal preparation instructions may cover a particular program or programs or, in rare instances, an “individual” deviation for a particular proposal.

Proposers may deviate from these instructions only to the extent authorized. Proposals must include an authorization to deviate from standard NSF proposal preparation instructions has been received in one of the following ways, as appropriate:

(a) by identifying the solicitation number that authorized the deviation in the appropriate block on the proposal Cover Sheet; or

(b) for individual deviations, by identifying the name, date and title of the NSF official authorizing the deviation.⁹ Further instructions are available on the FastLane website.

B. Format of the Proposal

Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that proposers conduct an administrative review to ensure that proposals comply with the proposal preparation guidelines established in the GPG. GPG Exhibit II-1 contains a proposal preparation checklist that may be used to assist in this review. This checklist is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the required proposal contents and associated proposal preparation guidelines. It is, however, meant to highlight certain critical items so they will not be overlooked when the proposal is prepared.

1. Proposal Pagination Instructions

Proposers are advised that FastLane does not automatically paginate a proposal. Each section of the proposal that is uploaded as a file must be individually paginated prior to upload to the electronic system.

2. Proposal Margin and Spacing Requirements

The proposal must be clear, readily legible, and conform to the following requirements:

- a. Use one of the following typefaces identified below:
 - Arial10, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 10 points or larger
 - Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger
 - Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 points or larger

A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figure, table or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable;

b. No more than 6 lines of text within a vertical space of 1 inch; and

c. Margins, in all directions, must be at least an inch.

These requirements apply to all uploaded sections of a proposal, including supplementary documentation.

3. Page Formatting

Since many reviewers will be reviewing proposals electronically, proposers are strongly encouraged to use only a standard, single-column format for the text. Avoid using a two-column format since it can cause difficulties when reviewing the document electronically.

While line spacing (single-spaced, double-spaced, etc.) is at the discretion of the proposer, established page limits must be followed. (Individual program solicitations, however, may eliminate this proposer option by requiring other type size, margin or line spacing requirements.)

The guidelines specified above establish the **minimum** type size requirements; however, PIs are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. **Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the proposal; consequently, the use of small type not in compliance with the above guidelines may be grounds for NSF to return the proposal without review.** Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements also is necessary to ensure that no proposer will have an unfair advantage, by using smaller type or line spacing to provide more text in the proposal.

~Note from Gayle:

A4 Problem and PrintingPDFdocs.doc

Latex Users:

Problem: LaTeX was originally created in Europe, with paper size default setting for A4 paper. As a result, when generating the PDF for printing, the wrong sized PDF document will be produced. The shape of the text will be too long and too narrow to print out with the correct margins on the required North American letter-sized paper.

Fix: Set LaTeX paper size settings to "Letter" or "8.5x11".

If in metric, this will be Width: 21.59 cm and Length: 27.94 cm

- o Fix WinEdt paper size configurations
- o Fix Linex LaTeX paper size configurations

Fix PDF program print configurations for paper size and scaling.