Grant Training Center

1901 N Fort Myer Drive
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NSF Statement of Significance Questions

This worksheet will help you to add intellectual merit to your project. The more detailed your answers, the stronger your project summary will be.

Building Intellectual Merit

1. How will the proposed activity advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?

2. How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project?

3. To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

4. How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity?

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5. Is there sufficient access to resources?

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Considering Broader Impacts

The answers you provide here will ensure that you have thought over the broader impacts of your project. Further, the questions will help you generate alternative and innovative approaches to your project.

1. Describe how the activity will advance discovery and understanding, while promoting teaching, training, and learning.

2. Describe how the proposed activity broadens participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.) in your project.

3. How will your project enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships?

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4. Describe your plan for disseminating results broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding.

5. What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

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Crafting Your Project Description

You should address the following questions to ensure that your project description is clear, comprehensive, and compelling. The answers you provide will flesh out your project for the review panel.

1. How will your statement of work convey your message with clarity and concision?
If you are going to include visual materials, how will you incorporate them within the 15-page limit?

2. Discuss the relationship of your project to longer-term goals of the Primary Investigator.

3. How will you incorporate your outline for the general plan of work?

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4. How will you include plans for preservation, documentation, and sharing of data, physical collections, curriculum materials, and other related research and educational products within the 15-page limit?

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Hypotheses

Hypotheses require investigators to predict an answer to a research question based on knowledge of the field, logical analysis, and/or anecdotal observations. Not all NSF proposals will require this step; however, you may wish to include a hypothesis to assure the review panel that your project is grounded in the scientific method.

State your initial hypotheses.

List the general relationships implied by your hypotheses.

1._____is related to_____

2._____is related to_____

3._____is related to_____

Identify specific alternative relationships or explanations, which would serve as competing or rival hypotheses, if possible.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Write your revised hypotheses, considering specific competing alternatives to the hypothesized relationships (if applicable).

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Motivating Rationale

The following questions are designed to make you think about why and how your project merits the time and funding of the NSF. Further, the answers will help the *review panels* understand why your project is worth their time and funding.

1. What makes your project compelling?

2. What national, international, regional, state, or local problem will your project help overcome?

3. What evidence will you present to make panels vote yes for your project?

4. What educational, engineering, or biotechnology need will your project meet or resolve?

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5. How will the reviewers be convinced that your project is reasonable and practical?

6. Describe the case you will build to demonstrate that the training or research
