2015 NSF Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER)

Eligibility
To be eligible to apply for a CAREER award, investigators must:

- Hold a doctoral degree in a field supported by the National Science Foundation by the deadline date for the competition to which they are applying;
- Not hold tenure at their employing institution as of October 1 following the deadline date for which they are applying;
- Not have received a CAREER award previously; and
- Be employed, in a tenure-track position (or its equivalent) as an assistant professor (or an equivalent title) at an accredited institution of higher education that awards degrees in a field supported by NSF (or a non-profit, non-degree-granting organization such as a museum, observatory, or research laboratory) by October 1 following the deadline date for which they are applying.

Associate professors (or their equivalents), with or without tenure, are NOT eligible for the CAREER program.

NSF will not grant exceptions or exemptions to any of the eligibility requirements.

Due Dates
- July 21 (Biological Sciences, Computer & Information Science and Engineering, and Education and Human Resources directorates)
- July 22 (Directorate for Engineering)
- July 23 (Geosciences; Mathematical and Physical Sciences; and Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences directorates)

Budget
The minimum CAREER award is $400,000 for a five-year period, except for proposals to the Directorate for Biological Sciences, the Directorate for Engineering, or the Division of Polar Programs. For BIO, ENG, and PLR, the minimum award size is $500,000 over five years. Note: While these are minimum award amounts, in many cases they are also the maximum award amounts. OCG recommends discussing any significant deviations from these amounts with the cognizant program officer in the directorate, division, or program to which you are applying.

Only salary for the PI may be included under support for senior personnel. No other senior personnel may be paid from a CAREER award, either as part of the primary budget or in any subawards. No other budgetary limitations or requirements apply.

Other Restrictions
Because the CAREER program is intended to foster individual career development, partners or collaborators on the project, while allowed, may not be designated as co-PIs or as senior personnel. Proposals submitted with co-PIs will be returned without review.

No appendices are permitted on CAREER proposals.

No letters of support may be included with CAREER proposals.

CAREER proposals may not duplicate (or be substantially similar to) proposals already under consideration by NSF from the same investigator. In other words, your CAREER proposal must be substantially distinct from any other proposal awarded or under consideration by NSF.

Required Elements
- The project title must begin with “CAREER:” and follow with an informative title.
- Project Summary (no more than 1 page in length, not to exceed 4,600 characters, written in the third person). The summary must be suitable for publication, cannot contain any proprietary or confidential information, and is not intended to be an abstract of the proposal. It should summarize the proposed research (and must explicitly address both the intellectual merit of the proposed research and its broader impacts, in addition to an overview section) in terms that an educated lay reader could understand.
• **Project Description** (no more than 15 pages in length). The description must provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken, and must contain a separate section on broader impacts. This section **MUST** be labeled “Broader Impacts of the Proposed Work”—do not use any other title for this section, or NSF may return the proposal without review. **DO NOT USE ANY URLs** in the Project Description. You may reference websites in the references cited section, but reviewers are not obligated to check any URLs included. Make sure all the information reviewers and NSF staff need to understand your project is included in the project description. If you have previously received NSF funding (including pre- or post-doctoral fellowships), you must include a section on results from prior NSF support, and provide specific information in that section (which cannot be more than 5 pages in length, and which counts against the 15-page limitation for the project description). If you have received more than one NSF award before applying for a CAREER award, choose the one project that is most closely related to the CAREER proposal, or which best demonstrates your ability to complete a project on-time and on-budget. Some CAREER-specific requirements:
  
  o Your project description should contain “a well-argued and specific proposal for activities that will, over a 5-year period, build a firm foundation for a lifetime of contributions to research and education” in the context of your institution.
  
  o Your project description must have an integrated plan of research and education activities. This plan should reflect your own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the needs and context of your institution.
  
  o If applicable, the proposal should clearly state how the research and education activities will be enhanced by international engagements, and should describe the benefits to participants in the United States and abroad.
  
  o You must describe the goals and objectives of the proposed education activities, how these will be integrated with the research component, and the criteria for assessing how these goals will be met. NSF strongly encourages including a discussion of how the impact of the education activities will be assessed or evaluated.
  
  o Education activities can be in a broad range of areas and may be directed to any level (e.g., K-12 students, undergraduates, graduate students, and/or the general public), but should be related to the proposed research.

• **Bibliography/References Cited.** Provide a bibliography of all works cited in the project description. You may use any style of references, as long as it is consistent. Complete bibliographic information for all works cited must be included, including the names of all authors (in the same order in which they appear on the original publication), the title of the article, book, book chapter, or presentation being cited, and, where appropriate, both starting and ending page numbers. **Do not use “et al.”** in an author list, even if it is called for in the bibliographic style you are using. Failure to provide complete citations in the bibliography is grounds for NSF to return proposals without review. There is no page limit for this section.

• **Biographical Sketch.** Biosketches normally may not be longer than two pages, and must follow the format prescribed by NSF exactly. Do not include any personal information in the biosketch (e.g., home address and telephone number, citizenship or marital status, date of birth, hobbies, etc.). NSF also does not permit listing of awards and honors or grant history in the biographical sketch. Inclusion of any of that information, or failure to follow the prescribed format, is grounds for NSF to return the proposal without review.

• **Budget Justification.** OCG will help you prepare a budget justification, which explains the items included on the budget and provides information about how the amounts were calculated. This document is limited to no more than 3 pages for the primary award, and up to 3 additional pages for each subcontract (if any).

• **Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources.** Provide information about other resources that are available to support or perform the proposed research (e.g., laboratory space, analytical equipment, computer resources, personnel). List only those resources that are relevant to the proposed work. No quantifiable financial information should be included in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources document. The document should be in narrative form, and should avoid using words such as “contribute” or “share” (except when discussing sharing of physical space or resources between one or more units or institutions). Describe all resources as if they were already available, and do not indicate whether they are extant or planned for future acquisition.
• **Current and Pending Support.** Provide information on all current and pending support you have for ongoing projects and proposals, including the CAREER proposal, whether or not you are receiving salary support from the project. This includes any institutional grants or awards (but not start-up funds).

• **Supplementary Documentation.** All of the following documents, if required, should be submitted as Supplementary Documentation (do not submit any of these documents as single-copy documents, or NSF will return the proposal without review).
  
  o **Data Management Plan.** Provide a plan, no more than two pages in length, describing how the proposed project will comply with NSF and federal government policies on the dissemination and sharing of research results and project data. Failure to include a data management plan will preclude submission of the proposal.
  
  o **Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan.** If you plan to request funding for a postdoctoral researcher as part of the CAREER proposal, you must include a one-page mentoring plan for that individual. Failure to include a mentoring plan, if required, will preclude submission of the proposal.
  
  o **Departmental Letter.** A letter, no more than 2 pages in length, from your department chair. If you have a joint appointment, the letter should come from the department in which you expect to receive tenure. Failure to include the departmental letter is grounds for NSF to return the proposal without review. The letter must include all of the following elements:
    
    ▪ The name and title of the department chair (below the signature);
    
    ▪ An indication that the research and education activities proposed in the CAREER project are supported by and integrated into the department’s and the university’s educational and research goals, and that the department is committed to the support and professional development of the PI;
    
    ▪ A description of the relationship between the CAREER project, the PI’s career goals and job responsibilities, and the goals of the department/organization;
    
    ▪ A description of the ways in which the department chair (or equivalent) will ensure appropriate mentoring for the PI, in the context of the PI’s career development and his/her efforts to integrate research and education throughout the award period and beyond; and
    
    ▪ A statement that the PI is eligible for the CAREER program
  
  o **Letters of Collaboration (if any).** If the project includes collaboration by other researchers (at CU or at another institution), a one-sentence letter from each collaborator may be included. The letter must be strictly limited to the intent to collaborate and may not contain endorsements or evaluations of the proposed project. The prescribed language to be followed is “If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert name of the PI] entitled [insert proposal title] is selected for funding by the NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description.” No other language may be included.

  o **Proposal Classification Form.** All proposals submitted to the Directorate for Biological Sciences must include BIO’s proposal classification form. Failure to complete this form will preclude submission of the proposal.