NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Instructions for Preparing and Submitting
Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MSPRF)

Remark: Before beginning the submission process, please carefully review the program solicitation NSF 14-582.

1. **Eligibility.** An individual is eligible to submit a proposal to this program if all the following criteria are met:
    a. Must, at the time of submission, be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or a legally admitted permanent resident alien of the United States;
    b. May not have held the doctoral degree more than 2 years as of January 1 of the year of the award;
    c. Must propose research in an area of mathematics or statistics;
    d. May not have previously been a principal investigator or co-principal investigator of an NSF award (other than a graduate research fellowship);
    e. May not submit a research plan duplicated in another NSF proposal;
    f. Must not have previously been offered an award by the MSPRF program; and
    g. Must have a doctoral degree conferred before the postdoctoral appointment start date

2. This program is not for individuals affiliated with institutions. It is for individual researchers only. You must register as an independent researcher.

3. **Deadline Date.** 3rd Wednesday of October, 5 p.m. proposer's local time.

4. **Program Purpose.** To permit Fellows to choose research environments that will have maximal impact on their future scientific development.

5. **Program Options and Duration.** The Fellows will have two options for the academic years stipend:
    A. The Research Fellowship option provides full-time support for any eighteen (18) academic-year months in a three-year period, in intervals not shorter than three consecutive months.
    B. The Research Instructorship option provides a combination of full-time and half-time support over a period of three academic years, usually one academic year full-time and two academic years half-time.

   Under both options, the award includes six summer months. However, no more than two summer months of support may be received in any calendar year.

   The stipend support for 24 months (18 academic-year months plus 6 summer months) will be provided within the 48-month duration of the award.

   The postdoctoral appointment must start between June 1 and October 1 of the year of the award.

6. **Document Guidelines.**

Prepare all documents according to guidelines in program solicitation and the NSF Proposal and Awards Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) [Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)](#).

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

a. Use one of the following typefaces identified below:

- Arial, 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; or
- Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 points or larger
- In addition to the typefaces identified above, Macintosh users also may use Helvetica and Palatino typefaces.

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 six lines of text within a vertical space of one inch.

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

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

7. **Submission Tips:**
   a. Register as an independent researcher under Postdoctoral Fellowships and Other Programs
   b. Begin EARLY
   c. Print and READ the latest Program Solicitation
   d. Once a document is completed, upload it into FastLane
   e. READ the proposal before submitting
   f. Check the spelling and grammar of each document
   g. Submit before the deadline

8. **You must register as an Individual Researcher.** Access *www.fastlane.nsf.gov*. Select *Postdoctoral Fellowships and Other Programs*. Select *GO* next to Individual Registration. Fill in all the required fields. Select *Submit*. As soon as you select *Approve* on the next screen, your password will be submitted for activation and you will receive an email confirming approval. There is no need for you to mail, FAX, or email a signed copy of the registration to NSF.

9. **Begin your application.** Access *www.fastlane.nsf.gov*. Select *Proposals, Awards and Status*. Under PI/Co-PI Login, type in your Last Name, NSF ID, and password. Select *Login*. You are required to change your password the first time you use it. Select

Proposal *Functions*. Select *Proposal Preparation*. The PI Information screen appears. Check your information and update if necessary. Your organization must be you as an independent researcher. Your organization code must begin with a 'P'. (Select the *Edit PI Information* to update your information. When completed, select *Save*.). Select *Prepare Proposal*. On the Proposal Actions screen, select *Create Blank Proposal*. The Forms Preparation screen appears.

10. **Prepare Cover Sheet. You must prepare this form first.**   Select *GO* next to Cover Sheet. The Cover Sheet Components Form screen appears first.

    Check that the awardee organization information is correct. This must be you as an individual researcher, not a university or college. However, rather than using personal information, you are advised to use your current institutional mailing address and email address, if available, as the awardee organization address. (Correct if necessary. Return to the PI Information screen by selecting *Go Back*. Select *Edit PI Information*. Select Change Institution. Type your last name into box and select Locate. Select you as an Independent Researcher with an institution code beginning with "P". Select *Save*.) Enter the host institution and its address information in the fields "NAME OF PRIMARY PLACE OF PERF" and "ADDRESS OF PRIMARY PLACE PERF, INCLUDING 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE."
    Select *GO* next to Program Announcement/Solicitation. Click on *Mathematics Postdoctoral Research Fellowships Program Announcement* to highlight. Click on *Select*. Select the program. The Coversheet Components Form screen reappears showing the program solicitation and the NSF Unit of Consideration.

11. **Prepare Remainder of Cover Sheet.** Select *GO* next to *Remainder of the Cover Sheet*. When the screen states, *"Your Cover Sheet has been saved,"* select *OK*. You will be returned to the Form Preparation screen. Only the forms pertaining to this fellowship are showing.

12. **Prepare Project Summary.**   [1 page limit]. The proposal must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitable for publication. It should not be an abstract of the proposal, but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. The summary should be written in the third person and include a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. You must clearly address and identify in separate statements (within the one page summary): (1) the intellectual merit of the proposed activity; and (2) the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activity. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. **Proposals that do not separately address and identify both merit review criteria within the one page Project Summary will be returned without review.**

    Select *GO* next to the Project Summary. Either copy and paste the text of your Project Summary into the text box or select *Transfer File*. Select *Browse*. Find the word processing file and double click on it so it fills the box next to the Browse button. Select *Upload File*. A screen will tell you when the document has been successfully uploaded. Select *Proofread PDF*. View the converted file, click on the upper right X to close the

window, and then select either *Accept or Cancel*. If you accept the document, you can now either select *Display Project Summary* to view the document or select *Go Back* and return to the Form Preparation screen.

13. **Prepare Project Description.** [5 page limit] The Project Description addresses what you hope to accomplish during the fellowship period and how it relates to your career goals. The Project Description should be written with both specialists and non-specialists in mind. It should be 3 to 5 pages long, including all figures, table, pictures, etc., with an acceptable typeface and font size. (See 6. Document Guidelines.)

    The Project Description consists of:
    a. An introduction or background section
    b. A description of past accomplishments
    c. A statement of research objective, methods, and significance
    d. An explanation of how the fellowship activities will enhance the your career development
    e. A justification of the choice of sponsoring scientist and host institution
    f. A separate section within the narrative that discusses the broader impacts of the proposed activities

    Select *GO* next to Project Description. Select *Browse* and find your document. Select *Upload File*. A screen will tell you when the document has been successfully uploaded. Select *Proofread PDF*. View the converted file, click on the upper right X to close the window, and then select either *Accept or Cancel*. If you accept the document, you can now either select the Display Project Description button to view the document or select Go Back and return to the Form Preparation screen.

    Include references for the Project Description separately in the References Cited section (no page limit).

14. **Prepare Biographical Sketches.** [2 page limit]. (See [Chapter II.C of the GPG for additional information](). Follow the instructions for senior personnel.)

    Select *GO* next to Biographical Sketches. Either copy the text into the text box or select *Transfer File*. Then select *Browse* and find your document. Select *Upload File*. A screen will tell you when the document has been successfully uploaded. Select *Proofread PDF*. View the converted file, click on the upper right X to close the window, and then select either *Accept or Cancel*. If you accept the document, you can now either select *Display Current Project Description* to view the document or select *Go Back* and return to the Form Preparation screen.

15. **Add/Delete Letter of Reference Writers.** [3 or 4 are required.] One letter must be from your doctoral advisor while the other reference writers should be scientists who know you or your research well. The sponsoring scientist is not allowed to serve as a letter-of-reference writer, unless that person is also your doctoral advisor. Select *GO* next to Add/Delete Letter of Reference Writers. Select *Add References*. Type in all the

information. The fields preceded by an asterisk are required. You assign the passwords to each writer. Give each reference a different password. Do not use numeric 1 or 0 or alpha "O" or "l". Select *Add Reference* to save the reference information. The next screen will ask if you want an e-mail sent to this person with the Temporary Proposal Number and the password. Select *Yes* or *No*. If you select *No*, make sure to contact each Reference Writer and provide him/ her with the Temporary Proposal Number and the Password.

16. **Status: Letters of Reference.** Check this function to see whether each Letter of Reference Writer has begun and/or submitted his/ her comments. The Letter of Reference Writer should submit as soon as possible and no later than the deadline date.

17. **Create the Application Form.** An application with an incomplete application form will be regarded as non-compliant. Select *GO* next to Application Form. Fill in all parts of the form. **Note: Do not change the pre-populated DURATION OF TENURE entry. All Fellowships are awarded for 48 months.** Select *OK* to save.

18. **Create Form B.** Select *GO* next to Form B. Fill in all parts of the form. **Note that the set of reviewers who read your application will be determined by the primary two-digit code that you list under the subject classification (MSC 2010). The proper selection of this code is thus critical to the success of your application.** Select *OK* to save.

19. **Sponsoring Scientist Statement.** Have the Sponsoring Scientist create his/her statement (3 page limit). The instructions for the Sponsoring Scientist statement are contained in the MSPRF solicitation. They can also be found in a document available from the FastLane webpage (Access www.fastlane.nsf.gov. Select Postdoctoral Fellowships and Other Programs. On this page, click on "I am a Sponsoring Scientist" and then select "Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships." Click on "How to Prepare Statement".) The sponsoring scientist should send the statement to you. You will then upload the statement as a Supplementary Document.

20. **Supplementary Documents.** More than one document can be uploaded with this module. DO NOT include any documents not specifically required.

    Select *GO* next to Supplementary Docs. Select *Transfer File* button and then select *Browse* and find the required document. Select *Upload File*. A screen will tell you when the document has been successfully uploaded. Select *Proofread PDF*. View the converted file, click on the upper right X to close the window, and then select either *Accept or Cancel*. If you accept the document, you can now either select *Display Current Supplementary Docs* to view the document or select *Go Back* and return to the Form Preparation screen. Documents to be uploaded into Supplementary Docs:

    A. Sponsoring Scientist Statement
    B. The Data Management Plan

21. **Table of Contents.** View the Table of Contents to confirm that you have the required documents saved and that you are within your page limits.

22. **Submit Application.** When the application is completed, print out all the forms. When satisfied that all documents are within the page limits and print out well, return to the Proposal Actions screen and select *Submit*.

    If you do not see the Submit button, go to the FastLane Home page and select *Research Administration* and login. Select *Proposals/Supplements/File Updates/Withdrawals*. Under the Documents in Progress tab, find the proposal and select *Submit*. Review the Cover Sheet information and continue scrolling down the screen until you see the question, *Submit to NSF*? Select Yes.

    In either case, you will be given an NSF proposal number. Use this number on all correspondence with NSF about your proposal. Check Proposal Status after the deadline date. If you cannot see the status of this proposal number within one week after the deadline date, contact the NSF program office.

23. **Do NOT mail any forms to NSF.** You electronically signed your application when you clicked on the *Sign and Submit*.

24. **Letters of Reference.** The Letter of Reference Writer accesses the FastLane website *www.fastlane.nsf.gov* and selects *Postdoctoral Fellowships and Other Programs*. The *GO* next to *I am a Letter of Reference Writer* is selected. The writer's last name, the temporary proposal number and password are needed to login. The password must be changed the first time it is used. This is a three-step process. Step One fills out and saves the Rating Sheet. Step Two uploads the Letter of Reference. Step Three submits both. This reference should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than the deadline date.

Last Update: July 16, 2014