How to Write and Submit an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG) Proposal

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Why Write an NSF Proposal

- ▶ Search committees place weight on fund-raising ability;
- ▶ Fund-raising is more difficult now than ever before;
- ▶ Submitting successful grant proposals takes practice;
- ▶ You might as well begin early;
- ▶ Money raises money;
- ▶ An NSF may permit you to collect data or undertake research that would not otherwise be possible;
- ▶ This may improve your dissertation or other research activities.

What Will the NSF Fund?

- ▶ Research that would not otherwise be possible:
    - ▶ Data collection;
    - ▶ Field research.
- ▶ What can you budget for?
    - ▶ The actual costs associated with data collection and/or field research;
    - ▶ Your support during the period of field research;
    - ▶ You cannot support yourself while in residence at your home institution.
- ▶ Read the Political Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants Program Solicitation (www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/nsf15571/nsf15571.pdf) for precise information.

The Process

- ▶ Only academic *institutions* are authorized to submit NSF proposals;
- ▶ Grants are submitted through the UCLA Office of Contract and Grant Administration (OCGA) or other authorized administrative unit;
- ▶ If you are a UCLA political science department graduate student, your contact person for assistance and submission is Tana Wong (tanawong@ucla.edu), Chief Administrative Officer, Social Sciences Grant Support;
- ▶ If you are a graduate student at another institution, you need to identify your local staff person;
- ▶ At UCLA your proposal is officially submitted to the NSF via SSGS or OCGA by the Principal Investigator (P.I.);
    - ▶ However, only Tana can execute the final submission of your proposal;
- ▶ Only a faculty member can serve as P.I.;
- ▶ Your P.I. should be your dissertation advisor.

Planning Time Required for an NSF DDRIG

▶ Writing an NSF proposal takes a minimum of four to six weeks lead time;

▶ You need to start very early in order to assemble all the necessary paperwork and to coordinate with your advisor;

▶ The proposal requires that your adviros submit certain documents, including a biographical sketch that is formatted according to NSF specifics;

▶ To meet the June 15 submission deadline, you should have a complete proposal drafted by around June 1;

▶ After your proposal is drafted, you will work with staff and with your advisor on the complex paperwork that must accompany your proposal;

▶ Tana can assist with your budget and other paperwork.

The Steps: Part 1

1. Download the January 2016 Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide 16-1 (`www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf16001/nsf16_1.pdf`);

2. Print it out and read it carefully, highlighting pertinent material;

3. Review the Political Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants Program Solicitation (`www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/nsf15571/nsf15571.pdf`);

4. Consult with your supervisor and with Tana;

5. Review other successful proposals;

6. Write your proposal...

The Steps: Part 2

7. Seek and obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if human subjects are involved and possibly IRB exemption otherwise;

   ▶ Your IRB process must also be intitiated by your P.I.;

8. Obtain written documentation regarding hosting institution, collaborations, or other auxiliary resources;

9. Obtain a letter of endorsement from your advisor;

10. Obtain other required paperwork from your advisor;

11. Finalize and submit your proposal and all necessary paperwork well in advance of the deadline.

The Documents

1. One page project summary:
   - Overview;
   - Statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity;
   - Statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.
2. Project description (10 page max);
3. Data management plan.

Project Description: Format

- Ten page maximum, using:
    - 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;
    - With one-inch margins on all four sides.

Project Description: Content

- ▶ Statement of the research problem, specific aims, expectations, propositions or hypotheses;
- ▶ Including:
    - ▶ Statement of broader impacts;
- ▶ Review of the literature and significance;
- ▶ Preliminary studies by the student, if any (which can show feasibility of research and/or preliminary findings);
- ▶ Research Plan, including:
    - ▶ Research Design, with an explicit rationale defending choices in the design;
    - ▶ Research Site or source of data;
    - ▶ Data analysis plans (note that references are as important in the section on methods as in theory);
- ▶ Research Schedule.

Other Required Documents

1. Cover sheet;
2. List of suggested reviewers or reviewers not to include;
   - Do not include any.
3. A number of institutional certifications (to be signed by the P.I.);
4. References;
5. Biographical sketches (max two pages each for P.I. and student, organized according to NSF instructions);
6. Budget (max \$15,000 direct costs plus 53% indirect costs);
7. Budget justification;
8. Current and pending support (of P.I. and the student), including the current proposal;
9. Facilities, equipment, and other resources;
10. Data management plan;
11. Letter of endorsement from your advisor.

Optional and Other Documents

1. IRB approval;
2. Letter of invitation or collaboration from host institution(-s);
3. Appendices (only with permission of the Program Officer).

Submission Mechanism

- ▶ Use of FastLane required;
- ▶ To obtain a Fast Lane ID, please follow instructions provided by Tana;
- ▶ Your faculty advisory must set up the proposal and list you as co-PI for you to access the paperwork;
- ▶ Administrative unit must be Poli Sci.

What to Send Tana to Obtain a Fastlane ID

1. First Name
2. Middle Initial
3. Last Name
4. Suffix (Jr., Sr., III)
5. E-mail address
6. Business Phone
7. Fax Number
8. Department
9. Street Address
10. City, State, Zip
11. Degree Type
12. Degree Year

Decision and Funding Mechanisms

- ▶ NSF DDRIG are highly competitive;
- ▶ Your proposal will be reviewed by three faculty members chosen with knowledge of your subject and/or regional area, as well as by an NSF Political Science panel;
- ▶ You and your advisor will probably hear (by email) in October or November;
- ▶ Your grant will be active as of about six months after the submission date;
- ▶ You cannot spend any of your funds until the grant begins;
- ▶ Your grant period is a maximum of one year;
- ▶ All funds must be expended within this period;
- ▶ It is trivial to request and receive a one-year no-cost extension;
- ▶ Regulations regarding allowable expenses are rigid and precise;
- ▶ Anyone receiving a DDRIG should meet with office staff to review spending requirements.