

Note to Reviewers of CAREER Proposals

The National Science Foundation established the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program in 1994 in recognition of the critical roles played by faculty members in integrating research and education, and in fostering the natural connections between the processes of learning and discovery. The CAREER program is a Foundation-wide activity that offers NSF's most prestigious awards for junior faculty members, and which embodies NSF's commitment to encourage faculty to practice, and academic institutions to value, integration of research and education. The intent of the program is to provide stable support at a sufficient level and duration to enable awardees to develop careers as outstanding teacher-scholars in the context of the mission of their organization.

CAREER awards have a 5-year duration. The minimum CAREER award (including indirect costs) is \$400,000 for all NSF directorates with the exception of the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), where the minimum CAREER award is \$500,000. A link to the solicitation (NSF 05-579) can be found on the CAREER Home Page (<http://www.nsf.gov/career>).

The CAREER program announcement stipulates that the Project Description should be developed in consultation with the department head or equivalent organizational official and should include:

- a description of the proposed research project, including preliminary supporting data where appropriate, specific objectives, methods and procedures to be used, and expected significance of the results;
- a description of the proposed educational activities, including plans to evaluate their impact;
- a description of how the research and educational activities are integrated with one another; and
- results of prior NSF support, if applicable.

Successful PIs will propose creative, integrative, and effective research and education plans, developed within the context of the mission, goals and resources of their organization, and which will build a firm foundation for a lifetime of integrated contributions to research and education. While excellence in both education and research is expected, activity of an intensity that leads to an unreasonable workload is not. The research and educational activities do not need to be addressed separately, if the relationship between the two is such that the presentation of the integrated project is better served by interspersing the two throughout the Project Description.

In your review of CAREER proposals, we also ask that you consider the Departmental Letter, found in the Supplementary Documentation section. The letter, which must be signed by the PI's department head (or equivalent organizational official), should demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, the effective integration of research and education as a primary objective of the CAREER award. A letter that fails to acknowledge institutional commitment to the professional development and mentoring of the PI may disadvantage an otherwise outstanding proposal.

Your detailed comments on the quality of a CAREER proposal should be presented within the framework of the two Merit Review Criteria used to evaluate all NSF proposals, namely: (1) What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity? and (2) What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity? These criteria are described in detail on the [Instructions for Proposal Review](#) page in FastLane. Guidance on avoiding conflicts of interests and on protecting confidentiality is also provided in these instructions. Separate text boxes are provided in the FastLane Review module for comments on each criterion, in addition to a box for Summary Comments. Please make sure you respond to both criteria.

Thank you very much for your help. Your reviews are important to NSF's evaluation of proposals and provide important feedback to the Principal Investigators. We very much appreciate the time and thought that go into preparing reviews.