



Note to Reviewers of CAREER Proposals (NSF 08-557)

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 in support of junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent education and the integration of education and research within the context of the mission of their organizations. Such activities should build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research. NSF encourages submission of CAREER proposals from junior faculty members at all CAREER-eligible organizations and especially encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and persons with disabilities to apply.

All CAREER awards have a five-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 08-557) 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.

The CAREER program embodies NSF's commitment to encourage faculty and academic institutions to value and support the integration of research and education. Successful PIs will propose creative, integrative and effective research and education plans, developed within the context of the mission, goals and resources of their organizations, and which will build a firm foundation for a lifetime of contributions to research, education and their integration.

All proposals must have an integrated research and education plan at their core. NSF recognizes that there is no single approach to an integrated research and education plan. Rather, these plans should reflect both the proposer's own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the needs of his or her organization. Because there may be

different expectations within different disciplinary fields and/or different organizations, a wide range of research and education activities may be appropriate for the CAREER program.

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 two merit review criteria are defined in the *NSF Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG) and the CAREER Solicitation (NSF 08-557). Examples illustrating activities that are likely to demonstrate the broader impacts can be found on the NSF web page at:

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf>. 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.