



Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program (NSF 20-525): Goals

- “A Foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation’s most prestigious awards in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as **academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization.**”
- “Activities pursued by early-career faculty should build a firm foundation for a **lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research.**”



CAREER Program: Goals

- Emphasizes the importance NSF places on early development of academic careers in which the excitement of research is enhanced by inspired teaching and dissemination of new knowledge
- Aims to provide stable support at a sufficient level and duration to enable awardees to develop careers not only as outstanding researchers but also as effective, committed educators
- Aims to encourage faculty and academic institutions to value and support the integration of research and education, in which the process of discovery stimulates learning and assures that research findings are quickly and effectively communicated in a broader context and to a large audience



Investigator Eligibility Criteria

- Hold a doctoral degree by proposal deadline
- Be untenured and employed in an at least 50% tenure-track (or tenure-track-equivalent) assistant professor (or equivalent title) position at an eligible institution as of the annual deadline
- Have both research and educational responsibilities at the eligible institution
- Have not previously received a CAREER award
- Have not had more than two CAREER proposals reviewed previously
- Eligibility certified in Departmental Letter



Investigator Eligibility Criteria-Non Tenure

- Any non-tenure track faculty is potentially eligible
- Adjunct faculty not eligible
- Continuing appointment that is expected to last the five years of the CAREER award
- Appointment has substantial research and educational goals
- Early career equivalent to pre-tenure
- All other eligibility requirements also apply
- Eligibility certified in Departmental Letter



Departmental Letter (2 pages)

- Statement indicating the PI's eligibility for the CAREER program
- Description of how the PI's career goals and responsibilities mesh with that of the organization and department
- Commitment to the PI's proposed CAREER research and education activities
- Description of how the department will contribute to the professional development of the PI with mentoring and whatever is needed to further the PI's efforts to integrate research and education



CAREER Proposal Criteria

- Evaluated using NSF's two merit review criteria:
 - What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?
 - What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?
- Additional Consideration for CAREER proposals
 - Integration of Research and Education



NSF Merit Review Criteria

The following elements should be considered for **INTELLECTUAL MERIT** and **BROADER IMPACTS**

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to:
 - a) **INTELLECTUAL MERIT:** advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields; and
 - b) **BROADER IMPACTS:** benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or institution to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home institution or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?



Integration of Research and Education

- All CAREER 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; but encourages all applicants to think creatively about how their research will impact their education goals and, conversely, how their education activities will feed back into their research.
- These plans should reflect the proposer's own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the needs and context 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



CAREER: Points to Consider

- Does the PI propose creative, effective and integrated research and education plans as well as plans for assessing these components?
- Is it 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 the PI's organization?



CAREER: Points to Consider (continued)

- 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.



CAREER Proposal Ingredients

- An integrated plan for research and education, ambitious but feasible
- Compelling argument that project will achieve effective integration of or synergy between research and education activities
- Departmental Letter demonstrating commitment to the career development of the investigator
- Letters of Collaboration (not of support or endorsement) when appropriate
- A budget that is consistent with the scope of the research and education activities

