ERA Forum Fall 2021 Webinar – Questions & Answers

This document contains the questions and answers about *Research.gov Modernization Updates and Proposal Preparation Demo Site: Available Functionalities for Proposers, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)* discussed during the ERA Forum Webinar on November 16, 2021.

For further questions and ongoing feedback about Research.gov proposal preparation and submission, click the Feedback button at the bottom of the Research.gov homepage, email rgov@nsf.gov or call 1-800-381-1532. For questions regarding NSF proposal and award policies and procedures, please see the *Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) (NSF 22-1) or email policy@nsf.gov.

Budget

	Question	Answer
1.	Can a template be provided for the budget? I would like to be able to upload the budget as an Excel file.	There are no plans to provide a template for the budget in Research.gov. The budget was built to have robust validations with business rules and, depending on the type of proposal, these validations change. It would be difficult to manage templates and keep up with the variations of spreadsheet software. The budget template in FastLane has been very problematic.

Format/Compliance Error

	Question	Answer
2.	Why are PIs/co-PIs not allowed to save/modify their CV, current and pending support, and COI information on Fastlane, instead of filling them out in PDF files that always change in formats and could lead to compliance errors?	NSF requires that each individual designated as a senior person on a proposal use an NSF-approved format for the biographical sketch and current and pending support documents. The approved formats include SciENcv and the NSF-fillable format. If you use SciENcv, you can save your documents online for future submissions. NSF also provides a template for use in submission of Collaborators and Other

	Question	Answer
		Affiliations information. Since all of these formats are required, there will not be compliance errors when using the NSF-approved formats.

General Research.gov

	Question	Answer
3.	How do we prepare our organizations to move from FastLane to Research.gov? Can you share more help or training materials?	The best training resource is the Demo site which allows anyone with an NSF ID to explore initiating and preparing Research.gov proposals. This hands-on training resource will show how user-friendly and intuitive the application is and how much inline help is provided throughout the preparation process. We are developing new training materials on an ongoing basis, including new FAQs with each release posted by topic on the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page. Soon we will be posting another demo video showing new functionality and how-to guides on how to submit proposals and how to prepare proposal file updates (PFUs). Keep checking the Research.gov About page for new training resources that support the transition from FastLane to Research.gov by December 31, 2022.

Project Reporting

	Question	Answer
4.	For the new question about the precent of the budget spent in a foreign country, how is that calculated? Is it direct costs only or indirect costs too? What about What to do about unreconciled travel advances that haven't hit our books yet?	For the RPPR question that requires PIs and co-PIs to indicate the percentage of the award's budget that was spent in a foreign country, NSF provides instructions that these reports should only include consultant arrangements with foreign individuals and first-tier

	Question	Answer
		subawards to foreign organizations. No other budget categories should be included.

Proposal Preparation

	Question	Answer
5.	Our proposal title includes the Indigenous spelling of a place name that requires the inverted apostrophe. We would like to request that a future update to the system allow for special characters like apostrophes, macrons, tildes, etc. We want to respect the proper spelling of Indigenous, Native, and Aboriginal community languages.	Aside from the apostrophe, it is challenging from a technical perspective to allow special characters without negatively impacting downstream processes and systems within NSF. Note that the proposal data gets consumed by multiple systems internally at NSF which are not at the same level of technical robustness. Increasing the inclusivity of special characters is not a new request, and NSF is always looking for opportunities to expand its ability to take in these characters. We encourage you to continue to advocate for this through venues like the NSF ERA Forum and the Research.gov feedback form.
6.	Why can't an SPO or AOR initiate a proposal?	Presently, only a PI can initiate a proposal in Research.gov; however, individuals with other roles (i.e., SPO, AOR, and Other Authorized User (OAU)) who are granted access to the proposal by the PI will be able to prepare and edit the proposal. This functionality was carried over from FastLane to Research.gov. NSF will discuss additional options for proposal initiation.
7.	Can the proposal title field be updated to handle regular apostrophes?	We will fix this in the first quarter of 2022.

Publications

	Question	Answer
8.	How can upload publications in PDF/A format when I do not own Adobe?	Microsoft Word documents can be saved in the PDF/A format. In addition to fee-based software such as Adobe Acrobat Professional, there are also other third-party applications and services that are free or have free versions with limited functionality (e.g., PDFTron, DocuPub, PDFCreator, and Ghostscript) that can convert documents to the PDF/A format. If you choose not to convert the file yourself, NSF recommends working with your publisher to obtain a properly formatted version of your publication. Another valuable resource is your organization's library staff, who often have tools to help you manage your publication deposits. Step-by-step instructions on converting Microsoft Word documents and PDFs using Adobe Acrobat Professional to the PDF/A format are included in this link: https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/How_do_I_create_a_PDF-A_file.pdf