



National Science Foundation
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NSF 09-055

MRI- R² Frequently Asked Questions

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RESUBMISSION

1. **Is resubmission of a previous MRI proposal allowed?**

Proposals submitted to the FY09 MRI competition under solicitation [NSF 09-502](#), that were accepted for review, are *not* eligible to be resubmitted for the MRI-R² competition. This applies to any proposal that wholly or substantially duplicates the FY09 MRI proposal that was accepted for review, whether it is awarded or declined. Updated proposals from competitions previous to the FY09 competition can be submitted, but only after they have undergone substantial revision that takes into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior NSF review. The Foundation will treat the revised proposal as a new proposal, subject to the standard review procedures.

2. **Are individuals who submitted to the MRI competition under solicitation [NSF 09-502](#) allowed to submit proposals to the MRI-R² competition?**

Yes, individuals who submitted to [MRI 09-502](#) are not precluded from participating in the MRI-R² competition, but the proposed project cannot represent a resubmission that wholly or substantially duplicates a proposal submitted to the FY09 MRI competition under [NSF 09-502](#).

SUBMISSION LIMIT QUESTIONS

3. **If my organization submitted proposals to the FY09 MRI competition under [NSF 09-502](#), can it still submit proposals to the MRI-R² competition?**

Yes. The MRI program submission limit applies to each individual competition. Prior submissions by, or awards to, an organization are not considered in the limit for the MRI- R² competition. Therefore, organizations can submit up to three proposals, if at least one is for development, for the MRI- R² competition.

4. **If a PI or Co-PI has received previous MRI awards, does that make them ineligible to submit an MRI-R² proposal?**

No, there is no limit on the number of MRI projects in which a PI/Co-PI may participate, but please note that results from prior MRI awards (within the past five years) must be summarized in the current proposal.

5. **The MRI-R² guidelines have been modified for subawardees. Does a subaward to an organization still count against that organization's proposal submission limit?**

An organization may be included as a funded subawardee/subcontractor in another organization's *development* proposal, at a level of 20% or less of that proposal's budget, without affecting the subawardee's/subcontractor's submission limit. Inclusion as a funded subawardee/subcontractor in a development proposal at a budgetary level in excess of 20%, *or* in any acquisition proposal, must be counted against proposal submission limits.

COST SHARING

6. **When it is required, what is the required level of cost sharing?**

Cost sharing, when it is required, must be 30% of the total project cost.

7. **Which organizations are exempt from cost sharing and which ones are required to cost share?**

Non-PhD-granting academic institutions of higher education are exempt. *For this MRI-R² competition only*, cost-sharing is further exempt for:

An institution of higher education which:

- a. **Is not ranked among the top 100 of those that receive Federal research and development funding; and**
- b. **Includes a certification** from the institution's president or provost that states that the project will i) make a substantial improvement in the institution's capabilities to conduct leading edge research; ii) provide research experiences for undergraduate students using leading-edge facilities; *and* iii) broaden the participation in science and engineering research by women, underrepresented minorities and persons with disabilities. *This certification must be submitted as a single-copy document as described in Section V of the MRI-R² solicitation.*

For institutions of higher education listed as one of the top 100 institutions receiving Federal research and development funding, cost sharing is required.

The list of the top 100 institutions of higher education, as documented by the statistical data published by NSF, can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf09313/>.

8. **Given the economic conditions, why aren't all organizations, including those institutions of higher education that are ranked in the top 100 of those receiving Federal research and development funding, exempt from the cost-sharing requirement?**

The America COMPETES Act (Public Law 110-69) requires cost sharing in the MRI program, but it also provides the exemption criteria. The cost-sharing exemptions have been implemented in the

MRI-R² competition as allowed by Section 7036(C)(2)(A) of the Act.

9. **Where does the list of institutions of higher education that are ranked in the top 100 of those receiving Federal research and development funding originate, and why is it the one that is used for the cost-sharing exemption eligibility criteria?**

The current list of the top 100 institutions of higher education receiving Federal research and development funding, which is referenced in the America COMPETES Act and serves as the basis for determining exemptions to the cost-sharing requirement, is compiled by the NSF Division of Science Resource Statistics in the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences.

10. **My institution of higher education is exempt from the cost-sharing requirement in the MRI-R² competition, but the institution committed to provide cost sharing for proposals submitted to the [NSF 09-502](#) competition (with a January 22, 2009 deadline). Are those proposals also exempt from the cost-share requirement?**

No. Proposals submitted to the [NSF 09-502](#) competition were subject to the guidelines contained in that solicitation.

11. **Since my institution of higher education is exempt from the cost-sharing requirement in the MRI-R² competition, is it possible to withdraw a proposal submitted to the [NSF 09-502](#) competition (where cost-sharing requirements differed), and resubmit it without cost sharing to the new MRI-R² competition?**

No. Proposals submitted to the FY09 MRI competition under solicitation [NSF 09-502](#), that were accepted for review, are *not* eligible to be resubmitted for the MRI-R² competition.

12. **Where can I find guidance on eligible cost-sharing expenses?**

Information related to cost sharing can be found in [OMB Circular A-110](#), Sub Part C.23 "Cost Sharing or Matching." For additional information on cost principles consult: [OMB Circular A-21](#) (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) and/or [OMB Circular A-122](#) (Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations). Further information about cost-sharing is available from NSF's Cost Analysis and Audit Resolution Branch at <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/caar/index.jsp>.

13. **Does cost sharing have to be provided up front, in the first year of an award?**

Cost-sharing commitments must be met by the end of the award period, which may be greater than one year depending on the award.

CERTIFICATION LETTER OF INSTITUTION TYPE

14. **Do I need to include a letter certifying my organization's degree-granting status, even if I have a cost-sharing commitment letter, or even if the organization is not subject to cost-sharing?**

Yes, a letter certifying organization's status as PhD-granting, non-PhD-granting, or non-degree-granting (per the definitions in the solicitation) is required for *all* proposals. Failure to provide this may be grounds for returning the proposal without review.

15. **My organization has not granted more than 20 PhDs in the previous two years. However, it is not considered to be a two- or four-year college or university, and does not grant bachelors or associate degrees. For the purposes of the MRI/MRI-R² program, are we considered to be PhD-granting, non-PhD granting, or non-degree granting?**

The MRI/MRI-R² program considers such an organization to be non-degree-granting. PhD-granting institutions of higher education are academic institutions that have produced more than 20 PhDs or DScis in any NSF-supported fields of science, mathematics or engineering during the combined previous two academic years. Non-Ph.D. granting institutions of higher education are two- and four- year colleges and universities that have produced 20 or fewer PhDs or DScis in any NSF-supported fields of science, mathematics, and engineering during the combined previous two academic years. Non-degree granting organizations are independent, not-for-profit organizations,

museums and science centers, or consortia of organizations working in NSF-supported fields of science, mathematics, and engineering.

ROOM RENOVATION

16. **Does MRI-R² support renovation or modernization of facilities or infrastructure if the costs are associated with installation of an instrument?**

No. Expenses associated with construction and/or improvements of supporting infrastructure are not eligible MRI-R² costs. This includes (but is not limited to) the installation of supporting infrastructure and systems such as HVACs, drainage, and power systems. Other opportunities (e.g., NSF's Academic Research Infrastructure program) may be available for these purposes.

AWARD CONDITIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

17. **Will there be additional conditions and reporting requirements for awards made as a result of this MRI-R² competition?**

Yes. Details about reporting requirements for MRI-R² awards can be found in the solicitation and at: www.nsf.gov/recovery.

MULTIPLE INSTRUMENTS

18. **Does MRI/MRI-R² allow for acquisition of multiple instruments?**

The MRI/MRI-R² program does allow for requests of multiple instruments, as long as they share a common or specific research focus. The intent is to allow for instruments that complement each other when undertaking research programs, or for instruments that probe a particular question or set of related questions from different perspectives. The instruments should be thought of as a system that would otherwise be difficult to assemble through individual grants. Researchers utilizing the equipment are expected to require the entire set of instruments, rather than individual investigators needing only a specific instrument.

INSTRUMENT USE

19. **The instrumentation I am requesting will be used for research, but it will also be available for educational and outreach purposes (e.g., courses and outreach activities) as well. Will this use disqualify the proposal?**

No. The use of the instrument in educational and outreach efforts is encouraged (e.g., a broader impact), but the preponderance of use of the instrument must be research and research training.

PERSONNEL

20. **If I am requesting funds in the budget for postdoctoral personnel, am I required to provide a postdoctoral mentoring plan as part of the proposal?**

Yes. A mentoring plan for postdoctoral personnel is a requirement of the America COMPETES Act. If a proposal requests funds to support postdoctoral personnel, then a mentoring plan is required. Failure to provide this mentoring plan will result in the proposal being returned without review. For further information on this topic, please consult the Grant Proposal Guide at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg

21. **Can I, as a faculty member, request salary support?**

Yes, but any requests for salary must be consistent with the Grant Proposal Guide requirements and allowable by the MRI-R² guidelines (i.e., for operations and maintenance or for activities that are directly related to instrument development). Such requests must be well justified, and be commensurate with the technical expertise and time required for the scale and scope of the instrument. Reviewers will be asked to comment on the appropriateness of such requests.

22. **Is technician time an allowable expense for operating and maintaining the instrument?**
Operations and maintenance costs to support a technician, commensurate with the scale and scope of the instrument, are eligible MRI costs during the award period.

TRAINING AND SERVICE CONTRACTS

23. **Are training expenses for the instrument eligible costs?**
Training expenses are allowed *only* for personnel who will install and/or operate the instrument. Expenses associated with the training of users are not allowed.
24. **Is the duration of this grant limited to one year for acquisition, or can the duration include more than one year of operational expenses, including service contracts?**
Service contracts during the award period are allowed. Proposers may request an award period of up to three years for acquisition proposals and up to five years for development proposals.

HARD COPIES

25. **Does the MRI-R² program accept hard-copy proposals, statements of collaboration, or other documents outside of the FastLane system?**
No. All allowed documents must be included in the electronic FastLane submission of the proposal itself. There is no mechanism to accept documents outside of the electronic submission process.
26. **Can I submit color hard copies of my proposal by regular mail?**
No. The MRI-R² program is not able to accept documents, including color copies, outside of the electronic submission process.

LETTER OF INTENT

27. **Is a letter of intent required?**
No. A letter of intent is not required.

STATEMENTS OF COLLABORATION

28. **From whom is a statement of collaboration needed?**
Reviewers should know that a participant knows and agrees that they will play a major part in a project. It is up to the PI to determine how best to convey that information, and to determine which of the project's participants should provide a formal statement of collaboration. Statements of collaboration from every possible user of an instrument, or participant in a project, may not be necessary. Note that the format for statements of collaboration is specified in the solicitation. Letters of collaboration or support will not be accepted.