Limited Submission Review Instructions & Scoring Matrix
NSF MRI Program 2020

Principal Investigator(s):

BACKGROUND & INSTRUCTIONS

A “limited submission” refers to a grant program that places a limitation on the number of proposal applications a single eligible entity can submit each cycle. The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) has a process in place to allow for an internal competition among interested PIs to determine which application(s) will move forward. Once a limited submission opportunity is identified, an internal call for pre-proposals is sent out to potential PIs. Those interested in being considered for full submission are required to submit a pre-proposal (ranging from one to five pages, depending on the type of program and sponsor) by a specified date. If more applications are received than the institution is allowed to submit to the sponsor, the applications are moved forward to a peer review process in order to make final selection(s).

That peer review process is what you are taking part in now. While we do want you to be aware that **the proposals you review here are *not* finalized and will be expanded before they are submitted to the sponsor**, we ask that you be as critical in your review as you would be if these applications were moving forward to a sponsor now. We are **especially interested in your feedback on weaknesses of the applications and where improvements can be made** either before they move forward through submission to this program or others.

If you are reviewing more than one application for this same program, we ask that you use the applications as a reference for one another in your scoring, knowing that the pool will be ranked based on scores received to determine which move(s) forward to the sponsor.

A final reminder for foreign nationals before you proceed:
We want to ensure that you are eligible to receive compensation for this service. Visa type determines your eligibility for honoraria. Most common visa types eligible for honoraria: B-1, B-2, F-1 (with approval from current school/employer and additional documentation provided), J-2, WB-WT. Any visa holders not eligible for honoraria pay outside of their employing organization may NOT be eligible for payment from UTSA. Further guidance from UTSA on allowable reimbursements for most frequently used visas can be found here: https://international.utsa.edu/visas/guide-to-most-used-visas/index.html. If you believe you may not be eligible for honoraria, please notify ORAU staff immediately.

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SCORING

Selection of applications to be submitted to the **NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program** will be based on a 5-point scoring scale for criteria given below. Scores for each criteria will then be weighted based on program specifications.

No. of applications allowed per institution this cycle: **1**

- Ratings should be given in whole numbers (not decimals).
- Reviewers should consider not only the relative number of strengths and weaknesses, but also the importance of these strengths and weaknesses to the criteria or to the overall impact when determining a score.
    - For example, a major strength may outweigh many minor and correctable weaknesses

      Minor weakness: easily addressable weakness, does not substantially lessen impact
      Moderate weakness: lessens impact
      Major weakness: Severely limits impact

SCORING RUBRIC

Score	Description
1	**Poor** – No evidence or information provided
2	**Fair** – Minimal evidence; limited potential; vague; weak concepts; limited likelihood of success; limited in innovative thinking; lacks sufficient information
3	**Good**– Some evidence; partially developed concepts; some potential for effectiveness and success; some inconsistencies; needs work; some innovation present; requires additional information/clarification
4	**Very Good** – Convincing concepts with enough examples of evidence to indicate a good chance for success; clear and complete; innovative
5	**Excellent** – Excellent concepts; exceptional evidence; well-thought out with an extremely high likelihood of success; exemplary; highly innovative

Borrowed from State of Ohio's Straight A Fund Application Scoring & Evaluation Process, Criteria & Rubrics.

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SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers should consider each of the review criteria below and give a separate score for each.

Below, please summarize the factors that informed your individual criteria scores:

1. Potential for Advancing Knowledge What is the potential for the proposed activity to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit)? All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge. Proposals 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.
Strengths: Weaknesses:
2. Potential for Advancing Societal Outcomes What is the potential for the proposed activity to benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)? Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
Strengths: Weaknesses:
3. Incorporation of Transformative Concepts To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
Strengths: Weaknesses:

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4. Project Planning Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan have a realistic schedule? Are mechanisms described to mitigate and deal with potential risks?
Strengths: Weaknesses:
5. Qualifications of PI, Team or Organization How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities? Is there evidence of departmental and/or institutional support for the PI and their career development?
Strengths: Weaknesses:
6. Resources Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?
Strengths: Weaknesses:

ADDITIONAL SOLICITATION-SPECIFIC REVIEW CRITERIA

ALL PROPOSALS

7. Improvement of Organization's Leading-Edge Research Capabilities The extent to which the proposed project will make a substantial improvement in the organization's capabilities to conduct leading-edge research, to provide research experiences for undergraduate students using leading-edge capabilities, and to broaden the participation in science and engineering research (especially as lead PIs) by women, underrepresented minorities, persons with disabilities and/or early-career investigators.

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Strengths: Weaknesses:

INSTRUMENT ACQUISITION PROPOSALS ONLY

8. Instrument Usage The extent to which the instrument is used for multi-user, shared-use research and/or research training. Does the management plan demonstrate sufficient commitment and technical expertise for effective scheduling and usage of the instrument?
Strengths: Weaknesses:
9. Instrument Justification Is the research to be enabled compelling and does it justify the instrument request? Is the budget request appropriate?
Strengths: Weaknesses:

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ONLY

8. Need for Development Need for development of a new instrument. Will the proposed instrument enable enhanced performance over existing instruments, or new types of measurement or information gathering? Is there a strong need for the new instrument in the larger user community to advance new frontiers of research?
Strengths: Weaknesses:

9. Technical Expertise and Cost Are there appropriate technical expertise to design and construct the instrument? Are the cost estimates provided for the new technology appropriate?
Strengths: Weaknesses:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO APPLICANT

Reviewers may provide guidance to the applicant or recommend against submission without fundamental revision.

Additional Comments to Applicants (Optional)

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EVALUATION SCORES

Criteria	Your Score
1. Potential for Advancing Knowledge	
2. Potential for Advancing Societal Outcomes	
3. Incorporation of Transformative Concepts	
4. Project Planning	
5. Qualifications of PI, Team or Organization	
6. Resources	
7. Improvement of Organization's Leading-Edge Research Capabilities	
TOTAL SCORE	

INSTRUMENT ACQUISITION PROPOSALS ONLY

Criteria	Your Score
8. Instrument Usage	
9. Instrument Justification	
TOTAL SCORE	

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ONLY

Criteria	Your Score
8. Need for Development	
9. Technical Expertise and Cost	
TOTAL SCORE	

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