

Click on a specific question to view the answer, or browse all the FAQs and responses below.

Review our [Quick Ref Guide for NSF Submissions](#), which has more extensive information about the specifics of an NSF S2S record.

Important NSF Instructions

- [Grants.gov Application Guide October 2021](#)
- [Proposal Award & Policies & Procedures Guide \(2021\)](#)

NSF is scheduled to retire FastLane in December 2022. Although NSF has mandated the use of Research.gov for submissions, there is still some duplication occurring automatically at NSF between Research.gov and FastLane. PennERA S2S submissions automatically are directed to the correct electronic location and should be viewable in both Research.gov Proposals and FastLane Submitted Documents. In some locations below, both terms are used. Contact PennERAhelp@lists.upenn.edu if you have any questions.

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1. How do I know if I can submit an NSF proposal to Grants.gov (GdG) using PennERA system-to-system (S2S)?
 - If the NSF Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) indicates that the proposal can be submitted to Grants.gov, then it can be submitted via PennERA S2S.
 - There are two types of proposals that NSF does **not** make available for Grants.gov submission:
 - ◊ Collaborative proposals submitted separately by two or more institutions can only be submitted to Research.gov and cannot use S2S.
 - ◊ Fellowships submitted directly by the applicant – the potential Fellow – rather than the University of Pennsylvania can only be submitted through Research.gov. The institutional support portion of the award is set up as a PennERA generic record.

NOTE: Current information about all S2S submissions is available at <https://researchservices.upenn.edu/areas-of-service/pennera/proposal-development-reference-materials/>, and by writing to PennERAhelp@lists.upenn.edu.
 2. What should I do if I can't find the FOA or if there is an old close date?
 - Always immediately notify the [PennERA Help Desk](#) if there are any questions about the FOA. We will work directly with NSF and/or InfoEd to quickly resolve any FOA issues.
 3. I have a collaborative proposal but only Penn is submitting the proposal; the collaborator will be a SubAward on the Penn proposal. Can this be submitted S2S?
 - NSF also defines a proposal with subcontracts (SubAwards) as "collaborative", and it can be submitted S2S via GdG.
 - See FAQ #1 regarding collaborative proposals submitted by two or more separate institutions.
 4. How is a PennERA S2S submission to GdG inserted into Research.gov?
 - PennERA creates and then submits the data package to GdG.
 - NSF retrieves the data package after they are notified that it has passed GdG validations.

Contact the PennERA Help Desk with suggestions, questions, or corrections: PennERAHelp@lists.upenn.edu.

- NSF then electronically inserts the proposal into Research.gov/FastLane. The PI and also the PennAORs mailbox will be notified, and information about any errors or warnings, with instructions about how to correct these, will also be provided.
5. Do I need to create a proposal record first in Research.gov?
 - No record should be created first in Research.gov. Only one record in PennERA needs to be created and completed. When the S2S submission is inserted into Research.gov, the NSF record is automatically be created at that point.
 6. Where can I find NSF's instructions for completing GdG submissions?
 - There are two user guides that need to be followed, in addition to any special instructions in the announcement (FOA):
 - ◊ NSF Grants.gov Application Guide (2020 is current version) [NSF Grants.gov Application Guide - October 2021](#)
 - ◊ NSF's Grant Proposal Guides [Proposal Award & Policies & Procedures Guide \(2021\)](#)
 7. How do I know if I have correctly created the PennERA S2S record?
 - On Setup Questions, the screen template should be "424 R&R NSF Dynamic (electronic submission)".
 - If this is not the template present in the record, contact PennERAHelp@lists.upenn.edu for assistance; **do not change the template.**
 8. How do I enter the Sponsor Credential in the proposal record?¹
 - This is the 9-digit NSF Research.gov ID (formerly FastLane ID) and is a required data element for the PI and all co-PD/PIs.
 - Instructions for adding this information to the PennERA Profile can be found on page 19 of the PennERA Proposal Development User's Guide or in PennERA – Profile Updates (a quick reference guide). Links to these guides can be found at [PennERA Reference Materials website](#).
 - If this information is added after a proposal record has been created, the ID will have to be selected in the existing Proposal Development record.
 - ◊ Once this information has been entered in the Profile, future records created will automatically contain it.
 - For non-Penn personnel, the information needs to be included in the record at the time they are added to the list of personnel in the record.
 9. How do I submit a changed/corrected application if there is a problem with my submission?
 - Most corrections can be made within the application in Research.gov/FastLane, using either the Update Module or the Budget Revision Module:
 - ◊ It is not necessary to resubmit the PennERA S2S record to GdG.
 - ◊ Work with the ORS Pre-Award person who submitted the proposal to make the change directly in Research.gov/FastLane.
 - If the change cannot be done directly within Research.gov/FastLane, the application will need to be resubmitted through Grants.gov.
 - ◊ The PennAOR may need to first withdraw the application from Research.gov/FastLane.
 - ◊ Do NOT identify the proposal as a "Changed/Corrected Application" on the SF424 R&R tab.
 - **IMPORTANT!** Make all changes or resubmit the S2S record prior to the deadline to ensure an on-time acceptance by NSF.
 10. How do I exclude "Participant" cost categories from MTDC and F&A calculation?
 - PennERA automatically excludes these categories; no adjustment is needed.
 - Contact PennERAhelp@lists.upenn.edu if you believe the F&A is not automatically calculating correctly; do **NOT** manually overwrite automatic calculations.
 11. This project involves foreign countries. How should I list these in section 6a of Other Project Info so that the information correctly populates to Research.gov?
 - Enter each country name, followed by a comma.
 - Note that NSF now limits the number of foreign countries that may be entered here to five.
 12. The PI wants to list suggested reviewers and names of potential reviewers to exclude. How should these be entered on the form?
 - Enter each person's name, followed by a comma.
 - NOTE: This form is not automatically included in the PennERA proposal record; it should be selected on **Setup Questions** if needed.
 13. How do I handle cost-sharing in an NSF proposal record?
 - **Discuss the cost-sharing aspects of the proposal with ORS Pre-Award²** before contacting the PennERA Help Desk for assistance on how to provide the information in the PennERA record.
 - NSF has provided instructions and discussion in their Proposal Preparation Guide (see links at the beginning of these FAQs).
 - Please contact the PennERA Help Desk if you plan to submit an NSF proposal that uses cost-sharing; we will assist in record completion.

¹ If credential and degree information are added after the proposal has been created in PennERA, a departmental person with PennERA Profile edit privileges will have to manually select the value in the proposal record. However, records created after this information has been included in the Profile will have the information automatically populated on the Personnel tab detail.

14. How can I list some Key Personnel on the Senior/Key Personnel form but not in the R&R Detail Budget form?²
- Add all personnel on the **Personnel** screen.
 - Do not enter any effort.
 - ◊ Personnel with 0% effort will appear only on the Senior/Key Person form and not in the Budget.
 - ◊ Follow the steps on pages 56 and 57 of the [PennERA Proposal Development User Guide](#) for the correct **Personnel Type** to be selected for 0% personnel.
 - **Check with ORS Pre-Award** if you have questions about allowability issues for 0% personnel.
 - Contact the PennERA Help Desk staff if you encounter problems with personnel output or have an unusual circumstance.
15. The PI of this proposal isn't required to have any effort. Will it fail at Grants.gov if their effort = 0%?
- Person Months may be entered as 0.0, if appropriate; the record will not fail during electronic validations.
 - ◊ PI will be properly identified as the PD/PI of the proposal and will be listed in the Budget at 0.0 person months.
 - ◊ Will also appear on the Senior/Key Person form as the PD/PI.
 - **Confirm with ORS Pre-Award** that 0% effort for the PI is allowable.
 - Contact PennERAhelp@lists.upenn.edu for assistance.
 - ◊ There are occasional circumstances that require slightly different data entry; Help Desk staff can help make that determination.
16. Is an upload required at both the Facilities and Other Resources and the Equipment upload locations?
- A document is required by NSF at each location.
 - If there is no Facilities and Other Resources or no Equipment to describe, a document needs to be uploaded that states that fact.
 - When these documents are retrieved by NSF, they are concatenated into one document that can be found at the Facilities location in the proposal record in Research.gov.
17. Where can I upload the Data Management Plan and/or the Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan?
- NSF has specific requirements regarding these documents. Be sure to check the NSF publications listed at the top of this FAQ.
 - These two documents, when required, are uploaded to the NSF Cover Page, which is located on the S2S Forms tab.
 - Be sure to follow NSF's instructions and use the correct file names. Using abbreviations, such as "DMP" or "Data Mgmt", will result in submission failures, as NSF is electronically validating expressly on the required name of the file.

² Be sure to review NSF's cost-sharing FAQs, found at [NSF Revised Cost Sharing Policy Statement](#). Cost sharing is also discussed in the current version of PAPPG (see links at top of this document).