

From: [Voronov, Roman](#)
To: [Plimpton, Suzanne H.](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] - Re: Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) available for comment
Date: Tuesday, June 04, 2019 7:50:40 PM

Dear Suzanne,

I have served on at least 5-6 different panels, in two different subject areas. And I have observed several ways that PIs who write proposals are able to mislead the reviewers or gain unfair advantages:

1) In the introduction to the proposal it is very common for the PIs to create a sandbox environment, where an important problem exists, and they are proposing the only solution out there that can fix it. As an illustrative example, I read a proposal about a point-of-care device that could test the blood type of a person in a remote area. Every reviewer on the panel who read the proposal gave it "very good" and "excellent" reviews. I, on the other hand, could not believe that this is novel. So I googled, and the very first hit came up with a product that was commercialized back in

2010: https://www.medgadget.com/2010/05/aborhcard_credit_cardsized_blood_group_determinator.html

You can even buy similar products online for very cheap: https://www.iherb.com/pr/D-adamo-Blood-Typing-Kit-1-Easy-Self-Testing-Kit/46330?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI2KG7q_fQ4gIVxo-zCh1leQA0EAYYAyABEgIvWfD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds

Whereas, the device being proposed required bulky expensive external equipment, was only "semi portable", and offered no apparent advantages. The moral of the story is that reviewers are often not diligent enough to search for what has been done on their own. **Therefore, I recommend that NSF enforce a requirement for the PIs to include a literature review, showing how their technology or idea is novel compared to the existing approaches.**

2) Since NSF does not have a citation format requirements, many PIs use the "numbered" citation in the Project Description. Although this makes sense, because it is more compact, it also does not show the year of the publication being cited. The problem with this is that the reviewers are not always diligent enough to take the extra step and look into the References section, in order to make sure to make sure that the literature review is up to date. I have seen examples, where literature reviews outdated by as much as a decade were used. **A simple fix for this would be to enforce the (authorname, date) citation formation: for example, (Voronov et al, 2019).** This makes it immediately apparent whether the literature cited is current or not.

3) For one reason or another, the Fastlane website allows the PIs to upload their own Project Summary in PDF format, if they are using special symbols. This offers several advantages when compared to entering it into the webform fields that Fastlane provides for the summaries without any special symbols: 1) Word count requirements can be circumvented, as long as the text fits onto a single page; 2) Text formatting becomes available, so these summaries typically look much nicer than the unformatted ones submitted via the webform; 3) The PI doesn't have spend time fighting the Fastlane website, whose word-count is often buggy, and does not agree with what is provided by MS Word. For these reasons many PIs abuse the policy, and upload their own summary, even when they do not have special symbols. Even several sample proposals shown at this CAREER workshop that I just attended are examples of such abuse: <http://129.130.42.171/NSF2019/main.html> And many inexperienced individuals in the audience were confused about why some Project Summaries shown to us look better than the others. Furthermore, the NSF Program Officers, do not view this as significant enough offense to disqualify a proposal. Yet, I believe it is unfair, because my proposal has been disqualified for less: once, I forgot to include the section heading for "Broader Impacts", even though the actual text for it was there. **Therefore, I believe it would only be fair if you either disallow the practice of uploading your own summaries altogether, or alternatively allow everyone to do so (even if they do not have special symbols).** Otherwise, you have some people who are using it to gain unfair advantages, while the ones who follow the rules become disadvantaged.

Thank you.

On Tue, Jun 4, 2019 at 12:41 PM Popp, Andrea (Contractor) <anpopp@associates.nsf.gov> wrote:

Hi Roman,

Suggestions can be sent to Suzanne Plimpton. I have included her contact information below. Very best.

Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer,
National Science Foundation,
2415 Eisenhower Avenue,
Suite W18200,
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone (703) 292-7556; or send email to splimpto@nsf.gov.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including Federal holidays).

Andrea Popp
NSF Contract Support
(703) 243-9696 ext. 154

From: Voronov, Roman <rvoronov@njit.edu>

Sent: Monday, June 3, 2019 4:11 PM

To: NSF Grants Conference

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Re: Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) available for comment

Hello, how can I make suggestions for the PAPPG? Thanks

On Mon, Jun 3, 2019 at 11:46 AM National Science Foundation

<grants_conference@communications.nsf.gov> wrote:



Dear Colleagues:

NSF published a notice today in the Federal Register announcing the availability of a “For comment” draft of the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). The Foundation is accepting comments from the external community until cob July 29, 2019. The draft PAPPG is available on the Policy Office website.

To facilitate review, revised text has been highlighted in yellow throughout the document and explanatory comments have been included in the margins, where appropriate.

Any questions should be directed to the Policy Office at policy@nsf.gov.

We appreciate the research and education community’s interest and look forward to your input.

Regards,

The National Science Foundation

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Sincerely,

Roman Voronov,

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-**Faculty Candidate?** Check out my blog: <http://www.aiche.org/community/sites/che-faculty-candidates-resource-center> OR <http://facultycandidate.blogspot.com/>
-**Writing a K99/R00?** I have a blog for that too: <http://pathway2insanity.blogspot.com/>

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Sincerely,

Roman Voronov,

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-**Writing a K99/R00?** I have a blog for that too: <http://pathway2insanity.blogspot.com/>