

**From:** [Joshua Roney](#)  
**To:** [Plimpton, Suzanne H.](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - Draft PAPPG comments  
**Date:** Thursday, July 18, 2019 3:58:27 PM

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Good afternoon,

In response to the “[Comment Request: National Science Foundation Proposal/Award Information-NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#)”, I have included several comments regarding the Draft NSF PAPPG, with minor suggestions that may benefit researchers and research administrators in proposal preparation/review. The relevant sections of the PAPPG are noted below. If you would prefer a different format for these comments (e.g., highlighting/commenting a PDF of the draft document), please let me know.

- **“Table of Contents”**
  - Since the ToC goes into depth in with some sections (like linking to the “Biographical Sketches” subsection “Appointments”), I recommend having similar links added to the ToC that link to subsections within the “Special Information and Supplementary Documentation”. Specifically, I think it would be very helpful to call out the subsections Data Management Plan, Letters of Collaboration, and Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan in particular, since they are present in many proposal submissions and two of those sections are also directly noted in the “Sections of the Proposal” overview in the PAPPG.
- **“Proposal Font, Spacing and Margin Requirements”**
  - Since margins are explicitly discussed in this section, I recommend also moving the pagination instructions to this section, since that is margin-specific guidance.
  - Also, something that may be very helpful to specify regarding fonts is the Character Spacing. Using Advanced Options, it is possible to adjust the scale of characters and spaces between them in such a way as to fit a notable amount of additional text within the same area, while staying “officially” an acceptable font type/size and line space. Making Character Spacing set to 100% scale and normal spaced (not condensed) would address this issue.
    - Here is an article on Character Spacing from Microsoft Word:  
<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/change-the-spaces-between-text-e9b96011-1c42-45c0-ad8f-e8a6e4a33462>
- **“Collaborators & Other Affiliations”**
  - In the last year, the COA template changed multiple times as adjustments needed to be made. I would recommend the following changes to this section of the PAPPG:
    - (1) Removal of detailed COA table instructions in the PAPPG in case additional changes are necessary next year, and instead refer them with a link to the designated COA webpage. This would be similar to how directorate-specific guidance on Data Management Plans contains the relevant note and link.
    - (2) On the COA template, it would be very helpful to have a “last updated” stamp in the COA template instructions within the template file. That will ensure that Research Administrators are using the most recent version available.
- **“Biographical Sketches”**
  - *Synergistic Activities* – The section notes “Examples with multiple components are not permitted.” I recommend also clarifying whether examples with multiple components would be grounds for return without review.
  - *Appointments* – In this section, I recommend clarifying the wording slightly to the following: “A list, in reverse chronological order **by start date**, of all the individual’s academic/professional

appointments beginning with the current appointment(s).” That way, individuals with multiple current appointments (starting at varying times) as well as past (non-current) appointments have more clarity as to the proper order.

- I also have a question - Can the appointments be separated by academic and professional type, or should they be a combined list?

- **“Current & Pending Support”**

- The section tells people to follow the NSF-approved format. To help make sure this occurs, I request that the following outdated NSF-hosted file either be taken down or modified to state that it is no longer an approved format by NSF (the outdated template online at NSF’s website does not follow current font or margin requirements):

<https://nsf.gov/pubs/2000/nsf003/nsf003.doc>

- Note: when someone searches NSF Current & Pending template in Google, this is among first results that appears.

Thank you for considering these comments. If I can provide any additional information, please let me know.

Best regards,  
Josh

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