

ACS PRF NEW DIRECTIONS (ND) RESEARCH GRANT

The following comments are presented to assist you in the preparation of a proposal for a New Directions research grant. See also [ELIGIBILITY, TERMS, and CONDITIONS](#).

Nature and Scope of the Research: American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund (ACS PRF) research grants are made to non-profit institutions for regularly appointed faculty whose research may be sponsored in accordance with the [Agreement of Transfer of Trust](#):

“The recipient (ACS) shall use all funds exclusively for advanced scientific education and fundamental research in the ‘petroleum field,’ which may include any field of pure science which in the judgment of (ACS) may afford a basis for subsequent research directly connected with the petroleum field.”

The ACS PRF New Directions grants program is intended to be a source of “seed money” to enable a Principal Investigator to initiate a new research direction, which is significantly different from previous research performed by the PI, and not a logical extension of previous studies. Proposals that are not a “new research direction” will be denied without external review, or may be rejected by the PRF Committee. ACS PRF will not support a proposal having overlap, or partial overlap, with research funded by another agency.

Note that *fundamental research* is required as opposed to applied research or methods development. All ND proposals will be reviewed for the following required elements: ***completeness and correctness of the application, fundamental nature of the research topic, relevance to petroleum or fossil fuels, and the extent to which the proposed research is a new direction for the lead principal investigator.***

Funding Criteria: The PRF Committee makes relative rankings of ND proposals and recommendations for funding based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed research represents a new or independent area of investigation for the lead principal investigator.
- The overall quality, significance, and scientific merit of the proposed research, including the extent to which it will increase basic knowledge and/or stimulate additional research.
- The impact of funding the research, including the effect on the principal investigator’s overall research program.
- The qualifications or potential of the principal investigator(s) and adequacy of the facilities to conduct the research.
- The extent to which advanced scientific education will be enhanced through the involvement of students in the research.
- All Principal Investigators must describe any significant risks or hazards that may be encountered in the proposed work, and how these risks or hazards would be mitigated.

Eligibility: To be eligible as a principal investigator for a ND grant, each applicant must meet all three of the ACS PRF eligibility criteria:

1. The non-profit institution submitting the proposal must certify that each individual listed as a principal investigator on the cover page qualifies as a principal investigator under the institution’s policies.
2. In view of the long-standing policy of ACS PRF to give priority to support of students (undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral), each principal investigator must be eligible to serve as the sole formal, official supervisor of graduate students in graduate degree programs.
3. The terms of appointment of each principal investigator must promise reasonable continuity of service. The appointment should continue at least through the period of funding requested in the proposal.

It is assumed that tenured or tenure-track faculty meet these criteria, and that non-tenure-track faculty do not meet all three of the ACS PRF eligibility criteria. One co-principal investigator (co-PI) is permitted on a ND grant proposal. The proposal does not have to be a new direction of research for the co-PI, but the co-PI must meet the same eligibility criteria as the lead PI and provide the same information requested of the lead PI in the application, except for the “New Research Direction Justification”. The lead PI (who should be denoted as such on the proposal) and their institution (designated as the grantee institution) would subcontract the co-PI through the co-PI’s institution. Any number of collaborators may participate on the project, but no funds from a ND grant may be used to support collaborators or their respective students.

Budget: The PRF Committee requires at least 60 percent of the total budget be devoted to support the education and training of students. See item 4 below for details. A budget justification is required as in the online application. If you have any questions about allowable budget allocations, please contact the appropriate Program Manager **before** submitting a proposal. For proposals that are funded, the budget becomes part of the grant agreement. Revisions to the grant budget can only be made **with prior approval** of ACS PRF.

1. **Request:** Proposals request \$125,000 for two grant years. The total budget may be divided among years according to the needs of the project. The ACS PRF budget year extends from September 1 to August 31. The first grant period may begin earlier than September 1, but must start on the first day of a month and end on August 31 of the following year. **A starting date earlier than September 1 will result in the first budget period being longer than twelve months.**
2. **Excluded Charges:** No overhead costs may be charged. Secretarial and/or administrative salaries are considered part of regular departmental expenses and should not be included in proposed budgets or charged against the grant. Funds **may not** be used to support laboratory technicians, contractors, consultants, or visiting faculty.
3. **Principal Investigator Stipend:** The proposed budget may include a contribution for PI summer salary, with an upper limit of \$8,000 per grant year, **including fringe benefits** and the **salary of the co-PI (if any)**, to a maximum of \$16,000 for the grant. This limit **does not** change as a result of time extensions. Summer salaries or contributions thereto are not provided for principal investigators in colleges or universities outside of the United States and its possessions.
4. **Support of Students:** Total student support must be at least 60% of the grant budget. Students are defined as graduate students, undergraduates, and/or postdoctoral fellows. Student support categories include stipends, salaries, benefits, graduate tuition, and student Field Work. Field Work expenses for students may include transportation, lodging, etc., and must be described in the budget justification.
5. **Travel:** A maximum of \$2,000 per year, or \$4,000 total, may be budgeted for conference travel. This limit does not change as a result of time extensions. Support of student travel to scientific meetings is encouraged. Note that scientific work performed away from the home institution is considered field work and is budgeted separately.
6. **Capital Equipment:** Requests for capital equipment on type ND grant proposals **are discouraged**. However, a limited amount of capital equipment funds (\leq \$5,000) may be included in the proposed budget, with justification and description of institutional cost-matching (if any) in the budget justification.

Carryover and Time Extensions: Funds that are unexpended at the end of an annual grant period may be carried forward into the next period in the same budget category. If unexpended funds remain in the grant account at the expiration of the original grant period, an extension of time without commitment of additional funds may be requested. A maximum of two one-year time extensions may be approved provided reporting requirements are up to date.

Proposal Submission:

1. **Format:** A complete proposal consists of the following material, submitted through the submission website for ND proposals at www.acsprf.org:
 - a. **Web-Submitted Information:** The following information is entered as part of your online application, on the proposal submission website: Signature pages, budget and budget justification; Principal Investigator contact information; title of proposed research; abstract; petroleum relevance statement; safety statement; suggested reviewers; PI education and experience; current and pending research support; publications and presentations; collaborations (if any); and technical proposal.
 - b. **Signed Pages:** A cover page and a budget page are generated from the information entered by the applicant for signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Institutional Representative. The applicant must download the pages, obtain all signatures, and upload the signed documents into the system. If the proposal is funded, the budget will become the approved grant budget. Any revisions to the approved budget require prior approval of PRF.
 - c. **Technical proposal:** The technical proposal is submitted as a single PDF file, including the scientific text of the narrative, references cited, figures, and tables. The text body may not exceed 4,000 words, double-spaced, in 12-point font (Times Roman, Arial, or Courier), with 1-inch margins, with a word count entered at the end of the narrative text.
2. **Page Order:** Number the pages of your proposal in the footer. No institutional cover letter is required; if one is included, please place it after the references.
3. **Length Restrictions:** The abstract of the proposal should not exceed 250 words. Submissions that exceed the 4,000 word limit for the technical proposal will not be considered.
4. **Limitations:** An investigator (lead PI or co-PI) may have only one active ACS PRF grant, or proposal under consideration, at any time. In addition, principal investigators (lead PI or co-PI) may have only one ND grant application considered in a 12-month period. Thus, a principal investigator (lead PI or co-PI) who has a New Directions proposal denied may not submit another ND proposal until the PRF Committee meeting one year later.

5. ***Petroleum Relevance Statement:*** A 100-word statement of petroleum relevance (*i.e.*, How is the proposal "fundamental research in the petroleum field"?) is required as part of the proposal submission. This statement is entered in the Web submission portal, before the PDF of the proposal is uploaded.
6. ***Safety Statement:*** All principal investigators must describe any significant risks or hazards that may be encountered in the proposed work, and how these risks or hazards would be mitigated. Web links to relevant references, and examples of risk assessments and mitigation strategies are at www.acs.org/safety, and also on the PRF [website](#).
7. ***Suggested Reviewers:*** The Principal Investigator must submit the names and addresses (including email) of at least six suggested reviewers who are experts in the field of the proposed research. This may not include former research mentors, students, collaborators, or colleagues at the PI's current or former institutions. Also, do not list names of any reviewers whom you have suggested in any previous proposal, submitted to ACS PRF within the past four years.
8. ***Additional material:*** If this is a resubmission of a previously denied proposal, you will need to answer the question, "**What has been changed in this revised version?**" in the online submission form. This information is just for the use of the Program Manager and the PRF Science Panel members, so it is **not** to be included in the proposal document. "Revised and resubmitted" proposals are sent to a different set of reviewers than those asked to evaluate the initial proposal.

Principal Investigators must keep the ACS PRF office advised of the status of applications for research support at other agencies while your proposal is under consideration by The ACS Petroleum Research Fund. The ACS Petroleum Research Fund reserves the right to scan proposals for plagiarism.

Checklist of Common Errors - Please Review Carefully Before Submitting a Proposal

Most unsuccessful proposals have problems with one or more of the following criteria. If in doubt, please call ACS PRF (202-872-4481) or email the appropriate Program Manager well before the submission deadline. Program Managers and their email addresses are listed on the "Contact PRF" page of our website (www.acsprf.org).

1. **Topic outside the scope of ACS PRF.** Research topics within all areas considered by the PRF Committee are listed in the [PRF Science Panels and Areas of Research Support](#) page of our [website](#).
2. **Missing or insufficient statement of petroleum relevance** (*i.e.*, How is the proposal "advanced scientific education and fundamental research in the 'petroleum field'?" **with the definition of 'petroleum field' in the downloadable "Agreement of Transfer of Trust" document.**) This petroleum relevance statement is entered on the online submission page before the technical proposal is uploaded.
3. **Incomplete application.** All proposals must be received, in complete and final form, by the stipulated deadline. No late submissions, additions, or document substitutions are allowed after the deadline. Proposals submitted in February-March will be considered at the October PRF Committee meeting; submissions in September-October will be considered in May of the next year.
4. **Budget for the wrong amount (must be \$125,000).** If necessary to make the total request equal this amount, add the "extra dollars" to the student support categories, or to the Supplies and Services budget.
5. **Insufficient student support.** The PRF Committee requires that at least 60 percent of the total budget be devoted to support the education and training of students (graduate students, undergraduates, and/or post-doctoral fellows).
6. **Principal Investigator salary over the maximum allowable amount of \$8,000 per year (this amount includes fringe benefits and the salary of the co-PI, if any).** The limit on PI Salary does not change as a result of any no-cost time extensions.
7. **Travel budget over the maximum allowable amount of \$2,000 per year.** This is for travel to meetings or symposia, to present research results. Travel to obtain data is part of the "Field Work" budget category.
8. **Proposal longer than 4,000 words, double-spaced in 12-point font.** The word count is entered at the end of the proposal narrative. Proposals that exceed this limitation will not be considered.
9. **Missing information for PI or co-PI.** For each PI (and co-PI), include all academic degrees, institution and date received, the name(s) of the dissertation director(s) of the PI, and any post-doctoral supervisor(s), if appropriate.

10. **Missing or incomplete information on suggested reviewers.** Include the names, organizational affiliation, and email addresses of at least six peer experts who are qualified to evaluate the proposed research, and have no conflicts of interest with the PI (and co-PI, if any). This information is entered on the online submission page.
11. **Missing signatures.** The signatures of the PI, the co-PI (if appropriate), and an authorized official of your institution are required on both the title page and the budget page. The institutional official is the person who is authorized to commit the PI's institution to performing the proposed research, and is not the Department Chair. **All signatures are required on both pages.**
12. **Incomplete reference citations.** Include the names of all authors, complete article title, journal title, year of publication, volume number, and pages of cited article. **Do not use "et al." in reference citations.**
13. **No outline of revisions.** For a previously denied proposal, which has been revised and resubmitted, the PI did not address reviewers' concerns/comments and did not include, with the application, a summary of major changes.
14. **Safety statement missing.** Principal Investigator has failed to provide required risk assessment and mitigation strategies in their proposal.