NEWS
ENGINEERING RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

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Announcements

Hanover GLC Modules for NIH, NSF-CAREER & Grant Development

The Hanover Research Grants Learning Center (GLC) on-demand grant development training portal offers faculty the opportunity to receive targeted training through self-paced, interactive modules with guidance and templates for prospective applicants to develop compelling proposals.

Auburn faculty interested in signing up for this training should contact Christine Cline for registration information.

Temporary Restraining Order

There is now a Temporary Restraining Order on the DOD's indirect rate cut to 15%, so until further notice, ERAD will apply to DOD proposals at DHHS negotiated rates.

Funding Opportunities

Quantum Characterization, Calibration, and Control (Q3)

U.S. Army Materials Command (AMC), Department of the Army, United States Department of Defense (DOD)
Proposal Due: August 7, 2025
Areas of Interest: Quantum Electronics

DEVCOM Army Research Laboratory–Army Research Office (ARL-ARO) in partnership with the Laboratory for Physical Sciences (LPS) is soliciting proposals for research in Quantum Characterization, Calibration, and Control (QC3). This is a proposed four-year program and is primarily focused on three topic areas in the field of quantum computing (QC).

Areas of interest include:

- **Characterization:** Advance the state-of-the-art to quantitatively assess the performance of qubit operations in multi-qubit circuits and to extract error-models.

- **Calibration:** Advance state-of-the-art for bring up of multi-qubit circuits for high-performance operations near or better than fault-tolerance thresholds.
- **Control:** Advance state-of-the-art control techniques to operate multi-qubit circuits operating near or better than fault-tolerant thresholds, accounting for the specifics of error-models for the circuit

Read more about this funding opportunity here.

Electrochemical Systems

National Science Foundation (NSF)
Proposals Accepted Anytime
Areas of Interest: Electrochemical Analysis, Reaction Engineering, Thermodynamics

The goal of the Electrochemical Systems program is to support fundamental engineering science research that will enable innovative processes involving electrochemistry or photochemistry for the sustainable production of electricity, fuels, chemicals, and other specialty and commodity products. Processes utilizing electrochemistry or photochemistry for sustainable energy and chemical production must be scalable, environmentally benign, reduce greenhouse gas production, and utilize renewable resources.

Topics of interest include electrochemical energy storage and electrochemical production/conversion systems. Radically new battery systems can move the U.S. more rapidly toward a more sustainable transportation future and to greater renewable electricity production penetration. High-energy density and high-power density batteries suitable for transportation and renewable energy storage applications are of primary interest.

Read more about this funding opportunity here.

Best Practices in Proposal Writing

Strategies for Proposal Writing

Writing a Competitive Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is not only an important aspect of the proposal document it also plays a key role in the conceptual development of the proposed research. When submitted, the proposal narrative should be a well-written document that responds fully, clearly, and persuasively to the research goals, objectives, and review criteria defined by the sponsor in the funding solicitation or agency guidelines.

Do not be concerned by uncertainty on the shape the final proposal will take, this is fairly common at the beginning of any proposal development effort. Bringing clarity to the proposal development process typically starts with ideas, concepts, and directions expressed among researchers related to meeting the solicitation and research objectives.

Creating an evolving proposal narrative transforms ideas and anchors researchers in a common reality and should contain all the information that the funding agency and review panel will know about the researcher's capabilities and capacities to perform. The crafting of the unifying proposal statement is as critical to a proposal's completeness as it is challenging to write.

Writing a Compelling Summary

As a proposal writer it is important to develop the ability to write a one- or two-page summary of the proposed research, these pages are called the project summary. Depending on the funding agency the

short summarizing statement leading your summary may be referred to as a project abstract, executive summary, research vision statement, or other similar terms.

When writing a project summary remain mindful that writing a successful project summary is a craft and not something that can just be casually written. The overview statement is an important opportunity to capture the interests of the reviewers early as they decide whether or not to fund the proposal they are reading. Use clarity of language, logic, and argument to create a compelling project summary.

The Power of Early Specifics

Lack of specifics distinguish between a proposal that may sit in the stack of proposals that are being considered and those that are not. It is important to clearly and specifically state what new knowledge will be generated and how the proposed approach is innovative. Broad, vague, and uncertain statements will frustrate and bore readers.

Use the information below as a guide for terms that require further details:

- **Proposing to develop a "new framework."** What is new about this framework? This should not be a term used for everything in a project that will just address a list of challenges.
- **Proposing to fill "critical gaps" and "key challenges."** This sentence should be followed by a sentence that states what those gaps or challenges are.
- **Proposing to develop a "new theory."** What is new about this theory? How is it an improvement from past theories?
- **Proposing to develop a "new model."** How will this model differ from current models? What will this new model allow us to understand or predict that we do not understand or cannot predict now?
- **Proposing to study a system.** Name and describe the system that will be studied earlier in the proposal instead of waiting until several pages into the document.
- **Proposing to investigate broad categories of factors.** These categories are so broad they do not have much meaning. State the specific properties you will be investigating and what metrics you will use to evaluate performance.

Improving the specifics in the first page of a proposal, through replacing vague and generic terms with specific and detailed arguments that show why your project is innovative and significant, will help a proposal stand out and help attract the reader's interest making them want to read the details in the proposal in the later pages.

Adapted from the May 2025 and the June 2025 Edition of the Research Development and Grant Writing Newsletter

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