

NEWS

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Funding Opportunities

DoD: FY 2026 Defense University Research Instrumentation Program (DURIP)

Department of Defense (DoD), Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR), Army Research Office (ARO), Office of Naval Research (ONR)

Pre-Proposal Inquiries Due: April, 11, 2025 (11:59 pm ET)

Proposals Due: April 25, 2025 (5:00 pm ET)

Award Amount: \$50,000 – \$300,000

The Department of Defense's (DoD's) FY 2026 DURIP is soliciting proposals from higher education institutions for purchasing equipment and instrumentation. These purchases should support research in areas aligned with the DoD's interests, including those supported by the Army Research Office (ARO), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR).

Proposals must explain how the prospective equipment or instrumentation will enhance student education through research in disciplines that are important to DoD missions.

View the full Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) [here](#).

Interfacial Engineering

National Science Foundation

Proposal deadline: Full proposal accepted anytime

Areas of Interest: advanced materials, nanomaterials, surface science & interfaces, thermodynamics & transport phenomena

The **Interfacial Engineering** program supports fundamental research on atomic- and molecular-scale interfacial phenomena and the engineering of interfacial properties, processes, and materials.

Proficiency in the thermodynamic, kinetic, and transport properties of interfacial systems is key to enhancing chemical process efficiency and resource utilization. Therefore, proposals should clearly state how the results will be applied in or contribute to the advancement of industrial chemical or biochemical processes. Research areas of interest include:

- **Chemical separations:**
 - Designing scalable mass separating agents (e.g., sorbents and membranes) and field-separation processes to reduce energy and material use
- **Biological separations:**
 - Downstream processing of biologically-derived chemicals, proteins, and biologics for higher throughput and purity; engineering interfaces for molecular recognition
- **Interfacial phenomena:**
 - Kinetics and thermodynamics of absorption/desorption; interactions of molecules and ions at engineered interfaces
- **Nanoconfinement and engineered surfaces:**
 - Theory, modeling, and/or approaches for examining transport and thermodynamic properties of fluids within nanopores, under nanoconfinement, or at engineered surfaces

PIs should address the **novelty and/or potentially [transformative nature](#)** of the work in the Project Summary section of their proposal. Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program proposals are strongly encouraged. Award duration is five years.

Read more about this funding opportunity [here](#).

ASME's Graduate Student Scholarship Program

American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)

Application Deadline: March 3, 2025

Recommendation Deadline: March 7, 2025

Scholarship Amount: \$1,000 – \$13,000

ASME scholarships are awarded annually to ASME Student Members who are in good academic standing. These scholarships are intended to support studies and educational expenses for the upcoming academic year. Graduate students may click here to [join ASME](#) or [renew their dues](#). Priority may be given to students who demonstrate the following:

- Significant leadership and involvement in ASME extracurricular activities (e.g., holding a position in the ASME Student Section or on an ASME committee).
- Strong potential for contributing to the mechanical engineering field, as highlighted in a recommendation letter.
- Exceptional leadership or volunteer experience with a charitable organization (applying mechanical engineering skills).
- Demonstrated financial need.

Begin your application [here](#).

Best Practices in Proposal Writing

Organizing Your Narrative

A well-organized narrative (or project description) is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the proposal review process. It can convey the accessibility of the proposed research, while also providing a clear, logical framework for arguing the importance of the research. Additionally, organizing the narrative early on can expedite the writing, editing, and revision processes prior to submission.

Organizational guidelines are often tailored to the agency and funding opportunity. However, when a program solicitation lacks clear guidelines, the agency may refer applicants to an external document for

organizing the project description. This is the case with the National Science Foundation's (NSF) **Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) Section 2d**, which outlines the following:

*"The Project Description should provide a **clear statement of the work** to be undertaken and must include the **objectives** for the period of the proposed work and **expected significance**; the relationship of this work to the **present state of knowledge in the field**, as well as to **work in progress** by the PI under other support. The Project Description should outline the **general plan of work**, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear **description of experimental methods and procedures**. Proposers should address what they want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful."*

Though not explicitly stated, the structure of an NSF proposal narrative, based on the above quote, typically includes the following core sections: **(1)** Introduction/Project Overview; **(2)** Background, Current State of the Field, and Significance of Proposed Research; **(3)** Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes; **(4)** Plan of Work/Methodology; and **(5)** Broader Impacts.

Organizing a project with multiple research strands and directorates into an integrated narrative can be challenging. To address this, PIs may consider structuring the tasks as subsections under a main section, such as Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes, while still ensuring that the project's overall vision, hypothesis, and expected outcomes are clearly articulated.

Additionally, depending on the nature of the research, you may need to decide where to discuss potential project pitfalls. Including this in your narrative is essential, as it shows reviewers that you have thoroughly considered the project and can manage any uncertainties that may arise during the research period.

Whether adhering to specific solicitation guidelines or referencing external resources like NSF's PAPPG, establishing the organization of the proposal narrative is a critical first step. Ultimately, the goal is to present a clear and cohesive project description—one that enables program officers and reviewers to quickly make an informed funding decision.

Adapted from the February 2025 edition of the [Research Development and Grant Writing Newsletter](#).

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