

Office of Research & Economic Development Limited Submission Internal Reviewer Guide



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Although we try to construct appropriate ad hoc review panels for each opportunity, it is understood that reviewers will not be likely to have scientific expertise in a given applicant's research area, and are evaluating applications to the best of their ability.

Reviewers should be selective, and use the full range of criteria scores. Reviewers should familiarize themselves with the funding opportunity and read all applications prior to performing their reviews. The standardized applicant guidelines for internal competitions are included at the end of this document.

Conflict of Interest

For conflict of interest on internal reviews, being a member of the same department does not automatically disallow a review. Current close collaboration, such as being co-PIs on a proposal, or being longtime close collaborators, are disqualifying conflicts in many cases. The same goes for any kind of shared financial interest, either professional or personal, as well as personal relationships such as marriage or kinship. If you have questions about what constitutes a conflict of interest for the purposes of this competition, please contact ajordan@southalabama.edu or 251.460.6507.

Evaluation Criteria

SCORING SCALE:

Exceptional: Meets all criteria; highly compelling and likely to be competitive at the national level.

Very Good: Strong proposal with minor weaknesses; demonstrates high potential.

Satisfactory: Meets most criteria; some areas could be strengthened for the full submission.

Fair: Lacks clarity in key areas and requires significant revision.

Poor: Does not clearly address key requirements or lacks significant detail.

INTELLECTUAL MERIT: Does the application present an innovative, scientifically sound idea that directly aligns with the sponsor's funding requirements?

OBJECTIVES & METHODS: Are the objectives clearly stated and supported by a feasible, logically structured research design and analysis plan?

ANTICIPATED IMPACT: Does the project have potential to advance the field, deliver meaningful outcomes, and strengthen the institution?

PERSONNEL & ENVIRONMENT: Does the applicant have the expertise needed to lead the project, and are necessary facilities and partner collaborations identified?

BUDGET FEASIBILITY & JUSTIFICATION: Is the draft budget reasonable, necessary for the scope of work, and clearly justified?

REVIEWER RECOMMENDATION:

Yes or No response. Comments supporting your recommendation are required.

APPLICANT FEEDBACK: Provide constructive comments to help applicants improve future submissions.

Application Requirements

When an internal competition is triggered, applicants must submit a pre-proposal through the internal submission form. All pre-proposals must follow these formatting and structure rules.

Eligibility

Applicants are responsible for checking the sponsor's full funding announcement to confirm their eligibility. Questions about individual eligibility should be directed to the relevant college's research dean.

Formatting

- Use 1" margins on all sides.
- Use single spacing.
- Use a font size of 11 point or larger.
- Combine all parts into a single PDF document.

Page Constraints and Structure

- Pages 1 & 2 (Project Description): Describe the project's objectives, methods, analysis, significance, and anticipated impact. This description must directly address the key requirements of the sponsor's funding opportunity. If the opportunity requires a collaboration, your description should identify the partner(s). **This section must not exceed two pages total.**
- Page 3 (Budget and Justification): Provide a draft budget and a brief justification of major expenses. **This section must not exceed one page.**
- Pages 4 & 5 (Biosketch/CV): Provide a brief biosketch or CV of **one to no more than two pages** for the lead researcher.
- **TOTAL PAGE LIMIT: The entire pre-proposal package must not exceed five pages, unless optional components are required as described below.**

Optional Documents

- Reviewer comments from prior submission: If you are applying to resubmit a proposal which was a previous institutional nomination, you must include the feedback you received from the program officer for the declined submission(s). We recommend including only the summary statement, but you may optionally provide all reviewer feedback.
- Statement addressing revisions: If you are applying to resubmit, please include a statement of no more than one page (formatted as above) addressing changes to strengthen the resubmission.