Proposal preparation guidelines

The proposal must include seven distinct sections: 1) Cover Sheet, 2) Project Summary, 3) Project Description, 4) Biographical Sketch(es), 5) Budget and Budget Justification, 6) Current or Pending support, and 7) Special Information and Supplementary Documentation. Guidelines on how to write these sections are appended below. The following text is adapted from the NSF Grant Proposal Guide http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/gpgprint.pdf. Some of the text is copied *verbatim* from the above document.

1 Cover Sheet (One page)

The Cover Sheet should include the following information:

- **Title of Proposed Project.** The title of the project must be brief, scientifically or technically valid, intelligible to a scientifically or technically literate reader, and suitable for use in the public press.

- **Total Budget and Timeline Information.** The proposed total budget (up to \$150) and the timeline for which support is requested (up to the end of the semester) must be consistent with the nature and complexity of the proposed activity.

- **PI Information and co-PI Information.** Names and credentials of the Principal Investigator(s) must be stated in the Cover Sheet. The proposal also may identify up to four additional co-Principal Investigators. Each individual's name and e-mail address must be included.

- **Project/Performance Site Primary Location.** The organization name of the primary site where the work will be performed must be identified. Provide the organization name and full address.

2 Project Summary (One page)

The proposal must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitable for publication, not more than one page in length. It should not be an abstract of the proposal, but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. The summary should be written in the third person and include a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It must clearly address in separate statements (within the one-page summary): (1) The intellectual merit of the proposed activity; and (2) the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activity. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. Proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the one-page Project Summary will be returned without review. To that end, proposers are encouraged to include separate headings within the one page document for both "Intellectual Merit" and "Broader Impacts."

3 Project Description (Five pages maximum)

3.1 Content

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include: objectives for the period of the proposed work, expected significance, and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress under other support and to work in progress elsewhere. 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. It must describe as an integral part of the narrative, the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activities, addressing one or more of the following as appropriate for the project: how the project will integrate research and education; ways in which the proposed activity may broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.) to science; how the project will enhance research and/or education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships; how the results of the project will be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding; and potential benefits of the proposed activity to society at large.

3.2 Page Limitations and Inclusion of Universal Resource Locators (URLs) within the Project

Brevity will assist reviewers and the Program Officer in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description may not exceed 5 pages. Visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 5-page limitation. PIs are cautioned that the Project Description must be self-contained and that URLs that provide information related to the proposal should not be used because 1) the information could circumvent page limitations, 2) the reviewers are under no obligation to view the sites, and 3) the sites could be altered or abolished between the time of submission and the time of review. Conformance to the 5-page limitation will be strictly enforced and may not be exceeded unless a deviation has been specifically authorized.

3.3 References Cited (One page)

Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the website address also should be identified. Proposers must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal. This section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 5-page Project Description.

4 Biographical Sketch(es) (One page per investigator)

4.1 Senior Personnel

A Biographical Sketch (limited to one page) is required for each individual identified as senior project personnel (PIs or co-PIs). The following information must be provided in the order and format specified below. Do not submit personal information such as home address; home telephone, fax, or

cell phone numbers; home e-mail address; date of birth; citizenship; drivers' license numbers; marital status; personal hobbies; and the like. Such personal information is irrelevant to the merits of the proposal. If such information is included, every effort will be made to prevent unauthorized access to such material, but the Program Officer is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

4.1.1 Professional Preparation

A list of the individual's past and current education and/or training as indicated below:

- **Academic Career:** School Institution(s), Degree & Year; Undergraduate Institution(s), Major Degree & Year.

- **Research Experience or Appointments:** A list, in reverse chronological order, of all the individual's academic/professional research experiences or appointments (if applicable) beginning with the most recent one.

4.1.2 Publications

A list of up to three publications most closely related to the proposed project. Each publication identified must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the website address also should be identified. For unpublished manuscripts, list only those submitted or accepted for publication (along with most likely date of publication). Patents, copyrights and software systems developed may be substituted for publications. Additional lists of publications, invited lectures, etc., must not be included.

4.1.3 Synergistic Activities

A list of up to three examples that demonstrate the broader impact of the individual's academic and extra-curricular activities that focuses on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation. Examples could include, among others: development/or refinement of pedagogical materials, research tools, computation methodologies and databases to support research and education; broadening the participation of groups underrepresented in science, mathematics, engineering and technology; and service to the scientific and engineering community outside of the individual's immediate organization.

4.1.4 Collaborators & Other Affiliations

A list of all persons in alphabetical order (including their current organizational affiliations) who are currently, or who have been collaborators or co-authors with the individual on a project, book, article, report, abstract or paper during the 12 months preceding the submission of the proposal. If there are no collaborators or co-editors to report, this should be so indicated.

4.1.5 Advisors and Sponsors

A list of the names of the individual's own advisor(s) and principal sponsor(s), and their current organizational affiliations.

4.2   Other Personnel

The proposal also may include information on exceptional qualifications that merit consideration in the evaluation of the proposal for these personnel categories:

- Faculty and postdoctoral associates

- Other professionals

- Other students

5   Budget and Budget Justification (One page maximum)

Each proposal must contain a budget spreadsheet for the support requested up to $150 (Lines A-G). The amounts requested for each budget line item (if applicable) should be documented and justified in the budget justification as specified below. The Budget Justification should be no more than one page. The proposal may request funds under any of the categories listed so long as the item and amount are considered necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable under the applicable cost principles and the policy of the University of Mississippi. Amounts and expenses budgeted must be consistent with the proposed work.

5.1   Equipment – Line A of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of $50 or more and an expected service life of more than one year. It is important to note that the acquisition cost of equipment includes modifications, attachments, and accessories necessary to make the property usable for the purpose for which it was purchased. Items of needed equipment must be adequately justified, listed individually by description and estimated cost. Allowable items ordinarily will be limited to research equipment and apparatus not already available for the conduct of the work. General-purpose equipment, such as a personal computer and office furnishings, are not eligible for support unless primarily or exclusively used in the actual conduct of scientific research.

5.2   Travel – Line B of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Travel and its relation to the proposed activities must be specified and itemized by destination and cost. Funds may be requested for field work and other travel associated with the proposed work, including subsistence. In order to qualify for support, however, travel must be necessary to accomplish proposal objectives, or disseminate its results.

5.3   Other Direct Costs – Line C of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Any proposed costs must be allowable, reasonable and directly allocable to the supported activity. The budget must identify and itemize other anticipated direct costs not included under the headings above, including materials and supplies, publication costs and computer services. Examples include construction of equipment or systems not available off the shelf.

5.3.1 Materials and Supplies – Line C1 of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The proposal Budget Justification should indicate the general types of expendable materials and supplies required. Materials and supplies are defined as tangible personal property, other than equipment, costing less than $50, or other lower threshold consistent with the policy established by the proposing organization. Cost estimates must be included for items that represent a substantial amount of the proposed line item cost.

5.3.2 Publication/Documentation/Dissemination – Line C2 of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The proposal budget may request funds for the costs of documenting, preparing, publishing or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under the grant. This generally includes the following types of activities: reports, reprints, page charges or other journal costs (except costs for prior or early publication); necessary illustrations; cleanup, documentation, storage and indexing of data and databases; development, documentation and debugging of software; and storage, preservation, documentation, indexing, etc., of physical specimens, collections or fabricated items.

5.3.3 Computer Services – Line C3 of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical and educational information, may be requested. General purpose (word processing, spreadsheets, communication) computer equipment should not be requested. Special purpose or scientific use computers or associated hardware and software, however, may be requested as items of equipment when necessary to accomplish the project objectives and not otherwise reasonably available.

5.3.4 Other – Line D of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Any other direct costs not specified above must be identified in this subsection. Such costs must be itemized and detailed in the budget justification.

5.4 Total Direct Costs – Line E of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The total amount of direct costs requested in the budget, to include Lines A through D, must be entered on Line D.

5.5 Indirect Costs (also known as Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A) for Colleges and Universities) – Line F of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The applicable indirect cost rate(s) negotiated by the organization with the cognizant negotiating agency must be used in computing indirect costs (F&A) for a proposal. The amount for indirect costs should be calculated by applying the current negotiated indirect cost rate(s) to the approved base(s).

5.6 Total Amount of This Request – Line G of the Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

The total amount of the request, direct plus indirect costs (F&A) (sum of Lines E and F) must be entered on Line G.

5.7 Unallowable Costs

Proposers should be familiar with the complete list of unallowable costs that is contained in the applicable cost principles. The following categories of unallowable costs are highlighted because of their sensitivity:

- **Entertainment:** Costs of entertainment, amusement, diversion and social activities and any costs directly associated with such activities (such as tickets to shows or sporting events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities) are unallowable. Travel, meal and hotel expenses of investigators who are not on travel status are unallowable. Costs of investigators on travel status are limited to those allowed under the governing cost principles for travel expenses.

- **Meals and Coffee Breaks:** No funds may be spent on meals or coffee breaks for intramural meetings of an organization or any of its components, including, but not limited to, laboratories, departments and centers.

- **Alcoholic Beverages:** No funds may be spent on alcoholic beverages.

6 Current and Pending Support (One page)

This section of the proposal calls for required information on all current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals. All current project support from whatever source must be listed. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the PI(s) and other senior personnel must be included, even if they receive no support from the project(s). The total award amount for the entire award period covered (including indirect costs) must be shown as well as the time to be devoted to the project, regardless of source of support.

7 Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources (One page)

This section of the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. Proposers should describe only those resources that are directly applicable. Proposers should include an aggregated description of the resources that the organization will provide to the project, should it be funded. Such information must be provided in this section, in lieu of other parts of the proposal (e.g., budget justification, project description). The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Reviewers will evaluate the information during the merit review process and the Program Officer will review it for programmatic and technical sufficiency.

8 Special Information and Supplementary Documentation (One page)

Special information and supplementary documentation must be included in this section, if it is relevant to determining the quality of the proposed work. Information submitted in the following areas is not considered part of the 5-page Project Description limitation.