

## **The Practical Guide to Applying for the NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant**

*By Wendy Yang, 12/4/07*

**Step 1:** Contact Cora Tabernero or the appropriate liaison for your lab in the ESPM Contracts and Grants office (230 Mulford Hall). This person will ask you for some information to help set you up on FastLane.

**Step 2:** Contact Richard Battrick to get a letter attesting that you have advanced to candidacy. You will need to scan this letter and upload it on FastLane.

**Step 3:** Contact any collaborators to ask them for letters of support to verify that you are working together. You will need letters from anyone whose facilities you are using, will collect samples for you, etc. You will need to scan these letters and upload them on FastLane.

**Step 4:** Decide on a title for your proposal and the total amount of money you are requesting. The ESPM Contracts and Grants Office needs this well in advance of the NSF deadline in order to process paperwork with the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO). These two details of your proposal cannot be changed once you have submitted them to the office.

**Step 5:** Put together your proposal! You will need:

- (1) 8 page project description (the body of the proposal including broader impacts)
- (2) 1 page project summary (including intellectual merit and broader impacts statements)
- (3) one-page context for improvement—How does the proposed research improve your dissertation? Why can't your advisor pay for this research?
- (4) 1-2 page budget justification (itemize and justify expenses)
- (5) biographical sketch for you AND your advisor (see NSF guidelines for format)

**Step 6:** Upload all materials at least ten business days before the NSF deadline. SPO needs ten days to review your proposal and make sure that you've met all the requirements to submit (for me, I had some letters of collaboration missing). The ESPM Contracts and Grants Office will review your proposal before it goes to SPO, so you should try to have everything uploaded more than ten days before the deadline. You can make major changes to any portion of your proposal (except title and budget total) after this time, but the office people won't be happy with you if you try to submit a partially completed proposal to SPO.

**Step 7:** The day before the NSF deadline (ideally), upload your final proposal. Make sure you proofread the pdf files carefully for formatting after they have been uploaded. Click on the "allow SRO access" button in FastLane to allow SPO to review and submit your proposal. Email your contact in the ESPM Contracts and Grants Office to let them know that you have done this, so that she can stop worrying that you'll miss the deadline.

**Step 8:** Breathe a sigh of relief. Don't look at your proposal again lest you find a missed typo. Wait until May of next year to find out if you were awarded a DDIG.