

National Science Foundation: RA Support for Project Reports



Research Administration Professional Development Program

Ensure
Compliance

Facilitate
Research

RAPDP

Research Administration Professional Development Program

Ensure Compliance/Facilitate Research

- Research Administrators (RAs) help to interpret and apply sponsor and University guidelines in order to minimize compliance risks and guide Principal Investigators (PIs) toward sound decision-making.
- The RA strives to provide excellent customer service by helping their PI navigate the bureaucratic and administrative landscape so that the fiscal and administrative aspects of their research run smoothly.

What's Changed / What's this all about?

- October 24 notification from NSF Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management
 - “... substantial number of overdue annual/final project reports and project outcomes reports...”
 - “...large scale non-compliance issue on the part of your organization...”
 - Other scary language!
 - **133** projects from UC Berkeley identified as having delinquent or missing project reports

Why we should care: impact to the PIs and to the rest of campus

- When project reports are overdue: NSF can issue various sanctions against the PIs, co-PIs, and UC Berkeley campus:
 - Withhold next annual budget increment or remaining funding on the affected award
 - Jeopardize PI AND co-PI ability to receive funding on other NSF-funded awards and pending proposals
 - Early termination of project, with draw-down impacts
 - Inviting further audit

Who Does What? Typical Role Divisions for NSF and Research.gov

SPO	CGA	Principal Investigator	Research Administrator
Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), or Sponsored Research Office (SRO) Actions	Financial Reporting and Closeout	Annual Project Reports	Fund balance reporting, other SASI 15/COSO reporting requirements
Chasing down delinquent project reports	Draw down activities in Award Cash Management Service (“ACM\$”)	Final Project Report	Effort Verification
Fastlane and research.gov account activation		Project Outcomes Report	“Courtesy Reminders”

What does NSF Require?

- Annual Project Report(s)
- Final Project Report
- Project Outcomes Report
- And one more optional but important function!

Annual Project Reports

- Technical narrative report, due **90 days** before the end of the annual budget period
 - 3 month window to submit (but not complete until reviewed/approved by Program Officer)
 - Considered “overdue” at the end of the annual budget period
 - Submitted through the PI account in research.gov

Final Project Report

- Final technical report, due 120 days AFTER the end of the award
 - Very similar to the Annual Project Reports
 - Separate reporting requirement from the financial component that's handled between RA and CGA
 - Submitted through the PI account in research.gov

Project Outcomes Report

- Summary report on the nature and outcomes of the project, specifically prepared for the “general public” audience
 - 200-800 words, intended to be released to the public
 - Posted to [research.gov](https://www.research.gov) the business day following submission
 - Can be edited by PI within 30 days after submission

No-Cost Extension

- “Grantee-approved Extension”: one-time extension of the final end date of the award
 - Up to 12 months for the first request
 - Pushes up the Final Project Report deadline
 - Needs to be submitted at least 10 calendar days prior to award end (but aim for 45 days anyway)
 - Subsequent requests for additional time require NSF approval
 - Requested through the PI Account, requires “Authorized Official” to complete
 - Follow up with email to the SPO CGO

Sample Timeline for Reporting: 2-year Project (7/1/2019 – 6/30/2021)

Reporting Milestone	Date
1 st Annual Project Report Open/Due (90 day prior)	April 1, 2020
1 st Annual Project Report Overdue	June 30, 2020
Grantee-approved No-cost Extension Due (10 days prior)	June 20, 2021
Final Project Report Open/Due	July 1, 2021
Final Project Report Overdue (120 days after)	October 31, 2021
Project Outcomes Report Open/Due	July 1, 2021
Project Outcomes Report Overdue (120 days after)	October 31, 2021

What Can RAs do?

- Keep eye out for annual anniversary dates on NSF Funds
 - Add reminders about grant-year end dates and overall award end dates to monthly reporting notifications
 - Dates are listed in PI Portfolio
 - Consider setting up calendar reminders when setting up a newly issued grant (NSF, federal, and otherwise)
- May need to assist with the “Participants” section of the report
 - Requirement to report on individuals who worked one month or more during the reporting period
 - Faculty may need help verifying the personnel effort charged to the project

Directing PIs to Research.gov

- Troubleshooting Fastlane and Research.gov accounts
 - PI may not remember their NSF ID# or Password
 - “NSF ID Lookup” function
 - PI may need you to specifically point out where they need to go to complete their reports

Keep things in perspective: PI already gets regular reminder emails from NSF, may be disregarding them for a reason.

Links and Other Resources

- National Science Foundation resources:
 - [“Getting Started Guide”](#)
 - [“About Project Reports”](#): includes downloadable Word template
- SPO resources:
 - [“Quick Guide to Working With NSF Fastlane and Research.gov”](#)