Frequently Asked Questions
FY 2016 DOE Office of Science Early Career Research Program
Version 1, Updated July 31, 2015

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Eligibility

Q: How does the DOE Office of Science define "early career"?
A: Principal Investigators are within 10 years of having received a Ph.D. and are either untenured assistant professors on the tenure track, untenured associate professors on the tenure track, or full-time, nonpostdoctoral, permanent DOE national laboratory employees. For the present competition, those who received doctorates no earlier than 2005 are eligible.

Q: The funding announcement states, "…a Principal Investigator may not participate in more than three Office of Science Early Career Research Program competitions." Does submission of a preapplication count as participation?
A: No. Participation in the competition is defined as submission of a full application.

Q: Is the program limited to Principal Investigators (PIs) who are U.S. citizens?
A: No, but the PI must be employed by either a U.S. academic institution or a DOE national laboratory.

Q: Can postdoctoral fellows apply for awards under the DOE Early Career Research Program?
A: Postdoctoral fellows may not apply directly. However, a PI may include postdoctoral support for the project in the proposed budget.

Q: I defended my Ph.D. dissertation in 2004, but I graduated in 2005. Am I eligible?
A: If the Ph.D. conferment date posted on the academic transcript is a date in 2005, you are eligible.

Q: I am a Ph.D. candidate, but I have not yet received my Ph.D. Am I eligible?
A: You must have a Ph.D. as of the proposal due date, November 19, 2015.

Q: If I have previously won an early career award from another agency or a nonprofit organization, am I eligible?

A: Yes.

Q: Are research professors eligible?

A: No. In universities, only untenured assistant professors or untenured associate professors on the tenure track with Ph.D.'s earned within the past ten years are eligible.

Q: While I hold a permanent position, I am a research (not tenure-track) faculty member. Am I eligible?

A: No. Research professors are not eligible.

Q: If I received an Office of Science Early Career Research Program award previously, am I eligible?

A: No.

Q: I am an untenured assistant or associate professor on the tenure track and have applied for tenure but have not yet received it. Am I eligible?

A: You are eligible if you are untenured but still on the tenure track as of the proposal due date of November 19, 2015.

Q: I am currently part time at a national laboratory but will convert to full-time status beginning in September. Am I eligible?

A: You are eligible if you meet the eligibility requirements as of the proposal due date of November 19, 2015.

Q: I have accepted a position as an untenured assistant or associate professor on the tenure track at a U.S. academic institution, but I have not yet begun the job. Am I eligible?

A: You must be employed in the position on the proposal due date, November 19, 2015.

Q: I have accepted a position as a full-time permanent non-postdoctoral DOE national laboratory employee, but I have not yet begun the job. Am I eligible?

A: You must be employed in the position by the proposal due date, November 19, 2015.

Q: I have earned two Ph.D.'s. One is within the ten-year eligibility window, and one is not. Am I eligible?

A: If a person has multiple Ph.D.'s, the discipline of the one they have earned within the ten-year eligibility window should be relevant to the proposed idea.

Q: I previously won a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). Am I eligible?

A: Yes. Previous winners of PECASE are eligible for the Early Career Research Program. If you received your PECASE award through the DOE Office of Science and the award is still active, you must forgo the remaining years of funding for the current award when the new award begins.

Q: My national laboratory has certain appointments not considered permanent but also not considered postdoctoral. Are people in these appointments eligible?

A: To make this determination, the laboratory director should work with Dr. Linda Blevins of DOE to answer the following set of questions generically for the type of appointment (and not for any individual currently occupying the appointment): (1) Is the appointment considered to be a postdoctoral position? (2) Is an appointee in this position an employee of the national laboratory? (3) Is it the laboratory's intention at the time the appointment is made to transition the appointee to career employment status when the appointment ends? (4) Is the appointment considered to be full time? (5) Does the appointment type qualify for the full benefits of a career employee (as opposed to a reduced benefits package that might be provided for a postdoctoral employee)? If the answer to the first question is no and the answer to each of the remaining questions is yes, the type of appointment is eligible.

Q: Is our academic institution required to supply any documentation certifying a Principal Investigator's tenure status and appointment in a tenure-track position?

A: We do not require such certification, but a submission through the institution implies the institution has made such a determination and takes responsibility for the decision. The cover page of the proposal asks for position title, tenure status, and year of Ph.D.

Q: I already have funding for a regular university grant through the DOE Office of Science. Am I eligible?

A: Yes, but you must propose new research.

Q: I am a U.S. national employed by a non-U.S. academic institution. Am I eligible?

A: No. You must work at a U.S. academic institution or a DOE national laboratory.

Q: Am I required to be PECASE-eligible to apply for the Office of Science Early Career Research Program?

A: No. PECASE eligibility is not required for the program, but we will not be able to nominate you for a PECASE later if you do not qualify for PECASE.

Q: I have accepted an eligible faculty position but am not yet on campus. The university has given me a courtesy appointment so that I can serve as a Principal Investigator and submit proposals. Am I eligible?

A: No. To be eligible, you must be receiving a paycheck from the submitting institution as of the proposal due date of November 19, 2015.

Q: I start my tenure-track position next calendar year. My soon-to-be department chair has offered to write a letter declaring that I will be employed in the position by January 1. Would I then be eligible?

A: No. You must be working in the eligible position as of the proposal due date of November 19, 2015.

Q: I worked in industry after receiving my Ph.D. but before joining academia. I meet all the eligibility requirements except one: My doctorate was awarded more than ten years ago. Am I eligible?

A: No. You must be within 10 years of having received a Ph.D.. For the present competition, those who received doctorates no earlier than 2005 are eligible.

Q: I work at an academic institution that does not have a tenure track. Am I eligible to apply?

A: No. Your institution must have a tenure track and you must be on it.

Q: My title is Assistant Professor. My department is implementing an alternative model, so I am not in a tenure-track position. I am also not a temporary or visiting employee. Our program has renewable, three-year contracts instead of tenure, and senior faculty members use titles of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. My position is considered by my institution to be tenure-track equivalent. Am I eligible?

A: No. You must be on a tenure track and be an untenured Assistant Professor or untenured Associate Professor.

Q: My institution has instructional and research faculty tracks. The instructional faculty tracks are at the Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor level, whereas the research tracks are at the Assistant, Associate, and Full Researcher level. I am on the researcher track. Am I eligible?

A: No.

Q: If my DOE national laboratory has no funding from the Office of Science, would our scientists be eligible?

A: No. Each proposal must be accompanied by a letter from the national laboratory director to the technical point of contact confirming that the proposed research idea fits within the scope of Office-of-Science-funded programs at the national laboratory. If there are no Office-of-Science-funded programs at the lab, there would be no basis for the letter.

Q: If my DOE national laboratory has a small amount of funding from the Office of Science, would our scientists be eligible?

A: Yes. However, the ideas proposed must fit within the (small) scope of Office-of-Science-funded programs at the lab.

Q: I have a 50% staff position at a DOE national laboratory and a 50% research staff position at an academic institution. Am I eligible to apply?

A: No. You are neither a full-time, nonpostdoctoral, permanent DOE national laboratory employee nor an untenured assistant or associate professor on the tenure track at an academic institution.

Q: Are early career scientists from other federal agencies eligible?

A: No.

Budget

Q: What is the lower limit on the proposed budget?
A: The minimum award size is $150,000 per year for five years for universities and $500,000 per year for five years for DOE national laboratories.

Q: What is the upper limit on the proposed budget?
A: There is no upper limit, but you should keep your budget as close to the minimum as possible.

Q: Does the minimum budget specified in the announcement include indirect costs?
A: Yes, the minimum budget includes both direct and indirect costs.

Q: Can there be a co-Principal Investigator on my proposal?
A: No.

Q: May I have a paid collaborator on my proposal?
A: Our intention is to fund projects directed and executed by the early career Principal Investigator (PI). In rare cases where a collaborator (either early career or senior) brings something unique to the project, support will be considered. However, our preference is that you propose a project with research support staff (e.g., students, postdocs), travel, supplies, equipment, and other necessary expenses for the PI-led project.

Q: May I propose equipment and/or travel support?
A: Yes.

Q: Can the budget contain funding for graduate students and other participants?
A: Yes.

Q: Why is the minimum laboratory award larger than the minimum university award?
A: The university award is intended to pay up to two or three months' summer salary for the Principal Investigator (PI) to supplement the normal, academic-year salary. The laboratory award is intended to pay the year-round PI salary. Also, universities can involve students part-time in research, while laboratories generally rely on full-time staff to support their research projects. The minimum university award is competitive with similar programs at other agencies. This is the only such award of its type available to DOE national laboratory scientists.

Q: Does this program require cost sharing?
A: No.

Q: The announcement provides a minimum cumulative award size. Must this minimum budget be distributed equally over the five award years or can it be distributed in any way as long as the five-year total equals the minimum award size?

A: You can distribute the budget any way you'd like, but make sure that the cumulative budget is about equal to the minimum award size. If possible, we ask laboratory applicants to aim to spend about $500k per year. Laboratory Principal Investigators must charge at least 50% of salary to the award each year of the award.

Q: PAMS allows a maximum of five budgets periods. My laboratory prices work based on fiscal years, so our tools are more suited for six budget entries than five. Can we enter six budget periods based on fiscal years instead of five budget periods that cross fiscal years?

A: No. Please complete the PAMS budgets in one year increments.

Preapplication and Proposal

Q: Is the preapplication required, and will it be used to select a reduced number of proposals for full submission?

A: Yes. Preapplications will be reviewed for responsiveness of the proposed work to the research topics identified in this funding announcement. DOE will send a response by email to each applicant encouraging or discouraging the submission of a formal application by October 8, 2015. Only those applicants that receive notification from DOE encouraging a formal application may submit full applications. No other formal applications will be considered.

Q: May I contact the program manager before I submit my preproposal for feedback?

A: Yes. Feel free to contact a program manager if you are uncertain about which topic from the solicitation is the best fit for your idea. The program manager can provide informal feedback on your idea and suggest other program areas if the idea does not fit within his or her area. Please note that you may formally submit any preproposal you believe fits within the topics described in the solicitation, regardless of the informal feedback you may receive from a program manager. A formal encourage/discourage decision based on topical fit with the solicitation will be issued for every preproposal we receive.

Q: Is there a required format for the preapplication?

A: The preapplication attachment should include, at the top of the first page, the following information:

Title of Pre-application
Principal Investigator Name, Job Title
Institution
PI Phone Number, PI Email Address
Year Doctorate Awarded:
Number of Times Previously Applied:
Funding Opportunity or DOE National Laboratory Announcement Number:

This information should be followed by a clear and concise description of the objectives and technical approach of the proposed research. The preapplication may not exceed two pages, with a minimum text font size of 11 point and margins no smaller than one inch on all sides. You may include optional figures and references, but they must fit within the two-page limit. To help the Office of Science avoid conflicts of interest in identifying potential reviewers, a one-page list of the Principal Investigator's collaborators, co-editors, and graduate/postdoctoral advisors and advisees must be submitted with the preapplication. The one-page list should be the last page in the pdf preapplication file and will not count against the two-page limit for the preapplication. Since the Office of Science will never use individuals from your institution as reviewers, you may omit them from the preapplication list to save space. Listing collaborators on your preapplication is to help us identify reviewers and does not affect the decision to encourage or discourage submission of a full proposal.

Q: I have accepted a position that is eligible for the program, but I have not yet begun the job as of the preproposal due date. I understand that I must be employed in an eligible position on the proposal due date, November 19, 2015 to apply for the program. I fully expect to be employed in my new position by the proposal due date. How can I indicate this on my preproposal?

A: Please list your current job title at the top of the first page, but add a footnote. In the footnote, provide your soon-to-be position title and indicate that you anticipate starting that position by the proposal due date.

Q: How does my university submit a preproposal?

A: The preproposal must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/. If you are applying from a university, choose "View / Respond to Funding Opportunity Announcements."

Q: How does my DOE national laboratory submit a preproposal?

A: The preproposal must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/. Note: If you are applying from a DOE National Laboratory, make sure you choose "View / Respond to DOE National Laboratory Announcements." Do not choose "View / Respond to Funding Opportunity Announcements." If you choose the latter, you will respond to the wrong solicitation, and your preproposal might not be considered.

Q: May I submit more than one preapplication? Alternately, may I submit the same preapplication to multiple programs?

A: No. You may submit only one preapplication.

Q: Does the Principal Investigator submit the preapplication or does the sponsored research office submit it?

A: We have no preference. The acknowledgment email will go to the Principal Investigator's email address.

Q: How do I submit a Preapplication or Preproposal?

A: Preapplications or preproposals must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website, https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/. Universities should respond to Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0001386. DOE National Laboratories should respond to DOE National Laboratory Announcement LAB 15-1386. The deadline for submission into PAMS is 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, September 10, 2015. Late preproposals will not be accepted. The Principal Investigator and anyone submitting on behalf of the Principal Investigator must register for an account in PAMS before it will be possible to submit a preproposal. You are encouraged to register for an account in PAMS at least a week in advance of the preproposal submission deadline of 5 pm Eastern Time September 10, 2015 so that there will be no delays with your submission.

Q: If I include citations on the preapplication, are they required to be within the 2-page limit and with a minimum text font size of 11 point?

A: Yes, you must fit everything you submit in your preapplication within the two allowed pages. If you choose to include references, they must fit in the two-page limit.

Q: May I include figures in my preapplication?

A: Yes, you may include figures within the two pages, but do not exceed two pages under any circumstances.

Q: If I submit a preproposal and it is discouraged, does it count toward the three attempts?

A: No. Participation in the competition is defined as submission of a full application.

Q: If I submit a preproposal and it is encouraged, do I have to submit the full proposal?

A: No.

Q: If I submit a preproposal and it is encouraged but I decided not to submit the full proposal, does that count toward the three attempts

A: No. Participation in the competition is defined as submission of a full application.

Q: Is there any budget information required in the preproposal?

A: No.

Q: Does the preproposal require institutional approval?

A: From the DOE perspective, the preproposal can come directly from the Principal Investigator, but check with your institution to find out its preproposal submission policy.

Q: I did not get an encourage/discourage notification from PAMS, and the encourage/discourage date has passed. What do I do?

A: Notifications sent from the PAMS system will come from the PAMS email address <PAMS.Autoreply@science.doe.gov>. Please make sure your email server/software allows delivery of emails from the PAMS email address to yours. When the email went out, the status (encouraged or discouraged) of the pre-proposal was updated at the PAMS website. Thus, you can log into PAMS and navigate to the My Preproposals page to determine the status. You can also contact the program manager. To report a missing email, please contact the PAMS Help Desk, which can be reached Monday through Friday, 9 AM – 5:30 PM Eastern Time. Telephone: (855) 818-1846 (toll free) or (301) 903-9610, Email: sc.pams-helpdesk@science.doe.gov. Please provide the solicitation number in all communications with the PAMS help desk.

Q: I work at a DOE national laboratory and would like to submit a preproposal, but I'm not sure if my idea fits within the scope of Office-of-Science-funded programs at my laboratory. How do I find this out?

A: You are encouraged to discuss your idea with a lab manager familiar with the scope of funded programs at the laboratory to make sure it fits.

Q: I was not able to submit my preproposal or proposal into PAMS because of technical issues with the PAMS software. Can I submit a late preproposal or DOE national laboratory proposal under these circumstances?

A: Your case will be considered only if you contacted the PAMS help desk prior to the preproposal or proposal submission deadline to report a problem. Please email early.career@science.doe.gov with your request. You will be asked the following questions: (1) Did you contact the PAMS help desk for help assistance with the problems before the deadline? (2) If so, approximately what time did you place the call or send the email? (3) Do you have a help desk tracking number? Please be ready to answer these questions when informing DOE of problems with PAMS.

Q: If I withdraw my proposal, does it still count toward my limit of three submissions?

A: Applications withdrawn prior to being sent for merit review by the DOE Office of Science will not count as a submission. Once an application is sent for merit review, its status as reflected in PAMS changes from "Submitted to DOE" to "Under Review," and it will count as a submission even if it is withdrawn.

Q: How does my university submit a full application?

A: Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. The Funding Opportunity Number is DE-FOA-0001386 and the CFDA Number for the Office of Science is 81.049. The deadline for submission into Grants.gov is 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, November 19, 2015. Late applications will not be accepted. Only those applicants that receive notification from DOE encouraging a formal application may submit full applications.

Q: How does my DOE national laboratory submit a full proposal?

A: Laboratory proposals must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website, https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/. The DOE National Laboratory Announcement

Number is LAB 15-1386. The deadline for submission into PAMS is 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, November 19, 2015. Late proposals will not be accepted. Only those proposers that receive notification from DOE encouraging a formal proposal may submit full proposals. Anyone submitting on behalf of the Principal Investigator must register for an account in PAMS before it will be possible to submit a preproposal. Submitters are encouraged to register for an account in PAMS at least a week in advance of the laboratory proposal submission deadline of 5 pm Eastern Time November 19, 2015 so that there will be no delays with your submission.

Q: May I submit my DOE national laboratory proposal into Searchable FWP?

A: **No.** Do not use the Searchable FWP system to respond to this announcement. Proposals submitted into Searchable FWP will not be accepted. Laboratory proposals must be submitted into the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website, https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/.

Q: Is my DOE national laboratory required to submit a Field Work Proposal or FWP?

A: No. Do not submit or attach a DOE Field Work Proposal (FWP) at this time. The program office will request submission of Field Work Proposals later *only from those applicants who are selected for possible funding*.

Q: A list of synergistic activities is required in the biographical sketch of the full proposal. I am asked to list as many as five professional and scholarly activities related to the effort proposed. What kind of information should be included here?

A: Your answer in this section depends on your experiences. Include information that can be used by reviewers to evaluate your potential for leadership within the scientific community (review criterion 6). Some examples might be invited and/or public lectures, awards received, scientific program committees, conference or workshop organization, professional society membership activities, special international or industrial partnerships, reviewing or editorship activities, or other scientific leadership experiences.

Q: Is a data management plan required for this proposal?

A: Yes. A data management plan should be included in Appendix 6 of the proposal. For guidance on data management plans, refer the solicitation. Please also refer to the DOE Office of Science Statement on Digital Data Management at http://science.energy.gov/funding-opportunities/digital-data-management/.

Q: I forgot to include a data management plan in my proposal, and the deadline has passed. Will DOE accept it if I send it by email after the proposal deadline?

A: No. The DOE Office of Science will decline without review any proposal that does not include a data management plan.

Q: May I include a list of suggested reviewers *not* to involve?

A: You should send such suggestions to the program manager in an email. Make sure you identify the title of your encouraged proposal and your institution in the email. Please *do not* include this list in your proposal because the proposal will be seen by the reviewers.

Q: Do you require an educational or outreach component in the application?
A: No.

Q: I work for a U.S. academic institution. Do you require a letter from my department chair with the application?
A: No.

Q: The announcement states that I must include several pieces of information (e.g., for academic institutions, Institution; Street Address/City/State/Zip; Principal Investigator (PI); Position Title of PI; Business Mailing Address of PI; Telephone Number of PI; Email of PI; Funding Opportunity Announcement; DOE/Office of Science Program Office; Topic Area; Topic Area Technical Contact; Year Doctorate Awarded; Is the PI in a Tenure-Track Appointment? (Yes or No); Does the PI have tenure (Yes or No); Number of Times Previously Applied; PAMS Preproposal Number; PECASE Eligible (Yes or No); and Proposal Contains Data Management Plan (Yes or No) on the first page of the narrative. Does this header information count within the 15 page limit?
A: You may place this information on a separate cover page outside of the narrative.

Q: How is PECASE Eligibility defined for this solicitation?
A: A PI is PECASE-eligible if he or she is, as of the closing date of the solicitation, a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or permanent resident and if she or he has not received a PECASE previously through any agency.

Q: How are PECASE nominees reviewed and selected?
A: The DOE Office of Science selects its PECASE nominees from the pool of PECASE-eligible winners of the Office of Science Early Career Research Program. Selections are made after a cross-disciplinary review panel meets to review the Early Career Research Program proposals, merit reviews, and updated CVs provided by the winners prior to the panel review. The PECASE review criteria, established by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), are listed here: (1) the pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology, and (2) a commitment to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education, or community outreach. The DOE Office of Science emphasizes the scientific leadership aspect of the second PECASE review criterion.

Q: I received my permanent residency a few days before the closing date for this solicitation, but my proposal had already been prepared for submission and did not declare my eligibility. Am I eligible to be considered for PECASE?
A: Yes, but you must let DOE know by immediately sending an email to early.career@science.doe.gov explaining the situation.

Q: I received a DOE Early Career Research Program award a few years ago, but I was not eligible for PECASE at the time. Since then, I have become a permanent resident. Can I be considered this year?
A: No. Automatic consideration for PECASE happens only in the year you win the award.

Q: I received my permanent residency one day after the closing date for this solicitation. Am I eligible to be considered for PECASE?

A: No.

Q: What mailing address should I list on my proposal?

A: Please list your professional or work mailing address (not your home address).

Q: I would like to submit a proposal with a title and/or topic different from the one in the preapplication I submitted. Is this allowed?

A: Our preference is that you keep the same or a very similar title. A slight change in the title is allowed, but the topic may not change.

Q: Should the list of current and pending support in the proposal include startup funds provided by my university?

A: No.

Q: I am at a DOE national laboratory. To whom should the letter from the laboratory director be addressed and where should it be placed?

A: It can be addressed to the relevant technical point of contact from the announcement. We have no preference for where you place the letter; you may want to place it at the beginning of the proposal file or in Appendix 6.

Q: How can I locate the format requirements for the full proposals?

A: For academic institutions, you must download the full Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0001386 from our Grants and Contracts website, http://science.energy.gov/~/media/grants/pdf/foas/2015/SC_FOA_0001386.pdf. For DOE national laboratories, the proposal format requirements can be found in the laboratory announcement LAB 15-1386 on our Grants and Contracts website, http://science.energy.gov/~/media/grants/pdf/lab-announcements/2015/LAB_15-1386.pdf.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of proposals that may be submitted by an institution?

A: No.

Q: In my field, there are routinely more than ten and sometimes hundreds of co-authors of archival publications. If I list every co-author on every paper, my biographical sketch will exceed the three-page limit. May I abbreviate the author lists?

A: Yes. You may use an abbreviated style such as the *Physical Review Letters* (PRL) convention for citations (list only the first author). For example, your paper may be listed as, "A Really Important New Result," A. Aardvark et. al. (MONGO Collaboration), PRL 999. You may also use this convention in the proposal bibliography.

Q: Can I include a table of contents in my proposal?

A: Yes, but it will count toward the 15-page limit.

Q: Can the research I propose overlap with other research for which I am already funded by DOE or any other agency?

A: The proposal should not duplicate your currently funded research, regardless of the agency funding it. You should propose new research. There is one exception (see the next question).

Q: Several early career investigators at my national laboratory would like to work together to solve a large problem. Can we propose one large award of two to four times the minimum budget with multiple early career investigators?

A: No. This is a single-Principal Investigator (PI) program. Our intention is to fund projects directed and executed by one early career PI.

Q: My idea seems to cut across two of the programs described in the funding announcement. How should I handle this?

A: You should select a single program to be the primary one to which the preapplication is submitted. The programs may move preapplications, but that will be decided by the Office of Science program managers after all of the preapplications are received. Once a preapplication is encouraged by a particular program office, the proposal must be submitted to that program office and cannot be moved by DOE.

Q: Can I submit the same proposal to two federal agencies simultaneously (e.g., can I submit the same proposal to the NSF CAREER program and the DOE Early Career Research Program)?

A: Yes, but you can only be funded once by the federal government for a given scope of work. Thus, if both are selected for funding, you will only be able to accept one award. To avoid this situation, you can submit proposals for completely different scopes of work to the two agencies.

Q: Are letters of recommendation, endorsement, or support allowed?

A: No. Applications that include recommendation letters will be subject to elimination from consideration during DOE's initial review.

Q: Even though letters of recommendation are not allowed, will you accept letters of collaboration?

A: Our preference is to support PI-led efforts without paid collaborators. If either an unfunded or funded collaboration is proposed, the best place to add the optional letters of collaboration is Appendix 7 (Other Attachments). Each optional letter of collaboration may contain <u>two and only two</u> sentences and must use the following format:

Dear <Principal Investigator Name>:
If your application entitled, "<Application Name>," is selected for funding under the DOE Office of Science Early Career Research Program, it is my intent to collaborate in this research by <Complete Sentence With a Very Short Description of What the Collaborator Offers to Do or Provide>. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,
<Collaborator's Name and Signature Block>

Q: Is it necessary for technical support staff (e.g., postdocs or students) to be on board at my institution at the time the proposal is submitted?

A: No.

Q: I am an eligible PI at a U.S. academic institution. Am I required to make contact with or collaborate with a DOE national laboratory for a successful proposal?

A: No. Your proposal will be evaluated using the merit review criteria in the announcement, and collaboration or contact with a national laboratory is not required.

Q: If I choose to support graduate students or postdocs using a grant from the Office of Science Early Career Research Program, are they required to be U.S. citizens?

A: No.

Q: I did not submit a preapplication. May I submit a full proposal?

A: No.

Q: How can I correct a typo in an application I have already submitted when it is before the deadline?

A: If you are from a university, correct the typo and submit the application a second time through Grants.gov. Check the "Changed/Corrected Application" box on the proposal cover page. Send an email to early.career@science.doe.gov to let DOE know you have submitted a changed/corrected application. If you are from a DOE National Laboratory, log into PAMS, select the "View My Existing Proposals" link, and click the "Actions/Views" link in the Options column next to the proposal to obtain a dropdown menu. Select "Reopen and Edit Proposal" from the dropdown. Correct the typo and resubmit the proposal to DOE before the deadline. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Q: Can I make changes to my preproposal or proposal after the deadline?

A: No. Changes after the deadline are not allowed for any reason.

Q: I submitted my application through Grants.gov twice. Which one will be considered by DOE?

A: As a courtesy, if you discover this has happened, please send an email to early.career@science.doe.gov to let DOE know you submitted twice. If you have a preference for which copy we should consider, please let us know. If we do not hear from you, we will consider the application that arrived last and disregard the one that arrived first.

Q: My preproposal was transferred by DOE to a Program Manager other than the one I selected when I submitted it. What should I do?

A: When you submit your full proposal, provide the new topic area and program manager's name on the proposal cover page under "Topic Area" and "Topic Area Program Manager." If you are with a DOE National Laboratory, select the new program manager

from the dropdown when you submit your full proposal into PAMS. If the new program manager is not listed in the solicitation, please contact early.career@science.doe.gov for guidance.

Review, Selection, and Award Management

Q: May I submit my proposal to a program office other than the one that encouraged my preproposal?

A: No. Once a preproposal is encouraged by a particular program office, the proposal must be submitted to and reviewed in that program office. This is especially important because some offices have additional requirements for their data management plans as described in the solicitation. Your proposal must conform to the data management requirements of the specific office that encouraged it. Because of this, proposals will not be moved between program offices after they arrive. They must be reviewed within the office that encouraged them.

Q: If I am selected for an early career award from another agency at the same time I am selected for one from DOE Office of Science, may I accept both of them?

A: You are allowed to receive both awards. However, you will not be funded twice for the same work. Make sure you keep the ideas you propose to the two agencies distinct if you want to accept both awards.

Q: How will the proposal review be conducted?

A: Review of the proposals will be handled in the programs using the review criteria established in the announcement. Proposals may be reviewed by either mail review or panel review or some combination of both. Each program will decide individually on its review method. Large numbers of proposals are generally handled by panels. The best way to prepare for the review is to learn about the review criteria and proposal format by reading the full announcement. If you write your proposal to be responsive to the review criteria, to fit in with the Office of Science mission areas, and to follow the required format, you will be ready for any review process.

Q: What is a reasonable start date for the award?

A: We suggest a start date of July 15, 2016.

Q: Will this program be offered next year?

A: Our intention is to continue this program on an annual basis, subject to availability of funds. Each Principal Investigator (PI) may only submit one Office of Science Early Career Research Program proposal per annual competition, and a PI may not participate in more than three Office of Science Early Career Research Program competitions over time.

Q: If I receive Office of Science Early Career Research Program funding and subsequently get tenure, can I keep the award for its remaining years or must it stop once I get tenure?

A: An award is for five years (assuming satisfactory progress and available funds), and you will not have to give up the award when you receive tenure.

Q: Will I receive the reviewer comments after the review is complete?

A: Yes. We will send reviewer comments to the Principal Investigator at the time or shortly after the award is issued or at the time or shortly after the proposal is declined.

Q: Are the peer reviewers asked to provide proposal scores?

A: Yes. In addition to providing narrative comments associated with each of the six merit review criteria, each reviewer will be asked to provide an overall integer numerical rating between 1 and 6 for each proposal, where the scale follows:
Strongly Encourage Funding (5 or 6);
Encourage Funding (3 or 4); or
Discourage Funding (1 or 2).

Q: Will all proposals with a merit review score above a certain level get funded?

A: No, the Selection Official will consider the merit review scores and written recommendations, program policy factors, and the amount of funding available. Program policy factors may include the alignment of proposed research with existing or planned projects and the utilization of existing or planned facilities within a given program.

Q: How will the reviewers evaluate criterion 6, Potential for Leadership within the Scientific Community?

A: For criterion 6, the following guidance is given to the reviewers: The potential for scientific leadership should be interpreted broadly according to your individual experience within your discipline. The Office of Science wants to identify those researchers early in their careers who have the potential to develop new scientific ideas, promote them, and convince their peers to pursue them as new directions. Each applicant was asked in the solicitation to provide in Appendix 1 information that can be used to evaluate whether the applicant is being recognized by peers as a prospective leader. Examples provided were invited and/or public lectures, awards, scientific program committees, conference or workshop organization, professional society activities, special international or industrial partnerships, or reviewing or editorship activities. However, you are encouraged to use your evaluation of the proposed science with your own professional judgment of what scientific leadership means. Beyond its utility in the selection of winners, your input on criterion 6 will be used, along with other information, to evaluate which of the winners will be nominated to the White House for the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE).

Q: How many Early Career Research Program proposals did each program office within the Office of Science receive in previous years?

A: The table below shows the number of proposals received in each of the past few years:

Program Office	Number of Proposals					
	FY10	**FY11**	**FY12**	**FY13**	**FY14**	**FY15**
ASCR*	361	181	87	75	94	61
BER*	277	150	79	71	58	67
BES	867	615	524	477	442	356
FES	42	34	22	23	30	23
HEP	153	129	89	79	75	73
NP	56	40	38	44	49	30
Total	**1756**	**1149**	**839**	**769**	**748**	**610**

*ASCR and BER reduced the number of topics included in the solicitation after fiscal year 2011.

Q: How many Early Career Research Program awards did each program office within the Office of Science make in previous years?

A: The table below shows the number of awards issued in each of the past few years:

Office	Number of University Awards						Number of Laboratory Awards					
FY	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14***	**15***	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
ASCR	5	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3
BER	5	4	6	4	1	4	3	3	3	3	3	1
BES	18	24	21	26	10	17	8	7	8	5	6	8
FES	4	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
HEP	10	8	8	7	3	4	4	5	4	2	3	1
NP	5	4	5	6	3	4	3	3	3	3	1	2
Total	**47**	**47**	**44**	**48**	**21**	**33**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**17**	**17**	**17**

*Success rates for university grants are temporarily reduced because the Office of Science is changing the way it funds grants and cooperative agreements. For further information, see http://science.energy.gov/grants/policy-and-guidance/full-funding/.

Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS)

Q: What is PAMS?

A: The DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) is a software system that accepts submissions from outside DOE and helps applicants and DOE program managers organize their proposal and award portfolios. PAMS is integrated with Grants.gov such that grant applications submitted into Grants.gov are imported into and stored by PAMS. Preproposals and DOE National Laboratory (contract work authorization) proposals can be submitted directly into PAMS. The

PAMS software is currently being deployed iteratively with new functionality being added a little at a time. PAMS uses the Government-Off-The-Shelf (GOTS) software platform that is the basis for the Health Resources and Services Administration Electronic Handbooks.

Q: How do I register in PAMS?

A: To register, click "Create New PAMS Account" on the website https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/ and follow the instructions for creating an account. You will be prompted to create a username and password and to enter your contact information. Registering to PAMS is a two-step process. Once you create an individual account, you must associate yourself with ("register to") your institution. Follow the onscreen instructions to do this.

Q: What internet browser should I use to access PAMS?

A: You may use Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome or Safari. For best results, we recommend you use Internet Explorer.

Q: How can I get help with PAMS?

A: For help with PAMS, click the "External User Guide" link on the PAMS website, https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/. You may also contact the PAMS Help Desk, which can be reached Monday through Friday, 9AM – 5:30 PM Eastern Time. Telephone: (855) 818-1846 (toll free) or (301) 903-9610, Email: sc.pams-helpdesk@science.doe.gov. All submissions and inquiries about this program must reference either DE-FOA-0001386 (for universities) or LAB 15-1386 (for DOE National Laboratories).

Q: How do I submit a preapplication/preproposal into PAMS?

A: Detailed instructions are provided in the solicitations. When submitting the preproposal, you will be asked to select a program manager. Select the program manager associated with the detailed program description to which the proposed research idea is responsive. Upon submission, the PI will receive an email from the PAMS system <PAMS.Autoreply@science.doe.gov> acknowledging receipt of the preproposal.

Q: How do I submit a full DOE national laboratory proposal into PAMS?

A: Note that only DOE National Laboratories will submit full proposals into PAMS. Universities will continue to use Grants.gov to submit full proposals Detailed instructions are provided in DOE National Laboratory Announcement LAB 15-1386. When submitting the proposal, you will be asked to select a program manager. Select the program manager associated with the detailed program description to which the proposed research idea is responsive. Upon submission, the PI will receive an email from the PAMS system <PAMS.Autoreply@science.doe.gov> acknowledging receipt of the proposal. Each DOE national laboratory has already appointed and registered at least one administrative business officer into PAMS. If you need contact information for your Administrative business officer, please contact early.career@science.doe.gov.