

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to DOE Comparative Review in HEP

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Note: Both the FY 2015 HEP Comparative Review Funding Opportunity Announcement [DE-FOA-0001140] and the questions and answers below use technical terms and acronyms specific to grant awards and the overall review process. Please refer to the ‘Glossary’ contained in Section IX of the Funding Opportunity Announcement for complete definitions of these terms.

Registrations and Eligibility

Q1: In order to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) and/or Final Applications in response to the HEP comparative review FOA, what particular systems must applicants register in?

A1: The complete list of systems that applicants are required to register with are listed in the “Registration” section of the FOA (i.e., see Pages i-iii of the FOA). These include:

- System for Award Management (SAMS)
- Grants.gov
- DOE’s Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS)
- Obtaining a DUNS number: a unique nine-digit identification number for applicants
- Central Contractor Registry (CCR)
- FedConnect
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System

As indicated in the FOA, registering in certain systems may take several weeks to process and complete. Therefore, the Office of Science (SC) encourages you to register in all systems as soon as possible and well before the relevant deadlines.

Q2: As indicated in the HEP comparative review FOA, submitting a LOI is not required. Therefore, I did not submit the LOI, but do I still need to register in PAMS?

A2: Yes. Since several of our systems tend to be linked with one another for processing the full application and since final award decisions by DOE are conducted through PAMS, it is highly encouraged to register in *all* systems that are specified in the FOA regardless of whether or not a LOI was submitted.

Q3: Who is eligible to apply to the HEP comparative review program?

A3: All types of applicants are eligible to apply *except* Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) contractors and nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995. In particular, applicants from regionally accredited domestic institutions of higher education or from domestic nonprofit organizations subject to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code are eligible to apply.

Proposal Types

Q4: What kinds of proposals are you looking for?

A4: We are soliciting proposals for research in High Energy Physics (HEP) in the HEP comparative review Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). All applications must address at least one of the six HEP subprograms described in the FOA. Proposals that are not consistent with the scope of the research described in the FOA may be administratively declined without review.

Q5: How will you handle proposals that are not for direct support of research, like conferences, project-specific R&D or fabrication, experiment operations, computing support, etc.?

A5: All such applications must be submitted to the general Office of Science (SC) open solicitation [DE-FOA-0000995]. The HEP comparative review FOA [DE-FOA-0001140] is for direct support of HEP research activities.

Q6: Can I submit a research proposal to the general Office of Science (SC) open solicitation instead of the HEP comparative review FOA?

A6: New or renewal proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation (i.e., DE-FOA-0000995, available at the URL: <http://science.energy.gov/hep/funding-opportunities/>) will be reviewed following standard merit review criteria (see *Review Process*); however, funding available to respond to proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation will be extremely limited.

Q7: I have an existing research grant funded through DOE and I will be submitting a proposal to FY15 HEP comparative review FOA. Should the proposal be submitted as a “new” or “renewal” application?

A7: The type of application to submit is fully described in Section II Subsection G of the comparative review FOA. In determining whether to submit a “new” vs. a “renewal” application, the proposal must satisfy the different criteria listed there and must correspondingly be marked as such on the SF-424 Research & Related (R&R) cover page.

Q8: During the comparative review process, are there any differences in regards to merit reviews for proposals that are “renewals” versus proposals that are “new”?

A8: As far as the merit review process is concerned, there are no differences. Renewal applications compete for funds with all other peer-reviewed applications – “new” or “renewal” – and must be developed as fully as though the applicant is applying for the first time.

New Faculty Members and Those without Current HEP Grants

Q9: I am a tenure-track/tenured faculty member at my institution and want to apply for an HEP research grant. What are the possible ways for me to apply?

A9: There are several possibilities, depending on the specific situation:

- If you want to apply for your own standalone grant, you can submit an individual proposal to the HEP comparative review FOA.
- If your institution currently has a HEP grant that you want to join, but it is not up for comparative review this year, you can apply to the HEP comparative review FOA as a standalone proposal for a one- or two-year period (depending on the remaining term of the current institution’s project period) and then re-apply with the rest of the group when their grant ends.
- If your institution currently has a HEP grant that you want to join and it is up for comparative review this year, you can apply as part of the proposal to the HEP comparative review FOA.
- If you are a junior faculty member, you may also be eligible for funding under the [Office of Science Early Career Research Program](#); all eligible junior faculty members are strongly encouraged to apply to this program. See additional information below.

Q10: I am a new tenure-track junior faculty member at my institution. Can I apply to both the HEP comparative review FOA, as well as the Office of Science (SC) Early Career Research program?

A10: Yes, you can submit the same proposal to two different Office of Science solicitations at the same time, but if both applications are successful in their respective merit review processes, only one can be funded. You should indicate in any application if you have applied to two different FOA’s. Further, any proposals submitted to two different FOAs must each comply with the guidelines (e.g., page limits, page formatting, appendix material) that are specified in each FOA.

Q11: I will be a new assistant professor, starting my first faculty position on September 1, 2015. Can I apply to the comparative review FOA?

A11: While you may apply, be advised that evidence of research productivity while holding your faculty position is considered highly desirable. Proposals from first year junior faculty lacking such evidence will likely be assigned a lower funding priority as part of the comparative review process.

Q12: I applied to a previous call for HEP comparative review proposals but my proposal

was declined. Can I apply again to this funding opportunity?

A12: Yes.

For Principal Investigators (PIs) with Existing HEP Grants

Q13: I have an existing HEP grant that was funded under a previous FOA (i.e., FY14 or earlier), and the award expires before September 30, 2015. If I want to renew that grant, how do I apply?

A13: If your grant was funded through a previous FOA and expires before September 30, 2015, and you want to renew the grant, you are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal under the new HEP Comparative Review FOA [DE-FOA-0001140]. This holds whether your current application corresponds to an extension of the previously-funded research scope, or to a change of research scope. Note that in such cases, please refer to Q&A #7 above and Section II Subsection G of the comparative review FOA to determine whether the proposal you plan to submit should be formally designated as a “new” or “renewal” application.

Q14: I have an existing HEP grant and I plan to submit an application to the FY15 HEP comparative review processes. However, the grant will now have changes to the investigator(s) listed on the existing grant. Therefore, should the proposal be submitted as a “new” or “renewal” application?

A14: Changes in the investigator(s) to an existing grant can result in either a change in the leadership of the existing grant or in a change to the general scope of research efforts of the existing group. In addition to what is discussed in Section II Subsection G of the FOA, the following guidelines should be used to help determine the type of application to submit:

- If there are any changes to the *Lead*-Principal Investigator identified for the existing grant, then the proposal must be submitted as a “new” application.
- If there are changes to a *majority* of co-Principal Investigators of the existing grant, then this generally results in a significant change in the scope of the research efforts funded through the existing grant. Hence, the proposal must be submitted as a “new” application.
- If there is a change at the level of a *single* co-Principal Investigator of the existing grant, then this generally does not significantly change the scope of the research efforts funded through the existing grant. Hence, if there is no significant change in research scope, then the proposal may be submitted as a “renewal” application.

Q15: My current grant expires after April 1, 2015 but before September 30, 2015, so I would normally submit my renewal proposal after the new proposals are due. Should I submit a proposal to the new FOA or a renewal proposal to the general SC solicitation?

A15: We strongly encourage you to submit a new proposal to the new HEP comparative review FOA [DE-FOA-0001140]. New or renewal proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation will be reviewed following standard merit review criteria (see the *Review Process* section of this FAQ below); however, funding available to respond to proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation will be extremely limited.

Q16: If I have an existing HEP grant that expires after September 30, 2015, do I need to

apply to the Comparative Review FOA?

A16: Not this year. If your grant expires in FY2016 (Oct. 1, 2015 – Sept. 30, 2016) you are urged to apply next year, under the new HEP comparative review FOA for FY16, by the deadline established next year for that particular FOA (exact deadline to be determined during the Summer of 2015). Depending on the expiration date of your current grant, you may also need to submit a renewal proposal or no-cost extension to cover the period between your current grant expiration and the nominal start date for most FY16 comparative review grants (April 1, 2016).

Proposal and Application Requirements

Q17: Is a Letter of Intent (LOI) required?

A17: No. Letters of Intent are requested to organize and expedite the merit review process. Consequently, the submission of a LOI is strongly encouraged but not required.

Q18: When is the Letter of Intent due?

A18: 5 PM Eastern Time on August 12, 2014.

Q19: How do I submit my Letter of Intent?

A19: The Letter of Intent must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website (via URL: <https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/>). The Principal Investigator and/or anyone submitting on behalf of the Principal Investigator must register for an account in PAMS before it will be possible to submit a letter of intent or a full proposal. Please carefully read the FOA (specifically Section IV, Subsection B) for details. It will provide instructions on how to register with PAMS and procedures on how to submit your LOI. It is highly recommended that you register with PAMS a full week before you submit your LOI to avoid any delays.

Q20: Are pre-applications required?

A20: No.

Q21: I was planning to submit my proposal to the HEP comparative review FOA [DE-FOA-0001140] but the proposal was incorrectly submitted to the general SC solicitation [DE-FOA-0000995]. Can the proposal still be submitted to the correct FOA?

A21: If the application is received by DOE before the given deadline of the respective FOA number, it will be processed according to the guidelines specified in the FOA. However, if the application is received after the deadline of the comparative review FOA, it will not be reviewed or considered for the award under that FOA. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator on the application to begin the submission process in sufficient time to accommodate reasonably foreseeable incidents and contingencies such as these.

Q22: What is the difference between a proposal submitted to the general SC solicitation and a proposal submitted to the HEP comparative review FOA?

A22: The technical content of either proposal should be essentially the same, if you are proposing the same scope of research. However there are important formatting differences for the HEP comparative review proposals, including hard page limits, separating the descriptions of research tasks by subprogram, and accompanying budget documents. Details can be found

in the HEP comparative review FOA. Also see notes above in the proposal types section.

Q23: What is the definition of “senior investigator”?

A23: For the purposes of calculating the page limit, a senior investigator is considered to be an active tenured or tenure-track faculty member at the sponsoring institution. Research collaborators at other institutions are not included. Non-tenure-track faculty (e.g., research faculty) or senior research staff members with term appointments are not included *unless* they are the sole principal investigator on the proposal. However, the roles and responsibilities of all senior research faculty and/or research staff included as part of the proposal should be clearly spelled out in order for their activities to be considered during the comparative review process. For Research Scientist(s) listed in the application, see also Q&A #31 below and Section IV, Subsection on Appendix 2 in the FOA for guidelines in preparing respective supporting narratives.

Q24: Are there limits on the length of the proposal?

A24: Yes. The total length of the research description(s) in the narrative section must not exceed 9 pages per senior investigator. Other parts of the submission (Cover Page, Cover Page Supplemental for Proposals with Multiple Research Areas or Thrusts, Project Summary/Abstract and appendices) do not count against this limit; see full text in Section IV of the Comparative Review FOA for complete details. Additional supporting material (i.e., Biographical Sketch, Publication Lists, etc.) should be put in appendices according to the format specified in Section IV of the FOA. Moreover, as noted in the format for Appendix 8 on “Other Attachments”, do not include copies of previously presented or published research papers, technical notes, presentations at meetings or conferences, or reports written for respective experiments or collaborations. Material for the appendices should not be attached as a separate file. Note: any proposal that exceeds the page limit will not be reviewed and therefore cannot be considered for funding.

Q25: In an application with multiple senior investigators, does the page limit apply to the narrative of each investigator or to the aggregate of all the narratives?

A25: The page limit will be applied to the whole proposal based on the number of senior investigators. For example, if an application contains 4 senior investigators, the page limit for the application narrative would be 36. One of the senior investigators may exceed their allotted 9 pages as long as the total page count does not exceed 36.

Q26: I am involved in two experiments. Is the page limit really 9 pages per senior investigator or 9 pages per senior investigator per experiment?

A26: The page limit refers to the total number of pages per senior investigator, irrespective of the number of activities being described.

Q27: I work on the CMS experiment and on the NOvA experiment. Do I have to split my 9 pages of research narrative into the Energy and Intensity Frontiers section of the proposal or can I have a single section describing all of my work?

A27: Because each of the six subprograms will be reviewed separately, senior investigators with efforts in more than one subprogram must split their narratives according to sub-program and place them in the appropriate section in the application. Please note that the 9-page limit per

senior investigator still applies.

Q28: According to the instructions we are allowed eight appendices. My institution is involved in several different efforts (ATLAS, Theory, SuperK). Do we get eight appendices for each of these? Or do we break each appendix into sections for these different efforts?

A28: No, the total number of appendices per proposal should not exceed eight regardless of the number of efforts. Less than eight are allowed but no more. Further, the material contained in the appendices is listed in Section IV of the FOA and applicants must follow the format described there.

Q29: In the proposal, I'd like to attach explicit copies of previous publications or reports in order to provide reviewers additional information that would help support my research. Can this be included in the Appendices?

A29: No. The format for material contained in each section of the Appendix is listed in Section IV of the FOA. You should not include any copies of previously published research papers, technical notes, and/or reports written for respective experiments or collaborations in the Appendices. If you plan to add this material to the Project Narrative instead, this will count against the page limit that applies to the narrative of each senior investigator. Instead, we encourage you to cite the appropriate references in the narrative, and consequently, list these in Appendix 4 of the application.

Q30: The proposal needs to include a Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7 on the Form) which contains a summary of the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public. My grant is involved in several different efforts (ATLAS, Theory, SuperK). Do I submit a Project Summary/Abstract for each?

A30: No, only one Project Summary/Abstract per proposal. The Project Summary/Abstract should summarize all efforts.

Q31: In the proposal that I plan to submit to the FY15 HEP Comparative Review FOA, request for support of Research Scientist(s) presently in the group will be made. Is there a mechanism to describe the Research Scientist's efforts in the application?

A31: Yes. The research efforts of any Research Scientist listed in the application can be included in the 9-page per senior investigator Project Narrative when describing the overall research activities and plans. However, we have reserved Appendix 2 strictly for named Research Scientist(s) to provide any supporting narrative. Such a narrative in this section of the appendix must not exceed 2 pages per Research Scientist and should include brief background information as well as a description of the roles, responsibilities, and scope of research efforts to be conducted by the scientist. This scope should support the research activities described in the Project Narrative of the application. When preparing this appendix narrative, the guidelines specified in Section IV, Subsection on Appendix 2 of the FOA must be followed.

Q32: In the proposal, what items should or should not be included for the Biographical Sketch for Project Director/Principal Investigator described for Appendix I?

A32: The full content of items for the Biographical Sketch that the project director/principal

investigator (PD/PI) and each senior/key person listed in Section A of the R&R Budget Form should provide is described in Section IV, Appendix I of the Comparative Review FOA. The information should include the individual's education and training, research and professional experience, list of up to 10 publications most closely related to the proposed projects, up to 5 synergistic activities related to the proposed projects, and a list of any potential conflicts of interests that can arise with the proposed projects. *However, any personal identification information (PII) such as social security number, date or place of birth, and/or any other sensitive information that a merit reviewer will not make use of should not be given in the appendix nor in any other section of the application.*

Q33: In the proposal, what items should or should not be included for the Biographical Sketch for Research Scientist(s) described for Appendix II?

A33: The full content of items for the one-page Biographical Sketch that each Research Scientist(s) named in the R&R Budget Form should provide is described in Section IV, Appendix 2 of the Comparative Review FOA. The information should include the Research Scientist's education and training, research and professional experience, list of up to 5 publications most closely related to the proposed projects, and the names and current organizational affiliation of any graduate students and postdoctoral associates that the Research Scientist has helped mentor during the last 5 years while at the institution in order to support the research activities. *However, any personal identification information (PII) such as social security number, date or place of birth, and/or any other sensitive information that a merit reviewer will not make use of should not be given in the appendix nor in any other section of the application.*

Q34: Are there limits on the length of the project period for the proposed research?

A34: No, but HEP research grants are typically awarded for a three-year period.

Q35: When are final proposals due?

A35: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on September 23, 2014.

Q36: When are new awards issued under this FOA expected to start?

A36: On or about April 1, 2015.

Q37: I have already submitted a research proposal to the general SC solicitation [DE-FOA-0000995]. How should I proceed?

A37: We strongly encourage you to withdraw your proposal and resubmit to the HEP comparative review FOA. New or renewal proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation will be reviewed following standard merit review criteria (see the *Review Process* section of this FAQ below); however, funding available to respond to proposals submitted to the general SC solicitation will be extremely limited.

Q38: I want to submit a collaborative (consortium) research proposal with my colleagues at other institutions. Is this allowed? If so, how do I do this?

A38: Yes. There are two options for submittal: (1) a single application from the lead institution, containing the entire proposal and budget, with collaborating institutions supported via subcontracts or purchase orders; or (2) multiple applications (typically one per participating institution), each requesting funding for that institution. In the latter case each application

should have the same title and clearly indicate the linkages with the other consortium applications in the narrative. In either case the applications should clearly state institutional roles and responsibilities, discuss management and organization of the collaboration, and delineate each institution's budget. Final decisions on support for collaborative (consortium) research proposal(s) will depend on the scientific merit review process and other programmatic priorities and factors. HEP may elect to fund some, none or all elements of the proposed collaborative research scope at its discretion.

Q39: I submitted a grant application in a previous year that was only partially funded. Can I submit a proposal that will supplement that existing grant?

A39: Yes, but not through the HEP Comparative Review FOA. Applications submitted to and selected under the HEP Comparative Review FOA are stand-alone research grants. To request additional funding for an existing grant, supplemental applications must be submitted to the general SC solicitation (i.e., [DE-FOA-0000995](#)). For best consideration you should submit your supplemental application on or before the HEP Comparative Review deadline. We note however that funding available to respond to applications submitted to the general SC solicitation will be extremely limited.

Q40: I am applying to the FY15 HEP Comparative Review FOA. Do I need to include a Data Management Plan (DMP) in the application as recently announced by the DOE Office of Science?

A40: Since the HEP comparative review FOA was issued before October 1, 2014, there is no requirement to include a DMP.

Budget

Q41: Are there minimum or maximum limits on the budget that can be requested?

A41: No.

Q42: What is the typical size of an HEP research award?

A42: There is a wide range of awards from \$10,000 to over \$1,000,000 per year. Usually the size of the award scales roughly with the number of senior investigators on a grant. However, any scaling also depends on the scientific merit review process of the proposal and of the senior investigator(s) in the application.

Q43: What budget form(s) do I have to submit?

A43: You need to submit the standard grants.gov budget sheets for the *entire* proposal (for each budget year, plus a cumulative budget page) following the standard procedure described on the grants.gov website. *In addition*, DOE budget sheets *must* be included for the proposed activities described in *each* subprogram section of the application. These should be included according to the format specified in Section IV of the Comparative Review FOA.

Q44: Is cost-sharing required?

A44: No.

Q45: The HEP Comparative Review FOA says support and infrastructure provided by the sponsoring institution should be described in the proposal. Do I need a separate budget form and justification for this?

A45: No. The support and infrastructure provided by the sponsoring institution (as appropriate) should be separately described in the research narrative but does NOT have a separate budget. Infrastructure and support activities should be reported on budget sheets as direct and/or indirect costs (whichever is customary at your institution) in each subprogram section of the proposal as noted above.

Q46: My research requires purchase of capital equipment for project R&D, fabrication, and/or operational related activities. Will such requests be supported under the HEP Comparative Review FOA?

A46: Requests to support equipment for project R&D, and fabrication and experiment operations efforts will not be supported within the respective experimental frontier research areas in the HEP program. Such requests may be submitted to the general SC solicitation ([i.e., DE-FOA-0000995](#)). Requests to support general-use equipment will be considered under the Comparative Review FOA.

Q47: My research requires staffing research scientists or engineers for project R&D, fabrication, and/or experiment operational related activities. Will these be supported under the Comparative Review FOA?

A47: Requests to support engineers and/or research scientists dedicated full-time to operational and/or project related activities for individual experiments will not be supported by the respective experimental frontier research areas in the HEP program. However, if such personnel are conducting physics research related activities, requests to support such efforts, appropriately scaled to the fraction of time on these activities, can be included. Specifically, support for engineering and other technical efforts required for particle detector R&D is included in the detector R&D subprogram. Final support will be based on the comparative review process (see also the *Review Process* section of this FAQ below and Section V of the FOA).

Review Process

Q48: What are the criteria for acceptance of proposals?

A48: All proposals must be responsive to one or more of the scientific research sub-programs detailed in Section I of the Comparative Review FOA. Proposals judged to be non-responsive will be declined.

Q49: Are there additional requirements?

A49: Additional requirements for proposals are detailed under New Application Requirements in the FOA.

Q50: What are the merit review criteria for the HEP comparative review FOA [DE-FOA-0001140]?

A50: The merit review criteria are the same as in the standard Office of Science Financial Assistance Program Rules detailed in 10 CFR 605.10. These are also listed in Section V of the Comparative Review FOA.

Q51: How will the merit reviews be conducted?

A51: All proposals judged to be responsive to the FOA will be submitted to external experts for peer review. For the HEP comparative reviews, the six different subprograms outlined in the FOA will be reviewed by separate mail and/or panel reviews that will compare the relative strengths of the proposals in that subprogram. Reviewers will typically evaluate multiple proposals and will be asked to provide a written evaluation of these proposals. All proposals will be evaluated by at least three experts. For subprograms conducting panel reviews, the panel will consider all proposals in that subprogram and individual panel members will be asked to rank order these proposals in terms of overall merit.

Q52: How will the reviews be used by the DOE?

A52: DOE program managers will consider the written evaluations, panel deliberations, as well as the individual rankings of proposals as input to making final decisions on which proposals will be funded, and if so, at what level the support will be. Additional considerations such as programmatic priority, alignment with the 2014 Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel's (P5) strategic plan for HEP, overall program balance and continuity may also factor into DOE decisions. Written reviewer evaluations will be returned to the applicant after redaction of information that could compromise reviewer confidentiality.

Q53: How can I improve my chances of receiving funding?

A53: Funding decisions are made on the basis of scientific peer review, alignment with HEP programmatic priorities, and the technical judgment and expertise of program managers. If you have peer reviews from previous proposals, you are strongly encouraged to read those reviews carefully and to address any deficiencies identified by the reviewers. A critical assessment of draft versions of your current proposal by colleagues or collaborators may also be helpful in improving your proposal.

HEP Program Questions and Agency Contacts

Q54: I am planning to submit an application to the FY15 HEP comparative review FOA, but I have a question specific to the research subprogram that I am applying within. Who should I contact regarding such inquiries?

A54: If you have further questions regarding specific research program areas, please contact the respective DOE personnel listed in Section I of the FOA. For questions about program rules, please email sc.hepfoa@science.doe.gov and reference the HEP comparative review FOA number [DE-FOA-0001140] in your inquiry.