

Visiting Faculty Program (VFP) - 2013 Summer Term

VFP Research Proposal Guidance

Through direct collaboration with research staff at DOE host laboratories, the VFP program provides an opportunity for faculty to help create innovative new capabilities and make discoveries germane to DOE science missions. Through the experience, visiting faculty members also develop integrated skills that translate to programs at their home institutions, which can help sustain the scientific vibrancy required to grow the STEM workforce pipeline in key DOE science mission areas.

A required program element includes development and submission of a research project proposal. This proposal is co-written by the visiting faculty member and a member of the DOE host laboratory's research staff, who serve as the project's co-Principal Investigators.

Proposal Format and Required Elements

The proposal can only be submitted as a normal Adobe Acrobat PDF document (with a name of the form "yourfilename.pdf") via an upload to the VFP application system. The required page format comprises margins of one inch around the text (top, bottom, left, right) with the text being in a 12-point, single-spaced (12 point), Times, Times Roman or appropriate symbol font (for math script).

a. Cover page (one page limit)

Proposal Title and Abstract: Provide a descriptive title of your proposed project and an abstract in that concisely (no more than 250 words) summarizes the proposed project's scientific topic or problem, the approach, and the expected scientific results and impact.

Please also include the following information on the cover page:

Experimental Team: In a table, list the names, institution, email address, and roles of each person who would participate in the proposed activities (including any students). This section could also briefly mention directly-relevant previous work done by the team members.

Scientific Facilities: Briefly explain if any scientific user facilities will be used in your project. Please also comment if the proposed work is contingent upon winning a user facility access proposal.

b. Body (six page limit)

No more than a total of six pages (not counting the vitae described below) can be used to appropriately address each of the following topics:

Background: Define the context for this proposal by relating it to other work, both at the host laboratory and elsewhere, including any preliminary studies. Set the stage to answer the question: "What is innovative in the proposal and how does it advance the state-of-the-art in the field?" The following information should be provided:

- One to three references to key publications by others that describe the state-of-the-art in the area of science proposed;
- Identification, if possible, of connections of the proposed research to programmatic activities (current and future) at the Lab;
- Identification of other current or recent/past Office of Science projects that are related to, or may have led to, the proposal;
- Specifically indicate areas where there are gaps in the current state of our knowledge.

Successful proposals will be those that communicate effectively the innovation and excitement of the ideas for the proposed research.

Hypotheses and research objectives and goals: Clearly state your hypothesis. Concisely define your research goals and describe how accomplishment of the research goals would help to validate the hypothesis and bridge one or more gaps in the knowledge and understanding of the relevant S&T community.

R&D approach, and expected scientific and technical results: The detailed science of the proposal should be laid out. Give the rationale for the approach, describe the design of your activities and the methods you will use, and outline the expected results. Be clear about how your project will advance the state-of-the-art. While it is recognized that in the most innovative R&D, it will be hard to predefine concrete milestones, the authors should, nonetheless, describe specific scientific accomplishments they might expect over the duration of the project.

Key Deliverable(s): List the key deliverable(s) you expect to accomplish. Clearly state the scientific and technical impact of this project based upon the listed deliverables.

c. Vitae

In addition to the six (6) pages in the body of the proposal, a one-page curriculum vita for each investigator should be submitted as part of the single PDF document upload. A vita must be supplied for the co-investigators. The purpose of these vitae is to demonstrate that the people to be supported on the proposed project have the requisite talent and experience to carry out the proposed research and development effort. These vitae should be limited to one page per investigator, and they are not included in the six-page limit on proposal length. Vitae should include lists of:

- Recent publications relevant to the subject of the proposal;
- Investigator's current projects;
- Recent collaborators.

d. Headers and footers

In order to ensure that your proposal is clearly identified, please include, within the top and bottom 1-inch margins, header and footer information as follows:

- Header-left: Proposal title;
- Footer-left: P.I. name;
- Footer-right: Page numbers.

e. Other notes

Proposals may contain embedded figures, but the entire proposal should be legible when printed in black and white (that is, color figures that are not clear in black and white should be avoided) and the inclusion of figures must not result in exceeding the page limit.

f. Proposal submission

Proposals must be submitted by uploading the PDF file into the VFP online application system.

Review

All eligible proposals will be objectively studied by an independent merit review panel. To be considered, an applicant must meet all eligibility criteria and have an application package comprising all required materials. The proposal materials uploaded and received through the electronic submission process will provide the sole basis for the review.

The merit review process evaluates the following three criteria, which are listed in order of decreasing importance:

1. **Scientific and/or technical merit of the project;**
(For example, the influence that the results might have on the direction, progress, and thinking in relevant scientific fields of research; the likelihood of achieving valuable results; and the scientific innovation and originality indicated in the proposed research.)
2. **Appropriateness of the proposed method or approach;** and
(For example, the logic and feasibility of the research approaches and the soundness of the conduct of the research.)
3. **Competency of the personnel and adequacy of proposed resources.**
(For example, the background, past performance, and potential of the investigator(s); and the research environment and facilities for performing the research.)