

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

Guidelines for Research Project Grants

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- Article 1 The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC or “the Council”) has formulated the following guidelines to offer grants to higher education and academic research institutions for science and technology research so as to advance Taiwan’s science and technology R&D standards.
- Article 2 Applying institutions (which shall be the same as the executive institutions) must be designated NSTC grant recipients approved in accordance with the Council’s application guidelines.
- Article 3 Principal investigators and co-investigators of NSTC-sponsored projects must fulfill the requirements listed below.
1. Full-time quota-based faculty members from a qualifying applying institution who meet one of the following criteria:
 - 1) Public and private higher education institutions:
 - a) Currently serving at the rank of assistant professor or higher
 - b) Having served as a lecturer for at least three years *AND* having been published in a distinguished domestic or international scholarly journal or having published a technical report for a registered patent
 - c) Holding a doctoral degree and having been appointed as an assistant researcher or to an equivalent or higher position
 - d) Having served as an attending physician at a university-affiliated teaching hospital for at least two years or in a research position as a medical professional for at least three years after obtaining a master’s degree *AND* having been published in a distinguished domestic or international scholarly journal
 - 2) Public and private research institutes:
 - a) Currently serving as a researcher or technical specialist, or in another position at the rank of associate researcher or higher
 - b) Holding a doctoral degree and having been appointed as an assistant researcher or to an equivalent or higher position
 - c) Having served as an attending physician for at least two years or in a research position as a medical professional for at least three years after obtaining a master’s degree *AND* having been published in a distinguished domestic or international scholarly journal
 - 3) Medical institutions:
 - a) Having served as an attending physician for at least two years or in a research position as a medical professional for at least three years after obtaining a master’s degree *AND* having been published in a distinguished domestic or international scholarly journal
 - b) Holding a doctoral degree and having been appointed as an assistant researcher or to an equivalent or higher position

2. Personnel who have retired in accordance with the applicable regulations and who meet the following requirements:

Having served as an academican at Academia Sinica; having been awarded the Ministry of Education's National Professorship, Academic Award, or National Award for Distinguished Contribution to Industry-Academia Cooperation; having won two NSTC Outstanding Research Awards; or having been named an Outstanding Chair Scholar by the Foundation for the Advancement of Outstanding Scholarship; or having won an equivalent award recognized by the NSTC

AND

Being sponsored by a qualifying applying institution, which shall clearly indicate its willingness to provide the necessary space, equipment, and administrative support for the retired personnel in the application letter

3. Full-time teaching/research staff appointed by a university with an endowment fund under the *Principles for National Universities Hiring Teachers, Researchers, and Staff Members with University Endowment Funds*, who meet the eligibility requirements for principal investigators listed under Subparagraph 1, Item 1 herein
4. Full-time teaching/research staff appointed by a private university in accordance with the *Principles for National Universities Hiring Teachers, Researchers, and Staff Members with University Endowment Funds* who meet the eligibility requirements for principal investigators listed under Subparagraph 1, Item 1 herein
5. Doctoral degree holders specializing in nuclear energy or aeronautics/astronautics who have been appointed by a public university under the *Regulations Governing the Selection and Appointment of Science and Technology Personnel in Rare Fields of Study by Public Higher Education Institutions*
6. Supernumerary attending physicians or full-time researchers holding a doctoral degree who have been appointed by a public medical institution with a healthcare fund, who have worked at the institution for at least two years, and who have been published in a distinguished domestic or international scholarly journal

Applications for those who meet the eligibility requirements set forth under Subparagraph 1 of the preceding paragraph but who are on secondment to a government agency may be submitted by their original appointing institution.

Article 4 The two types of research grants are as follows:

1. General research grants

Those eligible to serve as a principal investigator may apply for a general research grant in their field of expertise or in accordance with the list of research disciplines provided by the NSTC.

2. New personnel research grants:

Full-time teaching or research personnel who have served in a full-time teaching/research position for less than five years total in local and/or foreign institutions or who have received a doctoral degree within the five-year period preceding the application and are eligible to serve as a principal investigator may apply for a new personnel research grant. Priority will be given to projects that last three to five years. Those who have already served more than a total of five years in full-time teaching/research positions at the time of application may not be considered new personnel.

- Article 5 The two types of research projects are as follows:
1. Individual projects:
Principal investigators may apply for individual projects in their field of expertise or in accordance with the list of research disciplines provided by the NSTC.
 2. Integrated projects:
An integrated project is composed of a main (parent) project and several subprojects (child projects). The principal investigator of the parent project shall establish a research group focused on a key research topic designated by the NSTC or a self-selected that will propose several subprojects that span multiple disciplines and/or institutions.
- Article 6 Principal investigators may apply for the following fund accounts for their projects:
1. Operating expenses:
 - 1) Salary and wages:
Salaries and wages for full- and part-time employees, which shall be paid in accordance with the Council's *Notices for Hiring Contracted Research Project Staff*
 - 2) Supplies, equipment, books, and miscellaneous expenses:
Other expenses directly related to the execution of a research project
 - 3) Travel expenses for foreign scholars visiting Taiwan:
Travel expenses for scholars who are visiting Taiwan from a foreign country or mainland China for project purposes
 2. Research equipment:
Research equipment costing NT\$10,000 or more per unit which has a useful life of at least two years and which is necessary for the execution of the project
 3. International travel expenses:
 - 1) Travel expenses for trips to a foreign country or mainland China that are necessary for the execution of the project, which shall be limited to the following two purposes only:
 - a) International collaborations and transnational research:
The principal investigator and/or other personnel working on a research project are required to visit a foreign country to conduct experiments/field studies, collect samples, or use specific research equipment as part of an international collaboration or transnational research project.
 - b) International scholarly conferences:
The principal investigator and/or other personnel working on a research project are attending an international scholarly conference to present findings, give a speech, or serve as a moderator. Those who are not serving in the preceding roles but who wish to attend an important conference in a particular discipline must obtain the approval of the Council.
 - 2) International travel expenses for principal investigators and personnel of an NSTC planning and promotion project who are required to visit a foreign country for the purpose of observation
- Article 7 Upon approval of a research project, the NSTC shall grant the principal investigator a project management fee throughout the duration of the project.

Co-investigators of an integrated project or NSTC planning and promotion project who are not concurrently serving as principal investigator for any other projects may also be entitled to a project management fee throughout the duration of the project.

Each principal investigator and co-investigator will only be entitled to one project management fee throughout the duration of a project, but the project management fees, research fees, or planning fees for an industry-academia collaboration project or NSTC planning and promotion project are exempt from this limitation.

Except with the express approval of the NSTC, the applying institution shall immediately halt all project management fee payments to principal investigators and co-investigators who are unable to continue with a project or who cease to meet the eligibility criteria described under Article 3 herein due to termination of employment, participation in a short-term research project abroad, or transfer to a non-qualifying agency; the applying institution shall return any remaining grant money to the NSTC.

Principal investigators who were entitled to a project management fee before being seconded to a government agency as a political appointee, legislator, or overseas consular official shall be ineligible for any project management fee payments during secondment, and any remaining grant money shall be returned to the NSTC by the applying institution. Principal investigators whose research projects are approved by the NSTC during their secondment to a government agency as a political appointee, legislator, or overseas consular official shall not be issued a project management fee budget, and if such a budget is granted, the applying institution shall return it to the NSTC.

- Article 8 An institutional management fee may be granted to each NSTC-approved project as appropriate.
- Article 9 Principal investigators and co-investigators are prohibited from using project funds to hire contracted employees of another NSTC project.
- Article 10 Applications must be submitted by applying institutions by the deadline set by the NSTC. Late submissions will not be accepted. The foregoing notwithstanding, projects that meet the following provisions may be reviewed on an as-needed basis:
1. Applications for new or current faculty members who have never applied for an NSTC project despite meeting all eligibility requirements may be submitted within three years of their initial appointment date, the date on which they obtain their doctoral degree, or the date on which they become eligible to serve as a principal investigator under Article 3 herein.
 2. Applications for principal investigators of a previous NSTC project who are returning to Taiwan for an appointment after having taught or conducted research at a foreign institution for at least one year may be submitted within one year of the date of appointment, provided that they have not applied for any NSTC project since their return.
 3. Applications for principal investigators who were previously on secondment to a government agency or overseas consular office may be submitted within six months of their return to their original institution, provided that they have not applied for any NSTC project since their return.

4. Applications for principal investigators who were previously on secondment to a central government agency as a political appointee or legislator may be submitted with six months of their return to the original institution.
5. Applications for principal investigators with disabilities who are not currently executing any NSTC projects may be submitted at any time as long as the necessary supporting documents are provided.
6. Applications for principal investigators who have been determined by a physician to be pregnant or who are raising a child under three years of age may be submitted at any time, provided that they are not currently executing any NSTC projects and that the necessary supporting documents are submitted.
7. Applications for male principal investigators who are a single parent to or who are on paid parental leave for a child under three years of age may be submitted at any time, provided that they are not currently executing any NSTC projects and that the necessary supporting documents are submitted.

The number of applications is limited to one per person under Subparagraphs 1 and 2 and one per person per year under Subparagraphs 5 through 7 of the preceding paragraph. Applications for a second project, if permitted, may be submitted when the first project is set to conclude within three months.

A principal investigator who withdraws an application filed pursuant to this article after it enters the substantive review process shall be ineligible to submit any further applications.

The application deadlines for NSTC planning and promotion projects and goal-oriented research projects shall be set separately.

Article 11 Principal investigators should visit the NSTC website to download and fill out the following documents and then submit them to the competent applying institution for review. Each applying institution shall submit a list of approved applications with affidavits declaring each principal investigator's eligibility to the NSTC for processing. Applications with missing or noncompliant documents that are not corrected before the deadline will not be processed.

1. An application form
2. Personal information sheets for the principal investigator and co-investigators (for either an individual project or each parent/child project under an integrated project)
3. A list of research achievements or outcomes obtained in the one-year eligibility period leading up to the application deadline [For those who have been on maternity/parental leave, the eligibility period may be extended for two years per birth; for those serving a term of compulsory military duty, the eligibility period may be extended for the same amount of time as their military duty; supporting documents are required for an extension.]
4. Documents required for the research ethics review:
 - 1) Projects involving human subject research, human specimens, human embryos, and/or human embryonic stem cells shall require approval documents from a medical ethics committee or human subject research review board. Projects involving gene recombination shall require a gene recombination application approved by a biological experiment safety committee. Projects involving gene transfer as part of a field experiment shall require the approval of the competent

authority. Projects involving animal testing shall require the approval of a lab animal management Committee. Projects involving RG2–4 infectious biomaterials shall require the approval of the competent authority. If the approval documents cannot be supplied at the time of application, applicants must provide proof that they have submitted the applicable documents to the competent authority for review and supply any missing documents within six months.

- 2) Projects managed by the Council’s Department of Humanities and Social Sciences which involve interventions or interaction with individuals/groups or the use of identifiable personal information for a systematic study of human behavior or an exploration of knowledge in a professional discipline shall require the approval of an institutional review board (IRB) prior to implementation.
5. Projects involving marine research vessels shall require an additional research vessel application form.
6. Projects involving clinical trials shall require a gender analysis, the results of which shall be provided in a gender analysis checklist.

A clinical trial is defined as a scientific study of the human body conducted for the purpose of discovering or validating new medications, equipment, drug combinations, or treatments that can prevent, cure, or diagnose certain diseases.

Article 12 Principal investigators who wish to apply for or execute multiple projects in the same year shall indicate the priority of each project on their applications. Multi-year projects shall be assigned a higher priority than single-year projects. The NSTC will conduct a stringent review of each project in the assigned order.

Principal investigators who are seconded to a central government agency as a political appointee, legislator, or overseas consular official may only apply for/execute one project per year, and the annual budget for said project may not exceed the total budget for the duration of their secondment.

Article 13 Applications for multi-year projects shall be subject to the following provisions:

1. For a project consisting of several continuous subprojects, a multi-year project application shall be submitted, which shall clearly indicate the research items and budgets for each year.
2. Issuance of grant accounts for multi-year projects:
 - 1) Blanket approval: The entire multi-year project will be assigned a single project control number, and a contract for the entire project budget will be signed before the first year of the project begins. Grant money will still be issued in installments, and any budgetary changes shall be handled in accordance with the NSTC *Principles for Handling Research Project Grants*.
 - 2) Approval by year: Each year of the project will be assigned a different project control number. A budget approval form will be issued for the first year of the project, whereas a budget pre-approval form will be issued for each of the remaining years. Principal investigators may request changes to pre-approved budgets by filling out an application on the NSTC website and submitting it together with a progress report for approval.
3. Principal investigators of a multi-year project are required to complete research tasks in accordance with the deadline for each subproject, and they shall submit a

progress report via the NSTC website two months prior to the conclusion of each subproject. If a principal investigator fails to submit a progress report or is unable to address unmet goals, the NSTC may reduce the budget for the next subproject or terminate the entire multi-year project altogether.

4. For projects of a continuous nature that do not receive blanket approval, a separate application is required for each subproject. Applications shall include a progress report for the previous (current) subproject and a list of research tasks for the next subproject.
5. Multi-year projects that are currently under way shall be given priority and, except in extraordinary circumstances, may not be canceled.
6. For principal investigators of a multi-year project who are close to retirement age (65 years of age), or who are over the retirement age but have been granted an extension of appointment, the applying institution shall produce a letter of appointment or formal proof of their appointment extension at the time of application. The NSTC retains sole discretion over whether a multi-year project may be granted based on the results of its review.

Article 14 The method, key points of consideration, and time frame for the Council's review of project applications are as follows:

1. Review method:
 - 1) Reviews shall be carried out in accordance with the NSTC *Guidelines Governing the Review of Project Applications and Selection of Review Committee Members*.
 - 2) The NSTC may review each subproject under a proposed integrated project separately if the Council deems the proposed project unfit for approval as an integrated project.
 - 3) If necessary, the NSTC may ask the principal investigator of a proposed integrated research project to make a presentation to the Council, or it may perform an on-site inspection at the applying institution.
2. Key points of consideration:
 - 1) Individual projects: The principal investigator's past achievements and ability to carry out the project; importance and innovativeness of the project, feasibility of the methodology, expected results and outcomes, and reasonableness of personnel and budgetary arrangements
 - 2) Integrated projects: All points of consideration for individual projects, as well as the necessity of integration (coherence of goals, division of labor and collaboration framework, relevance of the subprojects, and level of integration); personnel arrangements (the main principal investigator's ability to coordinate matters, each subproject manager's professional skills, and the level of cooperation between them); consolidation of resources (equipment and instrument sharing between subprojects and exchanges of research experience and outcomes); degree of collaboration between the applying institution and collaborating units; synergy of the integration
3. Time frame: Review results will be announced within six months of the application deadline, but may be postponed if necessary.

Article 15 Applicants whose proposals are rejected may file an appeal in accordance with the NSTC *Guidelines Governing the Appeal of Project Grant Review Results*.

Article 16 Matters related to project contracts and grant issuance shall be handled in accordance with the approval notification issued by the NSTC.

The NSTC may reduce the amount of a grant after review in accordance with Article 54 of the *Budget Act* in the event that the Council's annual budget is reduced or rejected by the Legislative Yuan.

Article 17 Approved projects must be carried according to plan and may not be modified. The foregoing notwithstanding, the NSTC may approve a change under the following circumstances if the necessary supporting documents are submitted:

1. Unless with the special approval of the NSTC, any project led by a principal investigator or co-investigator who is unable to complete the project or becomes ineligible for their role under Article 3 herein shall either be canceled, terminated, suspended, transferred to another institution, or assigned a new principal investigator or co-investigator.
2. Approval from the NSTC has been obtained prior to the submission of an application for budgetary changes, virement, or additions.
3. Unless under extenuating circumstances, a project may be granted an extension of up to one year, during which no additional funding will be provided.
4. Principal investigators who are unable to meet the provisions set forth under Article 12, Paragraph 2 herein while on secondment to a central government agency as a political appointee, legislator, or overseas consular official shall have their original institution submit a project change application within the first three months of their secondment.

If a project is transferred to another institution under Subparagraph 1 of the preceding paragraph, the original institution shall submit a copy of the appointment letter issued by the new institution to the NSTC for approval.

Article 18 Applying institutions shall complete the account settlement process with the NSTC in accordance with the following provisions within three months of the conclusion of each project:

1. An income and expenditure statement shall be submitted to the NSTC.
2. All remaining account balances, if any, shall be returned to the NSTC. The foregoing notwithstanding, universities with an endowment fund, institutions that operate on the National Social Education Fund, and Academia Sinica may retain any such balances unless otherwise stipulated by the NSTC.

Applying institutions shall visit the NSTC website to fill in and print out a project income and expenditure statement and an account settlement confirmation form.

Article 19 Applying institutions shall require principal investigators to submit their final reports and overseas travel reports (if applicable) in electronic form via the NSTC website within three months of project conclusion:

1. Except for national core technology projects, final reports shall be released to the public in their entirety immediately upon submission. Principal investigators who wish to apply for a patent, technology transfer, or other intellectual property rights, or whose paper is pending publication, may request a wait period of up to two years from the project conclusion date. If there are extenuating circumstances, a principal investigator may be exempted from the preceding limitation with the NSTC's approval. Principal investigators who are granted a deferred release date

for their final report shall submit an abbreviated report that may be made available to the public immediately, whereas the full report shall automatically be released to the public once the wait period elapses.

2. Principal investigators who have been granted a budget for international collaboration, transnational research, or overseas observation shall submit an overseas travel report or international collaboration report.
3. Principal investigators who have been granted a budget for attending an international scholarly conference shall submit a conference report, proof of paper acceptance issued by the conference organizer, and the full text or abstract of the accepted paper.
4. For projects involving clinical trials that require a gender analysis, a gender analysis report detailing the results of the analysis shall be submitted.

Article 20 An NSTC-funded project will only be considered complete when its applying institution has finished the account settlement and report submission process described in Articles 18 and 19 herein.

Article 21 Principal investigators who fail to complete the account settlement process or submit the necessary reports shall be ineligible for any further project grants from the NSTC. In the event that an applying institution fails to complete the account settlement or report submission process by the stipulated deadlines despite warnings by the NSTC, the Council may seek the repayment of a certain percentage of the institutional management fee budget or deduct the outstanding amount from the following year's grant budgets. If necessary, the NSTC may suspend the applying institution's grants either in part or in full. The same shall apply to principal investigators who fail to comply with the applicable account settlement and report submission regulations and who refuse to make improvements by the deadline stipulated by the NSTC.

Article 22 Applying institutions shall take immediate action upon discovery of academic ethics violations by research participants. Results of their action shall be reported to the NSTC for reference.

Academic ethics violations committed by principal investigators or co-investigators during the project proposal, execution, or presentation stage shall be handled in accordance with the NSTC *Guidelines for the Handling and Review of Academic Ethics Violations*.

Article 23 Applying institutions shall be responsible for the oversight of approved projects. If an applying institution fails to meet project goals, complete project tasks, perform oversight duty, or comply with the applicable grant application, reimbursement, or management regulations, the NSTC may, based on the seriousness of the offense, terminate projects, seek the repayment of grants, deduct from or reduce the research grants issued to the applying institution, or reduce the institutional management fee budgets for all or certain types of projects.

Article 24 Principal investigators shall use project grants as stipulated and shall be held accountable for the accuracy of any proof of expenditures submitted.

Applying institutions are expected to verify the expenditures covered by their institution's project grants, and they shall refuse to reimburse expenditures that are inconsistent with the stipulated usage and ask the principal investigator in question to

address the situation. Any falsely represented or inflated declarations must be dealt with appropriately and reported to the NSTC for reference.

Article 25 The NSTC may seek repayment from an applying institution if it finds certain expenditures to be inconsistent with the approved usage.

The NSTC shall conduct a preliminary review of suspected falsified or excessive expenditures, and it shall ask the applying institution and principal investigator in question to provide a written statement of explanation. If the results of the preliminary review confirm the Council's suspicions, an ad hoc review committee shall be convened to review the matter:

1. The ad hoc committee shall be chaired by the Deputy Minister of the NSTC and shall be composed of competent NSTC directors and external experts.
2. The ad hoc committee may issue one or several of the following sanctions if it has sufficient evidence to confirm the falsification or inflation of expenditures, and the applying institution and principal investigator in question shall be notified of such:
 - 1) A written warning to the principal investigator
 - 2) Temporary or permanent suspension of the principal investigator's eligibility
 - 3) Mandatory improvements to be made by the applying institution and principal investigator
 - 4) Repayment of the research grant in part or in full
 - 5) Repayment of institutional management fees (up to three times the amount of the falsified or inflated expenditures)
 - 6) Reduction of the institutional management fees issued to the applying institution beginning from the following year
3. For serious offenses, the ad hoc committee may move to turn over the case to a law enforcement agency for further processing.

Article 26 Miscellaneous:

1. Applying institutions shall carefully review the qualifications of each principal investigator and only approve those who meet the requirements on the applications list, which shall be signed by the competent personnel to show responsibility. In the event that a principal investigator is found to be ineligible following project approval, the applying institution in question shall seek repayment of any grants already issued and return them to the NSTC in accordance with the applicable regulations.
2. When carrying out a project, principal investigators shall abide by the provisions set forth in the *Technology Data Confidentiality Act* and other applicable regulations.
3. If a project is designated a National Core Technology Project during the review process, the applying institution and principal investigator in question shall establish a data safety control mechanism in accordance with the *Data Security Manual for National Core Technology Research Funded by the Government* and other applicable regulations and confidentiality requirements set forth by the NSTC. In addition to any associated legal consequences, principal investigators in violation of these regulations and requirements may be refused further NSTC awards and grants for a specified number of years and their previously approved project grants may be revoked.

4. Unless otherwise stipulated by the NSTC, if two projects led by the same principal investigator overlap by more than three months (including extension periods approved by the NSTC), both projects shall count as the principal investigator's current NSTC projects.
5. Principal investigators are barred from submitting multiple applications for the same research project. Violators will be handled in accordance with the NSTC *Guidelines for the Handling and Review of Academic Ethics Violations*.
6. If a research project will be simultaneously funded by the NSTC and other domestic or foreign institutions (including those in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau), the application must clearly itemize the items funded by those institutions together with the funding amounts. Items that are funded by other institutions shall be ineligible for further funding from the NSTC.
7. Applying institutions and principal investigators shall disclose all domestic and international projects conducted within the three-year period prior to the application (including those in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau) and shall provide any information requested by the NSTC. Failure to comply may result in revocation of already approved project grants.
8. If a proposed project involves animal testing, the applying institution shall review the application in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Oversight of Applied Animal Science Research Institutions*. The NSTC may refuse to fund any projects that receive a "poor" institutional rating with unaddressed deficiencies.
9. The NSTC may refuse to process any applications submitted by an applying institution until it completes the following:
 - 1) Formulation of a set of academic ethics management regulations
 - 2) Designation or establishment of a dedicated academic ethics authority
 - 3) Establishment of an academic ethics training program
 - 4) Formulation of a set of standard operating procedures for handling academic ethics violations
10. Principal investigators who are applying for an NSTC project for the first time and research personnel who are participating in an NSTC project for the first time are required to submit proof of attendance in at least six hours of academic ethics training in the three-year period preceding the project application date to the applying institution for reference. Research personnel who join an NSTC project after its approval shall submit the same proof to the applying institution for reference within three months of their initial employment date.
11. Applying institutions shall require principal investigators to retain experimental parameters, data, images, records, and other raw data for a period of three years from the project conclusion date. If a longer retention period is required by other applicable regulations, the provisions thereof shall apply.

Article 27 Matters unaddressed herein shall be subject to the NSTC *Principles for Handling Research Project Grants*, the contract/agreement for each research project grant, and other applicable regulations.