

# The Grad Student's Guide to the Logistics of Submitting an NSF DDIG Proposal

## Quick References

- FastLane main page: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>
- Proposals Login page: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/jsp/homepage/proposals.jsp>
- 2008 DDIG Program Solicitation:  
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2008/nsf08564/nsf08564.htm>
- 2009 NSF Grant Proposal Guide:  
[http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf091](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf091)
- Eva Allen, Grants Specialist for the Department of Biology: [evaallen@indiana.edu](mailto:evaallen@indiana.edu), 856-1275, Jordan Hall room 220
- Office of Research Administration: [resdev@indiana.edu](mailto:resdev@indiana.edu), 855-0516
- Spencer Hall's grants links for grads:  
[http://www.indiana.edu/~halllab/grad\\_resources.html#DDIGS](http://www.indiana.edu/~halllab/grad_resources.html#DDIGS)
  - Spencer Hall and Leonie Moyle's comments on DDIG proposals:  
[http://www.indiana.edu/~halllab/GradRes/Hall&Moyle\\_DDIG\\_advice.PDF](http://www.indiana.edu/~halllab/GradRes/Hall&Moyle_DDIG_advice.PDF)

## Rough chronology

1. Before you do anything else, check the guidelines to make sure you qualify: you must have advanced to candidacy for a Ph.D. degree *before* the submission deadline to be eligible to submit a proposal.
2. Read the complete program solicitation, and also scan through the NSF Grant proposal guide to familiarize yourself with the content and formatting requirements of a proposal. Read the Spencer Hall and Leonie Moyle's document on what makes a successful DDIG proposal, and visit the Graduate Office to look over Gretchen's collection of successful DDIG proposals.
3. Start working on writing your project description, the 8-page narrative section that serves as the meat of your proposal. **Start early.** When you need study breaks, work on the next several steps, starting at least two weeks before the deadline.
4. Send an email to the IU Office of Research Administration (ORA) at [resdev@indiana.edu](mailto:resdev@indiana.edu) requesting that you be added to the NSF FastLane system. They will need to know your full formal name, your IU email address, your undergraduate degree and the year it was awarded, and your work (lab) phone number. Once you receive your login information by email from FastLane, be sure to login to the edit your profile in FastLane to make sure that all your information is complete and accurate.
5. Your advisor must serve as the PI on the proposal; you will be listed as Co-PI/Co-PD. Therefore, your advisor must initiate the proposal in FastLane, and then add you as Co-PI on the cover page using your NSF FastLane ID number.
6. Your advisor must upload their own biosketch into the proposal in FastLane and enter their current and pending grants in the funding area, or give this information to you to add for them.
7. Once you've been added as co-PI, you may access the proposal in FastLane by logging in to the PI/Co-PI Login dialog box on the FastLane Proposals page (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/jsp/homepage/proposals.jsp>).

8. Your budget must be approved by ORA before the proposal can be submitted. There's no need to finish your narrative section before you complete your budget. Send your completed budget as an Excel spreadsheet, with the accompanying justification as a Word file, to [resdev@indiana.edu](mailto:resdev@indiana.edu), with a request that your budget be reviewed for a DDIG proposal. It is prudent to send your budget to ORA for review at least 5 business days before the deadline. [**Note:** Be very nice to your ORA grants specialist: this person will be responsible for checking that your entire submission follows all requirements, helping you correct any problems, and getting it submitted on time. You may have need to chat with this person several times before your proposal is submitted; it's okay to ask for his or her direct phone number.]
9. As soon as the budget has been approved by ORA, your proposal can be routed through the IU Electronic Research Administration (eRA) system. Your PI or Eva Allen can create the route sheet in eRA [you will be listed as "fellow" here rather than co-PI], and then your advisor must electronically "release" the route sheet to initiate the university approval process. This process can move quite quickly, but it is prudent to start the sheet at least 3 business days before the deadline, to allow ample time for all offices to approve the sheet.
10. In addition to the project description that you've already been sweating over—going through multiple revisions with the help of your advisor—there are several other documents you must prepare as **separate files** to upload in FastLane. Do not wait until the last minute to work on these; the summary and context statements are critical to the success of your proposal, and you will want to go through several revisions of these with your advisor.
  - a. Biosketch. Use your advisor's as a model, and don't worry if you don't have anything relevant to list for many of the sections. Check the relevant instructions in the current Grant Proposal Guide to make sure you get the format correct.
  - b. Project Summary. This section is very important, so be sure to follow the instructions in the program solicitation **and** the Grant Proposal Guide very carefully. If you do not address in this section both review criteria (intellectual merit and the broader impacts) ***your proposal will not be reviewed.***
  - c. Cited references.
  - d. Context for Improvement. This is added as a supplemental document.
  - e. Statement of Candidacy. This is also added as a supplemental document. If you have Gretchen confirm that you are indeed a candidate, Eva Allen can generate this document as a signed pdf so you don't have to scan anything.
11. There are also several forms that you can fill out within FastLane.
  - a. Budget. You must enter exactly the numbers you've had approved by ORA. Your ORA grants specialist can help you figure out which costs go on which lines of the budget. Do not forget to upload your budget justification.
  - b. Support. In addition to any other current and pending grants your PI has, be sure that this proposal is listed as a pending proposal for both you and your advisor. And of course, if you have other grants, be sure to list them as well.
  - c. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources. This can be filled out in the form, or you can upload a file with the same categories. It is likely that your advisor

- already has this information prepared from other proposals, and may even enter it into the proposal for you.
12. Once you have uploaded all required files and supplementary documents, and filled out all the remaining forms, double-check that the cover sheet is completely filled out, and then ask your advisor to “allow SRO access”. [They must login to FastLane select the proposal, and then click the “SRO Access” button to set the SRO access level.
  13. Once SRO access have been set to “view and edit but not submit”, notify your ORA grants specialist that the proposal is ready for review.
  14. Once you have fixed any problems your ORA grants specialist finds, and your proposal has been approved for submission, your advisor must again change the SRO access, this time to “view, edit and submit proposal”.
  15. Login one last time and download a copy of the entire submission by selecting the print function, and choosing “entire proposal”, which will allow you to save a pdf file of the whole thing.
  16. Contact your ORA grants specialist, and ask them to submit the proposal. Do make sure you receive confirmation by 5pm of the deadline date that the proposal has been submitted.
  17. Thank your advisor and your ORA grants specialist.
  18. Do not re-read your proposal until after you’ve heard the results of the review process. You’ll just notice typos and errors and get all stressed out.
  19. Take yourself out for a celebratory drink.

Good luck!