Reviewing Proposals and the Physics 598PEN Proposal Review Process

Inquisition Scene, by Francisco Goya, 1816
The Proposal Review Process

Why should you care about the proposal review process?

You may be asked to review a proposal some day!

More importantly, knowing how proposals are evaluated will help you write successful proposals!
Examine the proposals critically, using the criteria provided by funding agency:

Most common ‘scientific’ review criteria:

Scientific content: What questions/problems does the proposed research plan to solve?

Significance/importance: Why is the research needed? How will the research advance knowledge?

Feasibility: Is the proposed research feasible? Can the problem be addressed in the timeframe and monetary size of the award?

Clarity: Are the proposal motivations, plans, and goals clearly stated?

Logical organization: Is the proposal logically organized and well written?
Examine the proposals critically, using the criteria provided by funding agency:

Other “outreach/broad impact” criteria:

Education: How well does the project help integrate research and teaching?

Accessibility: Will the results be made available to a broad audience to advance science understanding?

Underrepresentation: Does the research enhance the participation of underrepresented groups?

Societal impact: Are there any benefits of the work to society at large?

Interdisciplinarity: Does the work help advance interdisciplinary research?
The Proposal Review Process

Examine the proposals critically, using the criteria provided by funding agency:

Other issues that matter:

1: Does the proposal comply with the proposal preparation instructions?
2: Has enough detail been provided to allow adequate evaluation?
3: Is the research proposed “transformative”?
4: Have all parts of the proposal been included?
5: Is the budget well justified and adequate for the research proposed?
The Proposal Panel Review Process

Each proposal is generally reviewed (before the panel meets) by three or more of the panelists. External (mail) reviews may also be solicited.

**Primary reviewer** gives background on the proposal and leads discussion of the proposal.

**Secondary reviewer** makes additional comments.

**Scribe** takes notes on the discussion.

All the panelists can contribute to the discussion, and a final rating and summary of the discussion is decided upon by the entire panel.
Phys 598 Proposal Review Timeline

Friday, April 8: Project Summaries are due

Friday, April 22, 5 p.m.: Proposals are due

Monday, April 25: I will e-mail you the proposals for which you are the primary and secondary reviewer

April 25 – 28: Read, and prepare written reports for, the two proposals for which you’re responsible

By April 28: Project summaries for all proposals will be e-mailed to the class

Friday, April 29: Proposal panel review, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
## Your Responsibilities as the Principal Investigator

**Simple:** include all elements of the proposal, and get the proposal in on time!

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### The Physics 598 PEN Research Initiative
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

#### Request for Proposals

The Department of Physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (PHYS/UIUC) announces an intensive 1-year program to provide opportunities for talented graduate students to participate in research. Prospective participants are invited to submit proposals for research projects for the 2016 program.

**Project Summary “white papers” are due by 5:00 P.M. CST, April 8, 2016. Full proposals are due by 5:00 P.M. CST, April 22, 2016. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.**

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**The Initiative**

The PHYS/UIUC Phys 598 PEN research program provides resources to enable graduate students to undertake research projects in experimental, theoretical, and computational physics. Of particular interest are projects in condensed matter physics, materials science, theoretical biophysics, theoretical astrophysics, and experimental particle and nuclear physics. Proposed research projects should offer interesting, meaningful research that can be conducted without extensive background knowledge, in a 1-year time frame, and with a broad mix of appropriate techniques and methodologies. An ideal project will offer the student a chance to develop expertise in a particular area while learning techniques applicable to many areas.

**Objectives of the Program**

- Provide students with a meaningful experience in a first-class research environment.
- Enable students to work closely and directly with practicing researchers.
- Encourage students to develop their own “research literacy,” including familiarity with the literature, oral and written communications skills, time management, and teamwork skills.

**Terms**

Grants are for a 1-year period, beginning August 1, 2016.

Grantees are required to provide a final presentation and a written report that:

- Summarize activities and results as they relate to the proposed objectives.
- Discuss the significance of the results.
- Recommend avenues for future work.

Grantees will participate in programmatic activities and group meetings during the 1-year grant period.

Grantees are encouraged to participate in research-group and departmental seminars and colloquia.

**Budget and Budget Justification**

A maximum of $20,000 may be requested, of which $5,000 must be a student stipend. Other eligible expenses are equipment, materials and supplies, telecommunications, travel, publication-dissemination of results, and institutional overhead.

Institutional overhead is to be calculated at a rate of 52 percent of the modified total direct cost (MTDC) base. Student stipends and equipment costs are to be excluded from the MTDC. A narrative budget justification of no more than one page must be included in the proposal.
Your Responsibilities as a Phys 598 Reviewer

Prepare a separate reports for proposals you’re assigned

Discuss the following features:

1. Overall scientific and technical merit—does the project address an important problem?
2. Strengths and weaknesses of the proposal
3. Feasibility—likelihood of success
4. Compliance with stated program objectives—will the project contribute to the funder’s mission?
5. Adequacy of facilities and equipment to be used
6. Qualifications, capabilities, and experience of scientific personnel
7. Reasonableness of the project costs

Assign a rating or priority for funding
Primary reviewers will lead discussion of their proposals

Secondary reviewers will make additional comments

All will contribute to the discussion, and panel ratings, for every proposal.

Important things to note:

Written reports and panel discussion summaries should be evaluative, but constructively worded, as the principal investigators will read these:

“Review unto others as you would have them review unto you.”