W911NF-27-R-A001

# SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program Cooperative Agreement NOFO

## Questions and Answers Sheet

| Q1: For non-US students from the eligible listed countries, is the program implementer responsible for any visa support services or is this solely the responsibility of the academic institution at which the student is enrolled? Additionally, for these individuals what work authorizations are required to allow them to engage in the internship requirement with the noted DoW sponsoring facility and what role if any is the program implementer responsible for assisting with and tracking these authorizations? |
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| A: The NOFO does not specify that the Recipient is responsible for visa support services or tracking work authorizations for scholars. Generally, this is the responsibility of the scholar and their Sponsoring Facility. |

| Q2: Will scholar funds be advanced (e.g., through ASAP) so tuition can be paid on institutional billing schedules, or is the agreement reimbursement-only? How should applicants plan for stipend continuity under a continuing resolution? |
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| A: The NOFO states the Recipient will distribute stipend and academic fees on time based on institutional billing practices using common financial business practices and tools. Under the governing authorities cited in Section II.B (Pages 18–19) of the NOFO, the permissibility of advance payments is determined by 2 CFR § 200.305 (for higher education and nonprofits) and 32 CFR § 34.12 (for-profit entities). |

| Q3: After the government establishes a scholar debt, who performs collection and Treasury referral? Does the recipient have any ongoing debt servicing role beyond preparing case materials? |
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| A: According to DoDI 1025.09, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is responsible for collecting established debts owed to the DoW. Once due process is concluded, the case is referred to DFAS to initiate the collection of the debt. The Recipient prepares default case materials for the Government but does not collect the debt. |

| Q4: Will the recipient personnel use government issued laptops? |
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A: The NOFO does not require all recipient personnel to use government-issued laptops. IAW with the NOFO, at least four (4) of FTEs will liaise with the Department of War (DoW) Components (Army, Navy, Air Force, and 4th Estate). For purposes of proposal preparation, the government does not intend to provide government-issued laptops, but the proposed DoW liaisons should be eligible to obtain Common Access Cards (CACs) and access DoW networks.

| Q5: During a government shutdown, will funding continue to be released to support student stipends? |
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| A: The NOFO does not explicitly outline procedures for a government shutdown. Stipend payments are contingent upon the availability of federal funds and disbursements executed by the Cooperative Agreement Recipient. If a government shutdown occurs guidance will be provided by the Grants Officer and/or Cooperative Agreement Manager. |

| Q6: Section F.3.d (pp.40–41) requires six-month progress reports for each “Fellow,” including research project, advisor, publications and patents. Does this apply to all SMART scholars, including undergraduates? If so, can it be satisfied through SIMS data rather than individual written reports? |
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| A: Section F.3.d (pp.40–41) requiring six-month progress reports for each "Fellow" has been removed from the NOFO. Please refer to NOFO Amendment 004. |

| Q7: Upon what date will the recipient be responsible for tuition payments of the existing participants? |
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| A: The NOFO states that the period of performance for the base year of the new CA is expected to start NLT June 3, 2027, with the transition period estimated to be two months. Funding option years run August-July to align with the academic calendar, and the Recipient will be responsible for tuition payments starting August 2027. |

| Q8: Are the International Internships limited to Canada, New Zealand, and the UK? |
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| A: International Internships occur at internationally renowned research institutes in allied countries where the SMART Program has established partnerships, but they are not strictly limited to current partners or partnering countries. |

| Q9: Can activities other than SEED Awards, Creates Innovation award, and International Internships be proposed? |
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| A: The NOFO states that the Recipient will "provide innovative ideas and facilitate partnerships or strategic initiatives to promote DoW STEM initiatives". |

| Q10: The Orientation deliverable states: “The Recipient will execute an in-person orientation for 600-800 awardees and 200 additional stakeholders." Please clarify whether the Government anticipates a single centralized in-person orientation event, multiple in-person orientation events conducted across Sponsoring Facilities (SFs) or other locations, or a virtual presentation. |
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| A: The provided NOFO states, "The Recipient will execute an in-person orientation for 600-800 awardees and 200 additional stakeholders" based on historically single, centralized orientations, but offerors could potentially propose alternatives. |

| Q11: The NOFO states transition includes "A clone of the current SIMS environment, to include all documents, standard operating procedures, automated workflows, data structures, reports, Program forms, and any other data relevant to the administration of the Program". Please specify the automated workflows currently implemented in SIMS that will be transferred with the "clone". |
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| A: A comprehensive list of specific IT and automated workflows currently implemented in SIMS will be provided to the successful awardee as appropriate during the transition period. |

| Q12: Is the current SIMS ServiceNow instance government-owned or under the incumbent’s tenancy? After transition, who holds and pays for the licenses, and does the existing ATO carry over? |
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| A: The Government maintains full ownership of the database, its architecture, and all associated data at all times. However, it requires the Recipient to host the solution on a commercially available platform like ServiceNow. The transition of any license(s) currently owned by the incumbent will be discussed with the successful awardee as appropriate during the transition period. |

| Q13: Are AI tools within SIMS/ServiceNow approved at FedRamp High/Level 4? If AI tools are approved within the SIMS architecture, please specify which AI tools are currently being used. |
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| A: The NOFO states, "All SIMS infrastructure should be authorized at FedRAMP High/Impact Level 4". This includes any AI supporting tools. Providing a comprehensive list of specific AI tools currently implemented in SIMS is outside the scope of this NOFO. |

| Q14: Does the current SIMS environment provide an automated payment capability? If the current SIMS environment does not provide an automated payment capability, what file formats and interface specifications are available for integration with recipient financial systems? |
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| A: The NOFO requires the Recipient to "consider proposing an efficient and effective plan to distribute stipend and academic fees on time… using common financial business |

practices and tools". The exact current interface will be provided to the successful awardee as appropriate during the transition period.

Q15: The NOFO, Section H.2.d, Travel (p. 45), requires Applicants to provide detailed forecasts of travel expenditures, including destination and associated cost elements. Please provide additional information necessary to support development of a reasonable travel cost estimates, including a: estimated number of Sponsoring Facility (SF) visits anticipated per year, b: expected number of Recipient personnel participating in each visit, and, c: the anticipated geographic distribution and typical duration of such visits, if available.

A: The NOFO does not provide the historical exact geographic distribution of SF visits, but notes there are over 100+ active Sponsoring Facilities nationwide. The Government has provided an estimated travel amount for applicants to use in developing their proposals. Please refer to NOFO Amendment 004 for the applicable travel estimate in Section II.B., establishing a travel amount of $300,000 per year for Recipient personnel travel.

Q16: Will any of cooperative agreement budget line items/CLINs be awarded as firm-fixed price?

A: No, the Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) for this award will be awarded as Cost-No Fee. Cost No Fee is preferred for R&D Cooperative Agreements due to scopes that are more difficult to estimate.

Q17: Table 1 (p.18) requires no less than 82–87% of each annual award for scholarships, but Element 4 (p.16) estimates tuition, stipends and academic expenses at $60–100M/yr, which is as low as 50% of a $120M year. Which governs, and is the firm floor 82% or 87%?

A: Please refer to NOFO Amendment 004 Table 2, the firm floor is 82%. Applicants must optimize administrative costs to ensure this minimum floor is met to maximize funding for scholars.

Q18: Which costs count toward the scholarship percentage versus administrative costs: Seed and CREATES awards, international internships, site visit allotments, the in-person orientation, and the outreach/recruiting grants to affinity groups and institutions (p.14)?

A: All things directly related to the scholarship—such as orientation, outreach, stipends, tuition, and direct scholar allowances (including site visits, internship payments, travel and health/book allowances)— count toward the scholarship expenses. Please refer to NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.A-B.

| Q19: Does the 82%-87% include funding to support SEED Innovation Awards, Creates Innovation Award, and International Internships? |
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| A: SEED and CREATES grant funds are provided to the scholar's Sponsoring Facility (SF) directly from the SMART Program Office (SPO) and are therefore not included in the Cooperative Agreement funding. However, for International Internships, stipend payments scholars are paid directly to the scholar by the Cooperative Agreement Recipient. Please refer to NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.A. |

| Q20: To support consistent cost realism, can the government share historical administrative costs as a percentage of the total award, annual payment transaction volume, and the number of institutions billed each year? |
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| A: The published NOFO does not provide historical administrative costs as a percentage of the total award, the annual payment transaction volume, or the specific number of institutions billed each year. For scoping purposes, the NOFO does note a historical figure of an estimated 50-60 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to provide support under the SMART cooperative agreement, and states that the anticipated number of scholars in academic pursuit over the course of the CA is projected to be approximately 1,500 per year, with approximately 90% of those participants requiring stipends paid through this agreement. |

| Q21: Is there a target dollar amount associated with the solicitation of strategic outreach and recruiting grants to affinity groups and academic institutions? |
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| A: The NOFO does not specify a target dollar amount for affinity group recruiting grants. The recipient will work collaboratively with the Government to determine strategic outreach and recruiting grants requirements to effectively broaden reach and impact. |

| Q22: The NOFO states that specific items will transition from the current Recipient to the new Recipient, including “iPads and other equipment.” We request that the Government provide a list of Government-furnished laptops or other computing equipment currently being used by the incumbent contractor in support of the SMART Program that will be transitioned from to the recipient personnel. |
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| A: This information will be provided to the successful awardee as appropriate during the transition period. For the purpose of preparing proposals, there is no government furnished property to be transitioned. |

| Q23: Is SIMS output compatible with commercial financial systems such as Deltek Costpoint? |
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| A: The current SIMS is developed on ServiceNow platform. |

| Q24: The base period starts June 3, 2027, and option years run August–July, so the base period is about 14 months. Does the $120M base-year ceiling cover all 14 months, including the two-month transition overlap with the incumbent? |
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| A: Yes. The $120M base period amount listed in NOFO Section B. Federal Award information covers the full fourteen (14) month base period. While the two-month transition overlaps with the current SMART cooperative agreement and the new cooperative agreement is expected to be predominantly administrative, it is possible that payments of scholar benefits may commence during the transition period. |

| Q25: The NOFO states that “The Recipient should have a transition in plan, to transfer the ownership of the existing website, within 15 calendar days of award” and that “the full transition for a fully operational website, to include all portals, will be completed within 60 calendar days.” Please confirm whether the transfer of the existing website includes the public-facing website, public application portal, and all restricted web portals identified under Website and Portal Management (within Element 1), as well as the associated domain (scholarship.org), subdomains and other website assets necessary for their continued operation. |
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| A: Yes, the NOFO states the transition includes "the domain smartscholarship.org and all sub-domains under it" and "A clone of the current SIMS environment, to include all documents, standard operating procedures, automated workflows, data structures, reports… and any other data relevant". |

| Q26: Given the detailed requirements that are needed to be addressed from the NOFO, we request that the Government reconsider the font size to be used in figures, tables and captions. May Offerors use fonts smaller than 11 pt in figures, tables and captions provided they remain legible? |
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| A: The Government has updated the NOFO to provided that applicants may use font 8-10 point for tables, graphs charts, figures and diagram captions, provided they remain clearly legible at 100% zoom. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.D.2. |

| Q27: Can one or more of the three required past performance examples (p.29) come from a proposed subrecipient? Also, p.25 references past performance questionnaires. Is there a required PPQ form, and how should it be submitted? |
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| A: Yes, one or more of the past performance examples can come from a proposed subrecipient. |

| Q28: What documentation satisfies the requirement to show an approved accounting and financial management system before award (p.43)? |
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A: Recipients systems must comply with the financial management standards of 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200, to include evidence of the ability to allocate costs and maintain a GAAP compliant system among all other 2 CFR 200 requirements.

Commercial Entities:
Standard Form 1408 (SF 1408): This is the primary federal document used by agencies like the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) Cognizant Audit Agency Letters: An official memorandum or approval letter from a federal audit agency (e.g., DCAA, DHHS, DFAS) stating that the contractor's accounting system has been reviewed and deemed "adequate" or "approved" for cost-reimbursement awards is one method of satisfying this requirement. Absence of a DCAA or similar accounting system audit does not preclude an Applicant from being eligible, but it may be required to provide other evidence of the ability to meet 2 CFR 200 accounting system requirements.

Q29: The instructions for Chapter 3 - Past Performance Information state that the 6-page limit "does not include past performance questionnaires." The evaluation factor also says questionnaires will be considered in the assessment of quality of performance. No questionnaires were included in the NOFO. Are they a requirement for the Past Performance factor? If so, can you please provide the past performance questionnaire form?

A: The Government will handle the Past Performance Questionnaires (PPQs) directly with the POCs provided by the applicant.

Reference NOFO- Factor 3 Past Performance, "The applicant shall include contact information (agency/company name, point of contact, telephone, e-mail address, etc.) as well as the project/contract/grant/agreement name and number of three (3) references that can verify and validate its ability to successfully perform the requirements in the NOFO."

The Government will use this information to verify Past Performance for the applicant's examples.

Q30: The R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form has a field to "Attach Biographical Sketch." Is this content in addition to the information provided in 8-page Credentials section in the Project Summary, or does the Credentials section cover what is asked for in the form?

A: The Biographical Sketch Form provides instructions for submission of a biographical sketch by each individual identified as a senior/key person on a Federally Funded research project. The biographical sketch is used to assess how well qualified the individual, team or organization is to conduct the proposed activities.

The Factor (4) Credentials (p32) focuses on the applicants' credentials as an organization as well as the specific individuals proposed.

| Q31: The past performance criteria state that the offeror, “shall include contact information (agency/company name, point of contact, telephone and facsimile numbers, e-mail address, etc.)…” – will the Government please remove the requirement for “facsimile numbers” since almost no one uses fax machines currently? |
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| A: The NOFO has been updated to remove facsimile numbers from the contact information. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.E.1. |

| Q32: The deliverables table (p.21) lists IRS reporting for academic evaluation panelists. Are panelists compensated through the agreement, and which IRS forms are expected for scholars and panelists? |
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| A: The requirement for IRS reporting of stipend and allowance for academic evaluation panelists has been removed from the NOFO. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.B. |

| Q33: Please confirm the recipient will be responsible for the Application process starting August 2027. |
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| A: The Base Period is 3 June 2027 to 31 July 2028. The NOFO states the Application window runs from August to December. Therefore, the new Recipient will be responsible for the August 2027 application cycle. |

| Q34: Would it be possible to get the breakdown of roles for the 50-60 FTEs currently working on the SMART Program? |
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| A: The NOFO states this is a historical figure and that "The Applicant will use their own understanding of the fundamental elements to develop their proposed level of effort" (Page 4). |

| Q35: We will likely want to retain some number of existing employees to ensure a level of continuity. Would it be possible to get a list of current employee roles and average compensation for budget planning purposes? |
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| A: Applicants are expected to estimate labor costs based on their proposed technical and management plan. |

| Q36: The NOFO references historical staffing of 50–60 FTEs. Can the Government share the approximate staffing distribution by element or function, including whether that figure includes subcontractors, surge staff, and independent evaluation? |
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| A: The Government does not provide the approximate staffing distribution by element or function, nor does it specify whether the historical 50–60 FTE figure includes |

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| subcontractors, surge staff, or independent evaluation personnel. Applicants must propose their own staffing model. |

| Q37: Please identify the current SIMS and portal platforms, versions, hosting environments, and major integrations. Which items will the Government furnish or make available at award, including environments, licenses, source code or configuration packages, data dictionaries, interface specifications, test scripts, and historical data exports? Please identify any components or licenses the incoming recipient must replace or procure. |
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| A: The current environment details, data dictionaries, and test scripts are not comprehensively listed in the NOFO. The NOFO states that a clone of the current SIMS environment (in COTS format) will be transitioned to the new recipient. The new SIMS infrastructure must be authorized at FedRAMP High/Impact Level 4 and hosted on a commercially available, platform-independent solution, such as ServiceNow or an equivalent platform (Page 13). |

| Q38: What constitutes an acceptable Day 15 draft SIMS database? By Day 60, which records, attachments, audit histories, interfaces, reports, and portal workflows must be migrated and validated? Please clarify how the Day 60 milestone relates to the separate final database deliverable due 45 calendar days after Government comments. |
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| A: F or proposal preparation, applicants should focus their methodology on managing data migration and maintaining a FedRAMP High/Impact Level 4 authorized environment. The Day 60 milestone requires the completion of all data migration and validation to ensure full operational capability. Detailed record types and validation criteria will be established collaboratively with the successful awardee during the transition period. |

| Q39: Please identify the modules in use and clarify whether the incoming recipient will assume operation of the existing instance or receive transferable application configurations and data for deployment in a separate instance. If a separate instance or platform is required, which existing capabilities must be reproduced by Day 60? |
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| A: The NOFO states that "A clone of the current SIMS environment (in COTS format)" will be transitioned. Applicants should propose a robust software development lifecycle plan to assume and enhance this infrastructure. |

| Q40: Please provide approximate record counts and storage volumes by major data category, including attachments and legacy records. Are there known data quality issues, archived repositories, or records held outside SIMS that the recipient must reconcile or migrate? What criteria will the Government use to verify completeness and accuracy? |
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| A: Detailed record counts, storage volumes, and specific data quality metrics are outside the scope of the NOFO and will be provided to the successful awardee. For scoping |

purposes, applicants should plan for an environment supporting historical data for over 8,000 total scholarships awarded since program inception, alongside active data for approximately 1,500 scholars in academic pursuit annually as well as over 8,000 annual applications.

Q41: What reports, extracts, and dashboards must be available at cutover? Can the Government share a report inventory and distinguish existing capabilities that must be maintained from enhancements it expects during the first year?

A: A comprehensive report inventory will be provided during the transition period. Applicants should demonstrate their capability to support standard data analytics, financial tracking, and performance metric dashboards as outlined in NOFO Element 2 (Data Management, Analysis, and Reporting).

Q42: What Government-facilitated transition support will be available from the outgoing recipient, for how long, and for which workstreams? When can the incoming team expect access to test environments, representative data, system documentation, and incumbent SMEs?

A: The Government will facilitate a 60-day transition period (estimated to start June 3, 2027) requiring the incoming Recipient to work collaboratively with the outgoing recipient. Access to environments, data, and system documentation will be coordinated immediately.

Q43: What approved policies, procedures, official forms, scholar handbooks, and sponsoring facility resources will transfer at award? Which items must be revised or created in the first program year? Please identify the approval process and any deadlines for updates before the next application cycle.

A: All current program documents, including the SMART Scholar Handbook and Sponsoring Facility Toolkit, will transfer at award. The Recipient is responsible for maintaining and updating these documents annually or as policy changes occur. Approval processes will be managed collaboratively with the SMART Program Office.

Q44: Does the term “legacy data” refer to historical records already stored in SIMS, records maintained outside the current SIMS database, or both? If any legacy records are maintained separately, please identify their source systems and the file formats in which they will be provided for migration.

A: "Legacy data" refers to all historical scholar, policy, and process records required to administer the program. The vast majority of this data is currently housed within the SIMS ServiceNow environment. Specific file formats for any external data will be provided during the transition period.

| Q45: For Factor (3) Past Performance, page 29 of the NOFO, can these examples be those of major partners on the proposal or MUST they be examples of past performance from the prime only? |
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| A: Please see the response to question #27 above. Examples may be submitted for sub-recipients |

| Q46: Please clarify whether the Chapter 4 page limitation applies only to resumes and biographical sketches, or also to organizational credentials. |
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| A: The page count for Chapter 4- Credentials is limited to 8 pages.<br><br>Please refer to NOFO page 31, “The application shall provide a sufficient description of the leadership roles and management personnel to include the names, brief biographies and availability of key personnel substantially and meaningfully engaged in the CA. The applicant’s application shall clearly identify the components and/or functions each of the named persons will be responsible for managing.” |

| Q47: Please provide the past performance questionnaire format and identify the party responsible for transmitting questionnaires to references . |
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| A: Please see the response to question #29 above. |

| Q48: Please confirm whether the Section H reporting provisions related to Fellow Progress Reports and journal publications apply to this agreement. |
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| A: Section F.3.d (pp.40–41) requiring six-month progress reports for each "Fellow" has been removed from the NOFO. |

| Q49: Please clarify the budget treatment of scholar tuition, stipends, travel to orientation, and site visit allotments, including whether these costs are to be treated as participant support costs under 2 CFR 200.1 and excluded from the indirect cost base. |
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| A: Tuition, stipends, orientation travel, and site visit allotments are generally considered participant support costs and should be treated in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.1 and the applicant's approved accounting practices. |

| Q50: The NOFO states that scholarships shall be no less than 82 to 87 percent. Please identify the specific minimum percentage against which applications will be evaluated. |
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| A: Please see response to question #17 above. |

| Q51: Please confirm whether use of the R&R Budget form is required, or whether the cost proposal may be submitted in an applicant-developed format. |
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| A: R&R Budget form is required, although an applicant-developed format can accompany the proposal. |

| Q52: Please confirm that contractors identified by name in the application, with costs supported as required under Attachment 1, are acceptable under the procurement standards at 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327, or whether additional procurement documentation will be required. |
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| A: The applicant's budget shall include the elements listed on NOFO page 25 under Attachment 1 and section 2. Cooperative Agreement Proposals page 43 as applicable. The cost principles found in Subpart E of Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 establish a framework for determining which costs can be charged to federal grants. The recipient and subrecipient must apply these principles as a guide when pricing their proposals. |

| Q53: To support accurate cost estimation, please provide historical program data for the three most recent award cycles. This should include applications received, new awards (including second-round awards), active Sponsoring Facilities by Component, scholars in Phase 1 and Phase 2, alumni tracked in Phase 3, and the annual volume of inbound inquiries. |
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| A: For scoping and cost estimation purposes in proposals, the NOFO states the anticipated number of scholars in academic pursuit is projected to be approximately 1,500 per year. The program historically awards between 350–650 new scholarships annually, from over 8,000 submitted applications. |

| Q54: Please describe current Phase 0 site visit requirements, including responsibility for the agenda and the method by which site visit allotments are calculated and disbursed. |
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| A: The NOFO states that all recruitment awardees are required to complete a mandatory 1-2 day in-person site visit at their SF. The program provides a flat-rate site visit allotment disbursed directly to the scholar through this agreement. The Sponsoring Facility is responsible for creating the agenda. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.A. |

| Q55: Please identify the number of academic evaluation panelists used each cycle and the current method of compensation. |
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| A: The requirement for IRS reporting of stipends and allowances for academic evaluation panelists has been removed from the deliverables table. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.B. |

| Q56: Please describe the current SIMS platform, the number of users by portal, and the current hosting authorization level. |
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| A: The current SIMS environment is developed on the ServiceNow platform. As required by the NOFO, all SIMS infrastructure must be authorized at FedRAMP High/Impact Level 4. It supports thousands of concurrent users including applicants, scholars, SF POCs, and program administrators. |

| Q57: Please identify whether Recipient personnel will require Common Access Cards, government-furnished equipment, or background investigations to access SIMS or other Government systems, and if so, the required investigation level. |
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| A: Please see response to question #4. |

| Q58: Reference NOFO Element 4, Retention Scholar Support (p. 17). Does the application, evaluation, and selection process for retention participants differ from the process for recruitment applicants? If so, please describe the differences. |
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| A: The application and evaluation process are functionally the same, but the funding mechanism differs. Retention scholars are current DoW employees. As noted in NOFO Element 4, the DoW funds their stipends and benefits directly (outside the CA). |

| Q59: Reference NOFO Element 5, Independent Program Evaluation (p. 17), and Phase 3 description (p. 7). What time horizon does the Government intend for the longitudinal evaluation, and should it include cohorts and alumni from prior SMART agreements? Additionally, how long after completion of the service commitment does the Government expect Phase 3 employment tracking to continue? |
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| A: The longitudinal evaluation should assess both immediate and long-term impacts of the SMART Program on the DoW mission, spanning from program inception (2006 cohorts) to present. Tracking for Phase 3 (Post-Service Commitment) is ongoing indefinitely but relies on voluntary updates from alumni to measure long-term retention. |

| Q60: Reference NOFO Stakeholder Communication and Relationship Management (p. 10). What reporting are SFs currently required to provide to the SMART Program, and at what frequency? |
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| A: SFs are required to provide continuous status updates regarding scholars and the SF. |

| Q61: Does the Recipient have authority under the CA to require SFs to submit data or reports, or will SF reporting requirements be established and enforced by the Government? If the latter, what escalation path is available to the Recipient when an SF does not provide required information in a timely manner? |
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| A: While the Recipient establishes communication channels and provides tools (such as SIMS) for SFs to track deliverables, the Recipient does not possess the statutory authority to mandate SF actions. Under DoDI 1025.09, all escalations regarding SF compliance must be referred to the SMART Program Manager and the respective DoD Component Execution Leads (CELs) for enforcement. |

| Q62: Reference NOFO Element 2 (p. 8), the Element 1 IRS reporting deliverable for academic evaluation panelists (p. 21), and the Monthly Performance and Cost Report requirement for a candidate review committee summary (p. 40). Who is responsible for selecting and appointing application reviewers and candidate review committee members, and who is responsible for overseeing the conduct of the review process? |
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| A: The requirement for IRS reporting of stipends and allowances for academic evaluation panelists has been removed from the NOFO. Please refer to the NOFO Amendment 004, Section II.B. |

| Q63: Please confirm if there is a template or the outline that needs to be followed regarding the Cover Letter that is to be submitted in Field 21, Cover Letter Attachment, as part of form SF 424. |
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| A: The SF424 cover page is sufficient. Applicants may use any format for any additional cover letter submitted in field 21, although the cover letter itself will not be evaluated. |

| Q64: Please advise what, if any, documentation needs to be uploaded to the Attachments line item within Grants.gov as part of the application. This line item is listed as Mandatory, but after reviewing the Notice of Funding Opportunity, the only attachments that are to be submitted and are referenced pertain to attachments 1 – 3 which are to be uploaded to the Research and Related Other Project Information Form. |
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| A: IAW the NOFO, Attachments 1-3 should be uploaded as Attachments under Form Research and Related Other Project Information. There are no further Attachments that are required to be submitted as part of the NOFO. |

| Q65: Please confirm which templates/form version should be utilized when completing the following: a. Biographical Sketch Form b. Current and Pending Support Form |
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| A: The Biographical sketch is part of the Form Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) Version 4.0. Current and Pending support Attachment is not a requirement for this application. |

| Q66: Can you share why the CA is being increased from 5 years to 10 years? |
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| A: The Government changed the period of performance from 5 years to 10 years in order to sustain a mature partnership and reduce the disruption and administrative costs of recompeting or re-awarding every 5 years. This does not commit the Government to fund all 10 years. The funding remains subject to annual appropriations, satisfactory performance and exercise of future option periods. |