

Questions and Answers from April 5, 2023 Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DEPSCoR) Webinar on Recent Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

Q: Is virtual attendance an option for the May 18 Montana State University DEPSCoR Day?

A: No, we do not have the option for virtual attendance at DEPSCoR Day outreach events. Today's webinar is our only virtual engagement option. The real strength of DEPSCoR Days is the one-on-one interactions researchers get with DoD program officers and we have not found a way to replicate that in a virtual environment.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, can the Collaborator be a co-PI on a previously funded DoD award?

A: To be eligible to serve as the collaborator on a DEPSCoR proposal, the Collaborator must be a Principal Investigator (PI) on a DoD award, not a co-PI, and that award must come directly from the DoD. If you were part of a subaward, i.e. the award was made to University X and they provided a sub-award to you at University Y, that does not fulfill the eligibility requirements for this funding announcement. We encourage you to work through the flow charts in the FOA.

Q: The Research Collaboration solicitation states the award must be research based. If an individual has received an *education* award from the DoD and not a *research* award, are they eligible to serve as a Collaborator?

A: You are correct that the previous DoD award must be a research award. We will handle questions like this on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to Dr. Jen Becker to discuss in more detail.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, can the Collaborator be from a DoD or other National lab, i.e. Air Force Research Laboratory?

A: No, both the Applicant and Collaborator must hold full-time appointments at institutes of higher education (IHEs). This excludes national laboratory scientists from eligibility to serve as Collaborators.

Q: Would establishment of a new academic program, such as a chemistry or biology PhD program, be a reasonable thrust for a Capacity Building proposal?

A: Please reach out to Dr. Jen Becker to discuss in more detail.

Q: Can you give some examples of successful Capacity Building proposals?

A: We have only issued two Capacity Building awards to date, so we don't have much data to draw from as far as what makes a successful award. Both of the awards for the FY21 cycle had multi-thrust efforts toward achieving excellence in a DoD-relevant area of basic research. These thrusts included acquisition of equipment and instrumentation, funding to bring in new faculty members in a specific area to augment existing seed capacity, and funding for curriculum development (new graduate and undergraduate courses) in the specific area of expertise that the proposal intended to develop. These are examples of successful past applications; these components not required to be considered.

Q: Is feedback provided for white papers that are not invited to submit a full proposal?

A: Yes, absolutely. If you receive notification that you were not selected to submit a full proposal, that notification will include instructions on how to request feedback through the RunGrants platform that was demonstrated during this webinar.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, can the Applicant have a DoD award in the pending status?

A: Yes. As an Applicant with no prior DoD awards as Principal Investigator, you can have a DoD award in the pending status. However, if that status changes from *pending* to *awarded* before final selections for FY23 DEPSCoR awards are announced, you would become ineligible and must withdraw your DEPSCoR Research Collaboration application. Award selection announcements for the FY23 DEPSCoR cycle are expected to occur in January 2024.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, can the Applicant and Collaborator be from different DEPSCoR-eligible states or institutions?

A: Yes, absolutely. The Applicant and Collaborator can be from the same IHE, different IHEs within the same state, or different IHEs in different states, so long as the state or territory in which the Applicant and Collaborator IHEs are located is DEPSCoR-eligible.

Q: Who writes the qualifying letter?

A: If this is in reference to the Research Collaboration opportunity, one of the requirements for eligibility is that the Applicant and Collaborator be in a tenured or tenure-track position. If the Applicant or Collaborator is not in a tenured or tenure-track position, they must include a qualifying letter indicating that the IHE will consider the Applicant or Collaborator for a tenured or tenure-track position. The qualifying letter should come from someone within the IHE

administration, such as a Department Chair, Vice President for Research, or whoever has the authority to consider a status change to a tenured or tenure-track position.

Q: Can researchers send a research menu to a DoD program officer even if they are unable to attend an in-person DEPSCoR Day event?

A: Yes, absolutely. We encourage researchers to reach out to any program officer, not only those listed in the DEPSCoR FOA, but from any tri-Service Broad Agency Announcement (BAA). Feel free to reach out to any of them at any time. You can start with a research menu or with a short introductory email that includes details about your research ideas and how they might align with the program officer's portfolio.

Q: Will we be provided with the list of program officers attending the May 18 DEPSCoR Day in Montana, and if so, when?

A: Yes, the DoD program officers that will be in attendance are listed on the draft agenda on the website: <https://www.montana.edu/research/ord/dep-scor-day.html>

Q: Can the Applicant for the Research Collaboration competition be a co-PI on a proposal being submitted this year (first ever DoD proposal with co-PI status)?

A: If you are planning to submit a different proposal to the DoD or have a proposal in pending status and you meet all other criteria, you are currently eligible as the Applicant. However, if the other proposal(s) are selected for award and you become a Principal Investigator on a DoD award, then you are no longer eligible to serve as the Applicant for this funding opportunity and must withdraw your application.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, if a Collaborator was formerly a DoD employee and served as a PI on a 6.2 research project and is now a faculty member at a DEPSCoR-eligible IHE, are they eligible to serve as a Collaborator or do they have to have received a DoD award as a tenure-track faculty member?

A: As long as we can verify that the Collaborator truly served as a Principal Investigator on the award, then they would be eligible, but we will need to look at the details. Please reach out to Dr. Jen Becker and we can look at specific circumstances.

Q: Do research awards from the NAVSEA office count for the purposes of Research Collaboration Collaborator eligibility?

A: Yes, NAVSEA is part of the DoD.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, what about MURI-funded faculty? Is only the PI of the MURI eligible to serve as a Collaborator or can the rest of the team serve as a Collaborator?

A: Only the MURI PI is eligible to serve as Collaborator, as that is the only member of the team that we can verify. If you served as a co-PI on a MURI, that is not on a direct award from the DoD, but rather a subaward from the PI's IHE.

Q: For the Research Collaboration opportunity, can DURIP award PIs serve as Collaborators?

A: Yes, even though it is an instrumentation award, DURIP is an instrumentation award for research purposes. If you have served as a DURIP PI and meet all other eligibility requirements, you are eligible to serve as Collaborator.

Q: Is RunGrants only for DEPSCoR or for all DoD proposals?

A: RunGrants is used for DEPSCoR and the Vannevar Bush Faculty Fellowship as a way to manage our white paper process. DEPSCoR has a required white paper stage, unlike some other DoD funding opportunities, and RunGrants helps us manage that stage. We encourage you to engage with DoD program officers and they will be able to guide you through how to submit a white paper, if a white paper is required for the opportunity you are pursuing.

Q: For the Capacity Building opportunity, who is eligible to serve as a PI aside from the Vice President for Research (VPR)?

A: Different IHEs are set up differently, so the individual may have a different title. The proposal must demonstrate that obtaining basic research excellence in the area being proposed is a strategic objective of the entire IHE. We understand that not all IHEs have a VPR. If you have specific questions, reach out to Dr. Jen Becker.