

## Questions regarding the Enhancement Program

1. Q: Can faculty members serve as PI or Co-PI on multiple submissions to the same competition or two competitions for different disciplines or programs?

A: There is no limit to the number of proposals an individual can serve as PI or Co-PI on. An individual can submit multiple proposals to the same competition, to different discipline-based competitions or to the Multidisciplinary competition for Traditional Enhancement, or to both Traditional and Undergraduate Enhancement if the submitting school qualifies. Teams of faculty members often submit multiple proposals to one competition with one faculty member serving as PI on one and Co-PI on the others. This method has been successful. Less often, a single individual submits multiple proposals, and while it is rare for both to be funded, this method has worked to secure at least one successful proposal. The obvious strategical consideration is that when an individual or a team of faculty submit multiple proposals to the same competition, you are competing against yourself and asking the panel to prioritize the projects for your department.
2. Q: Are multi-year warranties, software subscriptions or other time-dependent purchases allowable requests?

A: No. The portion of any subscriptions, warranties, and other time-dependent activities to be paid by grant funds cannot last beyond the contract's termination date. A longer warranty or subscription may be purchased provided the campus or another eligible funding source pays for the period beyond the contract term. The longest ENH contract term is two years.
3. Q: Does a proposal submitted to the Multidisciplinary Enhancement competition simply need to incorporate more than one discipline into a project?

A: Multidisciplinary Enhancement proposals must be "rooted" in one the five eligible disciplines, providing tangible, documented enhancements both to that department and at least one other, separate department. Legitimate, residual enhancement must occur for the partner discipline/department. That is, a partner cannot claim to enhance mathematics because math is performed in the project, or claim to enhance computer science because computers are used in the project. The partner departments must both derive tangible benefits from the project. Proposals also must be careful not to submit to Multidisciplinary because they enhance two disciplines that fall under a single BoRSF competition such as Humanities or Social Sciences.

4. Q: I intend to submit two proposals (both as PI): one to Undergraduate, one to Traditional. The two proposals are related to the same discipline but for different courses, training, and instruments. Many parts of the two proposals may be similar. Will they be regarded as the same or very similar proposals?

A: As long as both proposals are enhancements for different types of courses or trainings using different technologies, they will not be considered the same or similar. Every effort should be made to present unique text on sections of the projects that may be similar, avoid copying and pasting text even for mundane organizational aspects of the two projects. The reviewers make the final determination. List each proposal as pending on the both proposals' Current and Pending Support Form so that the UG and TR reviewers are aware that you are submitting two proposals.

5. Q: I have PIs who are writing an Enhancement proposal for equipment to upgrade and expand a lab. In addition to lab equipment they are requesting an outdoor storage facility. Is this is an allowable request or would the Board would consider this to be a "bricks and mortar" construction cost. It is my understanding that there are no construction costs associated with the building. It will simply be dropped off at the designated location on campus.

A: PIs may always ask for anything they feel is an enhancement, but you are correct that the RFP classifies construction costs as disallowed budgetary items. Reviewers will decide based on the information in the proposal whether a pre-fab structure is considered "construction." The PI should anticipate any questions related to construction by fully explaining why the pre-fab structure is essential to the success of the project and an allowable expense.

6. Q: Are matching funds required for proposals?

A: Matching funds are not required. However, an institutional or private match does demonstrate that the proposal does have backing by the department, institution, business community or the community at large. It also helps the BoRSF leverage the award to stretch our funds further. However, fewer institutions and departments are able to provide matching funds in recent years due to massive cuts, and the panels are aware of this.

7. Q: Exactly what does the Board consider as cost sharing/institutional match?

A: Cost sharing is defined as any type of support, financial or otherwise, that

is provided by an educational institution, department, unit, external organization, or business/industry. It may be monetary (e.g., salary support for release time or partially contributing to the cost of equipment), or in-kind, such as space or equipment donated by the institution specifically for this project, maintenance and/or installation provided by institutional staff, or software provided free of charge by the computer manufacturer.

8. Q: We seek to purchase some equipment and also to (possibly) outsource certain parts of the project. Do we need to identify in the proposal the specific vendor(s) we intend to contract for the equipment or services, or do we need to get estimates from 2-3 vendors and simply include in the proposal the amount of funding needed, then select the actual vendor after the grant is awarded?

A: You do not have to name the vendor in the proposal. You should include any quotes from several vendors in the Additional Documentation section and list the amount you expect to spend on equipment and services on the budget page and in the justification/budget narrative. You can specify a range of prices in the justification if different vendors have varying prices. It is also a good idea to check State contract prices. You can select a vendor at any point.

9. Q: The cover page on the Traditional Enhancement proposal states: "For Special multidisciplinary submissions only: identify additional disciplines addressed by the proposal. Is that for the root discipline only or do we include the taxonomy subcategories too?"

A: You will type all taxonomy number(s) for the root and any secondary discipline(s).

10. Q: Is release time an allowed budgetary request in Enhancement proposals?

A: Funds for salary release may be requested, but it is discouraged except in compelling and unusual circumstances. See additional explanation in section V.G., "Funds for Principal Investigators and Support Personnel" in the Enhancement Program RFP. Review panels understand that some projects do require a minimal amount of salary support, but with diminished available funds since 2008, panels are trying to get the most out of BoRSF dollars and salary requests are often not recommended for funding unless they are deemed absolutely necessary to the success of the project.

11. Q: Under what circumstances can university professors earn additional salary through the Enhancement Program? Can the project pay stipends to faculty for participation in workshops, seminars, weekend activities, etc.?

- A: Faculty members on academic-year appointments may be paid summer support through the Enhancement Program (2/9<sup>th</sup> of AY salary for nine-month employees, and 1/9<sup>th</sup> for ten-month employees). Faculty and staff on twelve-month appointments may not receive any summer salary. For all faculty participants, requests for any payments during the academic year, including salary support, stipends, and other supplemental pay, must be fully offset by release time from the institution. This is true even if the proposed activities are extracurricular, taking place at night or on weekends, and if other participants, like students, are receiving stipends for their participation. The release provided by the institution must equal or exceed the payments for faculty support requested from the Board of Regents. Under no circumstances may a faculty member at a Louisiana institution receive more than 100% of his/her salary through a Support Fund grant.
12. Q: May a faculty member who is a visiting professor apply as principal investigator of an Enhancement proposal?
- A: Yes, if he or she is employed by a higher education institution in the State. However, it would be a good idea to inform reviewers of his/her status, indicating whether he/she will be available to direct the entire project and plans to address a change in PI if/when it happens.
13. Q: May an institution with more than two Ph.D. programs partner with a Louisiana institution that would qualify under the Undergraduate Enhancement Program where the larger school would receive a sub-award, or at least be part of a multi-institutional proposal?
- A: The school with multiple Ph.D. programs would be ineligible to receive a sub-award under the Undergraduate Enhancement Program. However, both institutions (or perhaps more than two) may submit a multi-institutional proposal under the Traditional Enhancement program since they are both eligible to apply separately in that program.
14. Q: Can equipment (such as iPads) purchased with the grant be given to students (such as graduating pre-service teachers) or community institutions (such as K-12 schools) once the project is done?
- A: Equipment purchased with BoRSF or State funds may not be given away to an individual or to another institution. By State law ownership must be retained by the purchasing institution and the property disposed of as surplus after its useful life is over. It cannot be donated even to K-12 schools. Additionally, the BoRSF contract is between the institution and

the BoR, not the PI and the BoR. The equipment belongs to the institution both during the grant and after the grant expires.

15. Q: What items fall under the 15-page limit for the Traditional Enhancement Program? Does the page limit apply also to Previous BOR Support Fund Awards or Budget and Budget Narrative/Justification?
- A: The narrative section can include brief narrative information about previous Support Fund awards received by the PI/Co-PI within the last 6 years (two funding cycles) and a bibliography if that is appropriate. It does not include the Current and Pending Support Form, the budget form and budget narrative, the biosketch form for the PIs and Co-PIs, or any additional documentation such as letters of support, equipment specifications, etc.
16. Q: Our community college is working in collaboration with the LSU Ag Center for delivery of courses in northeast Louisiana. Our question has three subparts:
- Q.1. Do we include institutional information about the LSU Ag Center under *1.A, Current situation/institutional description*?
- A.1. Yes, as well as institutional information relating to the community college.
- Q.2. Do we include personnel information concerning LSU Ag Center personnel that would be involved in facilitating implementation of the grant under *2.D, Faculty and Staff expertise*?
- A.2. Yes.
- Q.3. How do we list the support provided by the LSU Ag Center for facilities, personnel, maintenance, etc.? Would this be included on the budget page?
- A.3. Yes, use the Other institutional match column. Also, be sure to include appropriate explanatory information in the budget narrative.
17. Q: My question is about cost sharing. I see that "discounts received" do not count as institutional match. We are planning to have the trade-in value of a current instrument credited to the total of the new instrument. I would think that since this is a trade-in, this value would count toward the institutional match, but I want to be sure that is the case.
- A: Trade-in value is similar to a discount and should not be included as match on the equipment. The campus could sell the old equipment and

give the PI cash toward the purchase as match, but that is not the same as getting a benefit from the vendor on a new purchase.

18. Q: My university has established a research center. We are considering submitting an Enhancement proposal that would include a request to fund a post-doctoral researcher to manage the computational math section of the center. Would a proposal of this type be likely to be funded?

A: It is impossible to know. Generally, the Enhancement Program does not provide funds for creation and continuation of staff positions because funding can only be provided for a very brief period. If you can demonstrate, however, that the requested position will enhance the center, that the impact of the project will be substantial, and that the university is committed to continuing and funding the position beyond the life of the award, your proposal might be considered favorably, with all other things being equal.

19. Q: May potential beneficiaries or end users of a projected system be listed as co-principal or other investigators on the cover page of a proposal?

A: No. Only active collaborators in a project should be listed as investigators on the cover page of a proposal. The principal investigator may wish to identify beneficiaries or end users of a projected system in the appropriate section of the narrative and/or include letters of support from projected beneficiaries or end users with his/her proposal.

20. Q: May I request Enhancement funds to build a greenhouse?

A: No. Funds for new construction or renovations to existing construction may not be requested from the Support Fund, but may be provided as institutional matching funds.

21. Q: Is a center or institute of a university eligible to submit an Enhancement proposal?

A: Yes, if the center or institute has already been approved by the Board of Regents through its regular Academic Affairs approval process and if the proposal is submitted in a discipline eligible for that year. As stated in the Enhancement RFP, funds may not be requested for anticipated centers or institutes which require Board approval prior to their establishment and which have not been approved by the Board of Regents prior to submission of the proposal.

22. Q: Is a Notice of Intent required for Enhancement proposals?

A: No.

23. Q: Is the number of Enhancement proposals which a department or unit may submit in a given year limited?
- A: No.
24. Q: Can a proposal requesting equipment primarily for a master's-level program, but also benefiting the undergraduate program, be submitted in the Undergraduate Enhancement program?
- A: Yes, as long as the submitting department/institution meets the eligibility requirements for participation in the Undergraduate Enhancement program, as specified in the RFP.
25. Q: Is the Undergraduate Enhancement Program open to all disciplines?
- A: No. The Undergraduate Enhancement Program is open only to those disciplines identified in the RFP as eligible for Enhancement funding in the current funding cycle.
26. Q: Must the academic orientation of a submitting principal investigator be within the disciplines eligible for the Enhancement competition the application is submitted to?
- A: Not necessarily. The primary factor determining a proposal's eligibility is not the academic orientation of the principal investigator, but whether the proposal will significantly enhance instruction and/or research in one or more of the disciplines identified as eligible for funding. However, it is wise to include a co-PI from the eligible discipline on the project team to help solidify the intention to enhance the study of or the department of the eligible discipline at that institution.
27. Q: May a non-faculty staff member serve as co-principal investigator on an Enhancement grant? The staff member will be the primary operator of the equipment being requested.
- A: Yes, as long as the co-PI is employed by an eligible institution of higher education in Louisiana.
28. Q: What is meant by a continuation of an Enhancement proposal? Can you give an example?
- A: In general, a continuation request is a proposal that asks for support for the same or a very similar project previously funded through the Support Fund. In the Enhancement Program a continuation proposal might be a request for funds to support a curricular revision project or a symposium that had been supported in a previous year. It should be noted that

because Support Fund money was never intended to supplant State funds, it may not be used as continued/ongoing support for a program or its activities. For this reason, the Board does not encourage the submission of continuation requests in the Enhancement Program.

29. Q: One of our principal investigators is planning to apply for funding under the Enhancement Program. If funded, the PI then plans to apply to the National Science Foundation's Undergraduate Education Program and use the state Enhancement award as cost-sharing? Is this permissible?
- A: Yes. A request to use Enhancement funds as matching funds for another award will be considered on its merits by the Board. The request to use a Support Fund grant as matching funds must be fully explained in the narrative.
30. Q: Will a request for second-year funding reduce an Enhancement proposal's chances for funding?
- A: No. A request for second-year funding is not prejudicial to the success of an Enhancement proposal. Applicants under the Enhancement program may request up to \$50,000 in second-year funding. However, note that external reviewers may recommend to the Board a reduction in or the elimination of a second-year funding request.
31. Q: I wish to submit an Enhancement proposal focusing on the development and redesign of an undergraduate curriculum. Is such a proposal eligible under Enhancement?
- A: Yes, if the category under which the proposal is submitted is an eligible category for that year, and to the extent that the proposal's objectives "enhance the infrastructure of academic, research, or agricultural departments or units and ... promote(s) economic development."
32. Q: Since my request is for funding equipment, I assume that a vendor quote for the equipment should be included. However, I do not see this included in the instructions. If vendor quotes need to be included in a section, where should I place them?
- A: It is not necessary to have vendor quotes, but they do help. You can also attach quotes from State purchasing if the equipment you want is under State contract. See also section V.E.2 of the RFP and Q&A no. 122.
33. Q: Are costs for travel to conferences and colloquia for faculty enrichment and development eligible for funding in Enhancement?

- A: Yes. According to the Enhancement RFP, any activity is eligible if the applicant argues convincingly that it will enhance the infrastructure of the particular academic unit involved. However, since available funds were so heavily hit by the international financial crisis, travel funds have been less frequently awarded. They are often one of the first items to be cut. Panels have focused more on tangible benefits that will enhance the department long after the end of the grant. So applicants should strongly consider how necessary the travel is, and provide strong details justifying it.
34. Q: Is it correct to use the “other” line item on the budget sheet for faculty salaries?
- A: Yes, but the “other” line item must be broken down into its component parts and clearly justified in the budget narrative.
35. Q: We plan to submit an Enhancement proposal that requests funds to purchase workstations for a multi-purpose laboratory. Since chairs and bookshelves will be essential to the completion and effective utilization of this lab, can funds necessary for the purchase of such items be included as part of the institutional match?
- A: Yes. Funds for the purchase of regular office equipment, including chairs and bookshelves, may not be requested from the Support Fund and normally are included as part of the institutional match. To the extent that ancillary items are integral to the requested workstations, however, funding for such items may be requested under the Enhancement program. Subject to final approval by the Board of Regents, external consultants are the judges of what does and does not constitute an acceptable budgetary request.
36. Q: I am trying to determine whether or not my Enhancement proposal is primarily a request for equipment. What criteria should I use?
- A: If the “Support Funds Requested” column on the budget page(s) of your proposal calls for 50% or more of expenditures in the categories of “equipment, supplies, software,” your proposal should be considered primarily an equipment request. Sponsored Programs staff may reclassify a proposal to ensure that it is properly designated as a primarily equipment or primarily non-equipment request.
37. Q: How much information do you require on proposals involving purchase of a piece of equipment?
- A. The proposal should contain as much specific information about the item as possible, including the brand name, price, specifications, etc. It is also wise to include a justification of why the particular equipment was chosen

over other models, why it is preferable to a less expensive or used item, and why any accessories are necessary to the proposed project. Anticipating these questions from the review panel will help them understand your thought process, the goals of your proposal and what considerations should be made if budget reductions are recommended by the panel.

38. Q: Is a department that has received an Enhancement grant for equipment purchases in the past allowed to submit a proposal requesting upgrades or replacements for the previously purchased equipment?

A: Yes.

39. Q: Is an “equipment” proposal more likely to be funded than a “non-equipment” proposal?

A: The quality of the proposal always determines its likelihood of being funded. However, since 2008 available funds have been dramatically impacted, and certain types of non-equipment proposals have been funded less frequently, such as those involving extensive travel, speaker series or developmental grants that are mostly salary. So applicants should be wary when considering non-equipment projects that the argument for impact and need must be well articulated and detailed.

40. Q: I plan to buy a piece of equipment to be used by myself and a faculty member at another university. Will it strengthen the proposal to include the other faculty member as a co-PI?

A: Provided the proposal fully explains the partnership, the equipment’s impact on both institutions, and the number of faculty and students who will benefit from the project, it does not matter how faculty from other institutions are listed. If you plan, however, to submit a multi-institutional proposal and/or secure matching funds from a second institution, it is in your best interest to list a faculty member from that institution as a co-PI.

41. Q: If multiple institutions are submitting a proposal together should both schools be detailed in the institutional description section, or just the major partner?

A: You should describe both institutions and how you plan to work together. The RFP says to fully explain “the nature of the relationship.”

42. Q: The RFP states “For multi-institutional proposals, documentation must be provided describing the exact nature of the agreement between/among the institutions involved.” Does this mean an agreement letter must be signed between the lead institution and its partner(s)?

A: Neither institution is required to enter into a formal agreement at this point, though it may be necessary if the proposal is funded. The proposal should include as documentation a letter from each partner institution explaining the nature of the agreement as each understands it.

43. Q: Is an agreement letter signed by the heads of participating academic programs sufficient or does the agreement letter need to be signed by higher-level administrators such as deans or even presidents?

A: Any documentation of the proposed partnership should be provided (with electronic signature, if possible) by the offices with authority to commit the institutions to the agreement(s) outlined in the proposal. The lead institution and/or the applicant should determine whether that agreement needs to come from the dean, provost, and/or president/chancellor level.