

PROPOSAL CONTENT/CONCEPTS

- **Can you clarify the difference between focusing on learning versus focusing on teaching?**
The RFP states “proposed technological innovations should focus primarily on the experiences of learners; innovations that simply focus on making teaching easier will not be funded.” If your proposal is about technology that is focused on improving the efficiency of teachers’ lives but students are unaware or not impacted by it, then it is not in fact about learning but about administrative/institutional infrastructure. That is not in the scope of the Cyberlearning program. If the proposal is focused on teachers as learners that would be in scope and the proposal should then also focus on the relationship to changes in the classroom and the effects on the students since those are important goals for teacher learning.
- **Does NSF consider proposals in the domain of machine-based cyber-learning as well as human-based cyber-learning?** Generally no. If the proposal is not contributing to the literature on how people learn, then it is likely not a fit for the Cyberlearning program. You must be focused on a pressing societal need with respect to human learning. If, in order to address that need, you need to develop new, machine-learning models - that would be appropriate as a technology innovation under the Cyberlearning program.
- **Can you elaborate more on this point in the solicitation (from one of the three technological advances) "...draw in and encourage learning among populations not served well by current educational practices."** Proposals to Cyberlearning should be focused on innovative technologies and/or applications of technology. One important element of this could be reaching new audiences or audiences that are not well served, for example, populations that are underrepresented in particular disciplines, populations with distinctive learning practices, etc. It is important that the proposal be addressing a pressing societal need. In terms of proposals that target disabled populations, reviewers tend to prefer that the proposed technology applications also have broader reach and benefit to other populations. As you review the solicitation, be aware of areas where the solicitation asks that proposals fit a certain set of criteria versus instances where the solicitation provides examples. The examples are not meant to be limiting, they are meant to provide inspiration.
- **Are EXPs only for new technologies or also for innovative uses of existing technology?** Both. Typically, with an EXP, either the technology is new or the learning environment based on the technology is new. E.g., in the example that we shared about peer grading, an existing set of tools is being used but is being applied in a very different way with some additional development in order to use them for a different purpose than they were originally developed for. The Cyberlearning program does not typically fund routine/commonplace applications of off-the-shelf technology.
- **How can we address the lack of a national fiber optics network in the US, without which we cannot fully realize the capabilities of the internet?** The Cyberlearning program is not about creating applications that can be used today. The program is about the technology of the future and you can/should assume, in the content of your proposals, that large-scale broadband will be available someday. Therefore a proposal that addresses what could be possible with large-scale broadband that is not currently possible, would be appropriate for this program. Also, the US IGNITE organization is currently working with several cities around the country that have high

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capacity broadband, fiber optic networks – and where you could situate your work. Contact an NSF program officer to discuss this in more detail. <http://us-ignite.org/>.

- **How are "learners" defined? Do they need to be part of an academic institution or formal educational program? Or could the public/a specific population be considered learners (e.g. pregnant women)?** All learners/populations/settings are in scope. However, if the proposal is primarily about developing clinical applications for medical contexts, the proposal may be more appropriate for the NIH. You must be proposing a new genre of technology and not just the development or application of technology for a particular population and context. For example, if your proposal is focused on helping people with a particular medical condition learn how to live healthy lives with that condition and if what you learn can also be applied to help people with other medical conditions learn to live healthy lives with those conditions – then it is appropriate for the Cyberlearning program. That is, what you are proposing must contribute to the larger body of research on how people learn and on designing technology for learners.
- **What is the role of 'scale' and broader impacts in a proposal?** A proposal can address scale-up issues focused on bringing technology and opportunities to greater numbers of people, but it **MUST** be focused on the learning of those people and not just access. Also, if you are looking at an existing technological innovation that is a radically scaled, or a new genre of technology and have questions about collective learning at large-scale – that would also be in the scope of the program. Cyberlearning is not appropriate if you are looking to do a large scale, randomized, clinical trial at-scale of a well understood innovation (as discussed in the Common Guidelines). This program is about innovations in Cyberlearning and future learning technologies, not large-scale, efficacy research.
- **Can you clarify the statement: "aim beyond state of the art in terms of *using* technology for education, not necessarily state of the art of the tech itself"?** If what you are proposing could be done right now by a company making or developing a product, then it is currently 'state of the art' available technology, and not appropriate for this program. Beyond 'state of the art' includes trying to answer difficult questions that need to be answered about how to use technology to foster or assess learning and how to develop technologies to do so. It involves envisioning how learning and how classrooms might be in the future and aiming the technology towards those goals.

BUDGET

- **Can part of the funds go toward developing the technology?** Yes this is encouraged and expected. That said, remember that you should be developing a minimally viable technology and not a commercially viable one.
- **Does the total budget caps listed in the solicitation include indirect costs?** Yes.

SUBMISSION/PROCESS

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- **Can an institution submit multiple proposals if there are different PIs?** Yes.
- **How early does IRB approval need to be obtained - prior to submission or prior to receipt of funds?** NSF must have your IRB approval in hand in order to make an award. Negotiations and recommendations will be happening in June and July; we cannot send a recommendation forward for award without your IRB approval.
- **What percentage of proposals is funded in each cycle? What percentage of funded proposals is new versus resubmitted proposals?** Between 9% – 12% of proposals have been funded in each cycle. Of those, approximately one quarter to one third may be resubmissions. That is, if at first you don't succeed, you should consider revising and resubmitting your proposal in the next round.
- **Can institutions outside the United States apply to this program?** Lead institutions funded by NSF must be US-based institutions in the 50 states, District of Columbia, or U.S. territories and associated states. For more information, please see the NSF Grant Proposal Guide at http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf14001/gpg_index.jsp
- **Is it required to have an external evaluator for a DIP?** No. The Advisory board does need to have some sort of evaluative function within the context of your project, and this is discussed in the solicitation. As such, we do require that your project solicits critical feedback from your advisory board on an on-going basis.
- **Can you please clarify the submission date for DIPs? The solicitation says March 24th but the presentation slide said March 26th.** The solicitation is always right. The correct due date is March 24th.
- **Are proposals, such as EXPs, due in March and December this year (2014)?** Yes.
- **Given this year's submission deadline of March, is it still realistic to set the beginning date of a proposed project for September 1, 2014?** We are on a compressed timeline for Cyberlearning but we plan to make funding recommendations in the summer, followed by a budgets/contracts process. We are holding panels in May, and expect to be in touch with PIs whom we expect to fund in June and July. That would also be the time to have your IRB processing complete. Everything we decide to fund from this competition will be funded by the end of September. If we contact you to negotiate funding, and you must need to have the funding within a certain timeframe, let us know that at that time so we can try to get the funding to you earlier, but no promises. NSF does allow pre-award spending, but the feasibility of that is something you would have to explore within your own organization.
- **Can screenshots be sketches or drawn mock-ups?** Yes.
- **Can you provide examples of screenshots?** No.
- **Can screen shots be included in the main body of the proposal?** Yes but they take up space, which is why we allow you to include them separately.

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- **How does one determine whether to submit a Cyberlearning EXP vs. an EAGER, CAP, RAPID, etc?** You should speak with a program officer to help make this determination.
- **Is Cyberlearning an appropriate program area for CAREER proposals?** Yes.
- **Can a PI submit both an EXP as well as one or more CAPs at the same time?** If they are really distinct proposals, then yes, submit them accordingly, but you should talk to a program officer about any CAPs you are thinking about submitting.
- **What should we do if we have very specific questions about proposal?** You should draft a one page summary and send it to us, and then schedule a time to talk over the phone. We cannot write your proposal nor can we tell you what will be funded, but we can give you advice about the solicitation and tell you what has been funded in the past. We can also recommend resources, such as the CIRCL center itself, to assist you. <http://circlcenter.org/>
- **Do you need to include a post-doc mentoring plan if the post-doc is listed as co-PI on the proposal?** No.
- **How does one volunteer to become a reviewer?** Send an email to a program officer with your CV.
- **Should we conduct an evaluation of our work?** Yes, see previous question about how to use the advisory board.

ADVISORY BOARD

- **Should we pay advisors?** NSF cannot provide guidance on how much to pay advisors.