



## Request for Proposals

Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement

### Updated

March 21, 2017

This update replaces the RFP released on Jan 11, 2017

### Letter of intent

Requested by **March 31, 2017**

Due to the amendment of this RFP, CGS has extended the due date for letters of intent. We request that you submit your letter no later than March 31. If your institution already submitted a letter, there is no need to resubmit.

Single pdf to [kstone@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:kstone@cgs.nche.edu)

### Proposal due

**May 1, 2017, 8:00 p.m. Eastern**

Single pdf to [kstone@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:kstone@cgs.nche.edu)

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Attachment A: [Implementation Guide for PhD Career Pathways Surveys](#) .....A1

Attachment B: [CGS Career Pathways Alumni Survey](#).....B1

Attachment C: [CGS Career Pathways Student Survey](#).....C1

Attachment D: [Field Taxonomy](#) .....D1

Attachment E: [Proposal Cover Form](#).....E1

## I. Background

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) invites U.S.-based member institutions to apply to participate in *Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement*. This multi-university project seeks to increase the capacity of U.S. graduate institutions to collect data on PhD career pathways and to use resulting datasets to improve doctoral programs. The project is designed to:

- Implement the survey instruments and implementation guidelines developed in Phase I of the *Understanding PhD Career Pathways* project;
- Identify promising practices for the sustainable integration of a major PhD career pathways data collection effort into existing university processes;
- Help graduate schools collect and use preliminary data regarding PhD career pathways to improve programs; and
- Stimulate broad-scale adoption of the CGS PhD Career Pathways surveys.

CGS is providing three options for proposals and awards:

**Option 1 Humanities only** provides awards of \$30,000 each to support implementation of surveys of humanities PhD students and alumni over a period of twenty-four months. Supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (#31600612); 15 awards available. Please indicate in your proposal why a humanities-only project aligns with your institutional mission.

**Option 2 STEM only** provides awards of \$50,000 to each to support implementation of surveys of STEM PhD students and alumni over a period of thirty-six months. Supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF #1661272); 15 awards available. Please indicate in your proposal why a STEM-only project aligns with your institutional mission.

**Option 3 Combined proposal.** If an institution meets the eligibility requirements for both the Humanities and STEM awards, CGS strongly encourages the submission of a combined proposal. Institutions selected to participate in this category will receive a total award amount of \$80,000.

Please note that combined proposals will be the most competitive.

## II. Role of Project Partners

Each university selected for an award will be a project partner, and will commit to conducting the following activities on their campuses. With the support of CGS and a network of partner institutions, each university will:

- Develop a plan for implementing two survey instruments developed by CGS. This plan should be based on the CGS Implementation Guide for PhD Career Pathways Surveys (Attachment A).
  - The CGS Career Pathways PhD Alumni Survey (Attachment B) must be administered in

Fall 2017 and 2018 (humanities, STEM, and combined), as well as Fall 2019 (Combined and STEM-only).

- The CGS Career Pathways PhD Student Survey (Attachment C) must be administered in Spring 2018 and Spring 2019 (humanities, STEM, and combined), as well as Spring 2020 (combined and STEM-only).
- Perform analyses of resulting data from the surveys to inform the improvement of doctoral programs.
- Submit deidentified data to CGS for aggregate analysis.
- Participate in related research activities conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools to gain information about challenges and lessons learned in the process of implementing the surveys.

### III. Eligibility

To qualify for consideration, institutions submitting proposals must:

- Be U.S.-based, [Regular Members](#) of CGS in good standing. Consortia of member institutions may also choose to collaborate on a single proposal.
- Have awarded PhDs since AY 2001-2002, currently award PhDs, and commit to collecting data on PhD student and alumni in at least three programs per award (i.e., a **combined** proposal must meet all eligibility criteria for at least 8 programs).
  - For the **humanities** grant, your institution must commit to collecting data in **three** (3) of the following humanities fields:
    - English Language and Literature
    - History
    - Foreign Languages and Literatures
    - Arts (History, Theory and Criticism)
    - Philosophy
  - For the **STEM** grant, you must commit to collecting data in five (5) STEM programs, with at least one program in **each** of the following broad STEM fields:
    - Engineering
    - Physical Sciences
    - Mathematical and Computer Sciences

Programs in other STEM fields can be included among the remaining 2 programs, including doctoral programs in the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences.

See Attachment D, Field Taxonomy, for more information.

The director of a project must be the graduate dean (or primary institutional official responsible for graduate education). Institutions may designate a co-director(s) and other key personnel to

implement the project. These individuals do not need to be staff members or affiliates of the graduate school; proposers are encouraged to include individuals from across campus in their project teams.

Members of a consortium may select one primary director to coordinate activities across the consortium, or appoint co-directors.

## IV. Selection Criteria and Process

The following selection criteria will be used in evaluating proposals. More detailed guidance on aspects of these criteria can be found in Section VI, *Proposal Preparation*.

To be competitive, a proposal must:

1. Provide evidence that the institution has a record of success in implementing reforms in graduate education. Successful proposals will include examples from past efforts supported by internal or external seed funding that have transformed into on-going and sustainable initiatives.
2. Outline a clear, organized and realistic plan to implement the required data collection effort on campus. Successful proposals will incorporate elements discussed in the CGS Implementation Guide for PhD Career Pathways Surveys (Attachment A), as well as innovative ways to efficiently locate PhD alumni and ensure high response rates to both surveys.

*Note: Combined proposals will be the most competitive because they support broader institutionalization of the surveys by collecting data in humanities and STEM fields.*

3. Outline a clear plan to conduct timely analysis of resulting datasets. Successful proposals will include clear descriptions of how data will be aggregated and analyzed, and indicate what types of resulting data products will be developed from the datasets.
4. Describe a thoughtful strategy for communicating resulting analyses to stakeholders on campus. Successful proposals will identify who intended audiences of resulting analyses and data products are, as well as how project teams plan to communicate with them.
5. Describe a thoughtful strategy for using data for program improvement. Successful proposals will clearly describe how data analyses and resulting data products align with and inform program improvement goals.
6. Offer a clear sustainability plan to ensure data collection and analyses continue beyond the funding period. This plan should incorporate at least some of the recommendations for sustainability outlined in the Implementation Guide (Attachment A).
7. Demonstrate the capacity of the project team to successfully implement all required and proposed activities. Successful proposals will include brief background information about key project personnel and their intended contributions to this project.

8. Provide evidence of strong institutional support beyond the graduate school.
9. Provide a high-quality data management plan that will ensure data integrity and protection of human subjects.
10. Provide a reasonable budget. Institutions submitting a **combined** proposal must submit separate budgets for the humanities (\$30,000) and STEM (\$50,000) award amounts.

### *Selection Process*

In May-June 2017, a selection committee will review proposals, and make funding recommendations based on the above criteria. The committee may recommend funding pending revisions to the proposed activities and/or budget. Final funding decisions will be announced in June 2017. **Please note that awards will be contingent upon IRB approval.**

## V. Required Activities

### 1. CGS Research Activities

As a part of the overall project, CGS will address a number of research questions, including:

- What are the processes that best support sustainable implementation?
- To what extent do these instruments catalyze university action?
- How do the surveys and their data get diffused across a university?
- How do graduate deans and doctoral programs use data from the surveys to inform decision-making and program improvement?
- Are there patterns of difference among subgroups of survey respondents?

Project partners are study participants in these research activities, and as a condition of this funding support, are expected to:

- **Submit to CGS de-identified, individual-level data** derived from the data gathered via the required data collection efforts at your institution.
- **Share information about the implementation processes** of their proposed activities with the CGS research team through webinar meetings, a private listserv/discussion board, in-person/telephone interviews, and questionnaires.\*

### 2. Grant Administration Activities

In addition to the core project activities outlined in Sections II and V, all sub-awardees must commit to the following:

- **Submit annual reports** to CGS.
- **Attend biannual in-person meetings** for project directors (PDs). These will be held in

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\* STEM-only awardees will not be required to commit to the indicated activities, but are encouraged to participate.

conjunction with the CGS Summer Workshop and New Deans Institute (every July) and the CGS Annual Meeting (every December).

- **Participate in biannual webinar meetings** for all active project staff to share challenges, information and lessons learned.\*
- Participate in a **private listserv/discussion board** for members to share questions, promising practices, and challenges.\*
- Provide ongoing care and **protection of human subjects**. Institutions are responsible for taking necessary steps to assure the protection of human subjects and obtaining and maintaining an IRB approval to conduct data collection efforts, as well as subsequent uses of resulting datasets in relation to this project.

## VI. Payment of Subawards

Grants will be paid according to the following schedule. Please note that IRB approval for your data collection effort is required at the time of the initial award installment.

### *Payment schedule*

**Humanities** only: \$15,000 within the first month of selection to participate; \$10,000 after receipt of the 2017 annual report, and the final \$5,000 after receipt of the final report in 2019.

**STEM** only: TBD pending guidance from NSF.

**Combined**: TBD pending guidance from NSF.

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\* STEM-only awardees will not be required to commit to the indicated activities, but are encouraged to participate.

## VII. Timeline

The following timeline provides a broad overview of the schedule of activities for CGS and project partners. Please refer to the Implementation Guide (Attachment A) for a more detailed schedule for submitting data to CGS.

Date	CGS Administration	Survey Implementation	Grant Administration Activities
2017	Letters of Intent requested <b>March 31</b> Proposals due <b>May 1</b> Selections made (June) Funding period begins July 1	Wave 1 Alumni survey (Fall/winter)	Biannual webinar meetings for project team* Project Director (PD) meeting at CGS Summer Workshop (Jul) PD meeting at CGS Annual Meeting (Dec) Preliminary sustainability plan due (Dec)*
2018		Wave 1 student survey (Spring) Wave 2 alumni survey (Fall/Winter)	Biannual webinar meetings for project team* Annual report due (June) Revised sustainability plan due (June)* PD meeting at CGS Summer Workshop (Jul) PD meeting at CGS Annual Meeting (Dec)
2019	Humanities: funding period ends June 30	Wave 2 student survey (Spring) STEM and Combined: Wave 3 alumni survey (Fall/Winter)	Webinar meeting for project team* Final sustainability plan due (Jun)* Humanities: Final report due (June) Combined: Interim humanities report due (June) STEM and Combined: PD meeting at CGS Summer Workshop (July)
2020	STEM and Combined: funding period ends June 30	STEM and Combined: Wave 3 student survey (Spring)	STEM and Combined: Final report due (June)

\* STEM-only awardees will not be required to commit to the indicated activities, but are encouraged to participate.



## VIII. Proposal Preparation

### Letter of Intent

A letter of intent, no more than one page in length, should be emailed in pdf format to [kstone@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:kstone@cgs.nche.edu). The letter should briefly indicate that your institution intends to submit a proposal to participate, and be signed by the graduate dean or equivalent. Please address letters to the CGS Selection Committee. The purpose of the letter is to ensure a sufficiently large and diverse body of proposals to participate; it will **not** be evaluated as part of the full proposal package.

*Note:* Due to the amendment of this RFP, CGS will continue accepting letters of intent past the original due date. Letters are requested no later than March 31.

### Full Proposals

Proposals should include the following information, in the exact order listed below. All sections of full proposals should be in 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. **The entire proposal (parts A, B and C) should be submitted as a single pdf document.**

- A. **A cover form.** (Use Attachment E, Proposal Cover Form.)
- B. **Proposal narrative** (maximum 10 pages total) including the following five sections:
  1. A brief description of your institution or consortium
  2. Outcomes of prior reform efforts in graduate education
  3. Proposed activities, addressing:
    - a. Plan for implementing CGS Career Pathways surveys
    - b. Plan for analyzing resulting datasets
    - c. Strategy for communicating resulting analyses to stakeholders on your campus
    - d. Strategy for using data for program improvement
    - e. Strategy for sustainability (continuing data collection beyond the funding period(s))
  4. Project personnel and their roles
  5. Data Management Plan. This should include a statement of protection of human subjects, analyzing resulting survey data, and using findings for program improvement. The plan should outline: i) where and in what format original survey responses will be stored and for how long; ii) who will have access to student-level data; iii) what the process of granting access to student-level data will be; iv) how analysis results will be shared and disseminated without compromising privacy and confidentiality of survey respondents; and v) your plan for submitting data to CGS. In addition, this section should include a plan to secure and maintain appropriate IRB approvals for the duration of this project.
- C. **Supplementary materials** (do not count towards 10-page limit):
  1. *Budget.* Please refer to the guidance below when preparing your budget(s).
    - a. Humanities award (\$30,000 total)
      - i. Must NOT charge indirect cost recovery.
      - ii. Cost sharing is allowed for this portion of award.

- b. STEM award (\$50,000 total)
    - i. MUST include indirect costs calculated at institution's federally-negotiated indirect cost rate.
    - ii. Allowable costs must adhere to NSF [guidelines](#) and policies.
    - iii. Cost sharing is NOT allowed for this award.
  - c. Combined awards
    - i. Must submit separate budgets for the humanities and STEM award amounts. These separate budgets must follow the guidance above.
2. *Budget justification* (1 page each).
    - a. Please submit a one-page budget justification for each budget submitted.
  3. *Letter of support* from university president or provost that is sufficiently specific to demonstrate institutional support, even in the event of leadership change. A letter of support is required from a president or provost at each participating university in a consortium, OR from the president or provost of a system office if the proposal is put forward by a system.

**Proposals should be submitted as single pdf attachments to K. Stone at [kstone@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:kstone@cgs.nche.edu).**

Please note that materials faxed or sent by regular mail will not be accepted.