Scaling a Systems Approach to Inclusive Graduate Research Environments
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Request for Proposals

I. ELIGIBILITY

Our institution awards a PhD in two of the three required fields. Is our institution eligible to apply?

Yes, an institution is eligible to apply if the institution can commit to collecting data from students and faculty from a minimum of five STEM doctoral programs that award a PhD.

- Data collection must be from at least two of three required STEM fields: Chemistry, Computer, Electrical, and Electronics Engineering, and Computer and Information Sciences
- Data collection must also be from a minimum of three other priority STEM fields – see RFP Attachment B for a list of the other priority STEM fields

My institution has computer science as a PhD program, but not computer and information science, is this still eligible as a program?

Yes, please see RFP Attachment B (Taxonomy of Fields of Study).

Is there a ratio of students to faculty that should be used for the minimum enrollment size? Or a percentage of students to meet the minimum threshold?

No, the Proposal Cover Form requests applicants to specify the number of PhD students currently enrolled in at least five STEM fields of study (two of three required fields and at least three other priority fields).

Is there a minimum or maximum number of key personnel you want/would like to see on these projects?

No, applicants should identify key personnel and other personnel that they feel are needed to successfully execute the study's required activities.

II. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

The Proposal Cover Form requests an Institutional Review Board case number. Is a case number required in the proposal submission?

A case number is not required in the proposal submission.

Our institution's IRB requires us to submit the data collection instruments as part of our submission package. When will draft data collection instruments be available?

The CGS project team aims to have draft data collection instruments (surveys and focus group questions) available in mid-June.

When you say you want to see University support, can you clarify what that means?

"Institutional support" does not refer to financial support. Rather, it refers to an institution's commitment to creating the conditions that will allow the project to succeed. Institutional support is demonstrated by a letter of support from the university president or provost indicating that they are aware of the project, support its goals, and are confident that the project will be able to continue even in the case of leadership changes.

What is the specific format for the budget or budget narrative?

There is not a specific format for the budget and budget narrative. We have provided a sample budget template located on the CGS Supporting Inclusive Research Environments webpage that is optional for applicants to use with modifications as needed.

There is not a specific format for the budget justification. The budget justification should justify the amounts requested for each budget line item, explaining how the expense is necessary to the execution of the project.

What percent to use for indirect costs?

At this time, we are recommending that applicants use their federal negotiated indirect cost rate when they submit their proposal. If required by the National Science Foundation, the indirect cost rate and budget may be updated in coordination with CGS.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

The RFP states that the first round of the survey is planned for Fall 2025. Is this the standard timing, or is there flexibility to administer it in a later semester?

There is flexibility to administer the surveys. The student and faculty surveys can be administered in the Fall 2025 or Spring 2026 term.

Do you have an estimate for the amount of time a student, faculty member, program director would need to complete these surveys, inventories, etc.?

We are aiming for the student and faculty survey to take no more than 15-20 minutes and for the program inventory to take about 30 minutes.

After the survey and focus group data are shared with CGS, what analyses will UC Berkeley conduct using our data? Additionally, who will have access to the results of this research?

During the study period, the CGS Research Environments project team will have access to the survey, program inventory, and focus group data. Each school will also have access to their own data for analysis. In line with NSF requirements, approximately two years after the completed study, the combined, anonymized dataset will be available to the broader community of researchers.

Our institution has an established governance structure for campuswide surveys, and the current guidance is to survey a random sample of the population rather than the entire population. Additionally, we have a large number of STEM graduate students and faculty. Would this sampling strategy be acceptable for this proposal? If so, do you have a recommended percentage or sample size of the student and faculty populations we should target to ensure meaningful and representative results?

You may want to inform the governance structure that this study is not a campus wide population survey of all graduate students enrolled in STEM programs. It is a selected set of degree programs within which you would survey the whole population of students within each of the selected degree programs. Please contact us at researchenvironments@cgs.nche.edu if you have additional questions.

Are the data collection approaches standardized? Will they be provided by the CGS teams?

Yes, the data collection approaches are standardized and will be provided by the CGS project team.

If you have additional questions about the RFP, please contact the CGS Research Environments Project Team at researchenvironments@cgs.nche.edu.