



# ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

## GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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This document lays out the content and formatting requirements when writing a grant proposal to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for

**Research projects where the total funds requested from the Sloan Foundation exceed \$125,000**

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A *research project* is any project the output of which could be appropriately published in a academic or scholarly journal.

If your project is not a research project or the funds requested from the Sloan Foundation do not exceed \$125,000, this is not the correct set of guidelines for your grant proposal. Please visit our [Grant Proposals](#) page to download the correct guidelines.

If your grant has *both* a research and a non-research component (for instance, you seek funds both to conduct research and to build a website to

help disseminate this research to the public) and the total funds requested exceed \$125,000, use these grant application guidelines.

Please read our [Tips for Writing a Successful Grant Proposal](#) for useful advice on what makes for a successful grant proposal to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.



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## Elements of a Grant Proposal

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All grant proposals to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation must contain the following elements. Unless indicated otherwise in these guidelines, proposals that fail to contain any of these elements are not complete and will not be considered for funding until such time as all elements have been submitted.

1. Proposal Cover Sheet
2. Proposal
3. Budget
4. Curriculum Vita(e)
5. Appendices (optional)
6. Proposal Administration Form

Elements should appear in a single document in the order indicated above. (Proposal cover sheet first, then proposal, then the budget, etc.) Specific content and formatting requirements for each element are detailed below.



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## Proposal Cover Sheet

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All grant proposals must be accompanied by a completed Proposal Cover Sheet Form. [Visit the Forms section](#) of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation website to download a Proposal Cover Sheet Form.



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## Proposal

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### Format

The proposal must

Be double spaced

Be in 12 pt. font

Have 1" margins

Have page numbers

Not exceed 20 pages

## Content

The grant proposal must be divided into sections that answer the following questions.

1. **What is the research question and why is it important?** The proposal should start with a discussion of the research question(s) that the proposer expects to address. It should go on to discuss why these questions are important (e.g. fill gaps in the literature/knowledge/data, etc.) and how they are related to the particular Foundation program that would provide the grant support.
2. **What is the state of the research on this question?** The proposal should contain a summary of the existing literature on the research question(s) being addressed. This summary should include citations and references to the most important papers in the literature. Gaps in the literature should be identified. This literature review should refer to key papers written both by the proposer(s) and by other scholars in the field. An associated list of references should be included as an appendix.
3. **Why is the proposer qualified to address the research question for which funds are being sought?** The proposer's education, teaching, previous research accomplishments, etc., related to the proposed research should be discussed briefly.
4. **What is the research methodology?** The proposal should contain a discussion (understandable to a non-expert) of the theoretical framework, data sources, sampling methods, and empirical analysis methodologies that will be used to answer the research questions (as appropriate for the nature of the research). To the extent statistical analysis is part of the research project, the proposal should specify the empirical models that will be deployed, the statistical methods that will be used (e.g. ordinary least squares, instrument variables, probit, multinomial logit, factor analysis, etc.), and why these methods are appropriate for estimating the relevant parameters of interest. Issues of sample selection, endogeneity, treatment of dichotomous variables, error structure assumptions, etc., should be included in this discussion. Additional technical detail (at the "expert" level) may be attached as an appendix, if desired.
5. **What will be the output from the research project?** The proposal should include a discussion of anticipated papers, conferences, briefings, training of Ph.D. students and post-docs, etc., that the research is expected to yield.
6. **What is the justification for the amount of money requested?** The proposer should justify the budget request and why it is consistent with the research and associated output that the

funds will support. This should be a general discussion, with additional detail provided in the proposal budgets (See “Budget”, page 3.)

7. **What other sources of research support does the proposer have in hand or applied for to support the research team?** If funds are being provided or requested from other sources, the proposal should list those sources, amounts and the current status of funding from each. This narrative information can be integrated into the previous question, with detail provided in the budget.

**When an existing or previous grantee seeks funds for a project in the same or related area to that currently or previously supported by a Foundation grant, an additional section should be included in the proposal answering the following question:**

8. **What is the status and output of current and/or previous Sloan grants?** The proposal should include a discussion of the work that has been produced (or is in process) in connection with previous Foundation grants. This discussion should include a list of publications (working papers, articles published in journals, books, PhD dissertations, etc.) and other products (e.g. conferences, presentations, films, training, etc.) designated as output or outcome metrics from current and/or previous grants.



## Budget

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### Format

- The budget should be presented in tabular form, but the Foundation does not require a particular format.
- Universities, which comprise the majority of Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grantees, may have formats that they require their researchers to use. Such formats will generally meet the needs and requirements of the Foundation.
- Individuals and organizations without required budget formats, or those less experienced than universities in preparing budgets, may want to use or adapt the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation sample budget format. [Visit the Forms section](#) of the Foundation’s website to download the sample budget.

## Content

- **Overhead costs may not exceed 15% of direct project costs.**
- If there is a “pass-through” or subcontract there must not be double overhead. (The institution should not charge 15% on money subcontracted to another institution.) A recommended division of overhead where a subcontract is involved is 3% for the contracting institution and 12% for the institution that makes the final expenditure.
- If the total cost of the project is larger than the amount requested from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, an overall financial plan for the whole effort must be included, including the identification of matching financial contributions (either secured or anticipated). When possible, letters of support from other funders should be included indicating their willingness to provide funds and the amount of support to be provided.
- Detail needed to supplement the narrative budget justification in the body of the proposal should also be included in this section.



## Curriculum Vita(e)

- Proposers should provide CVs or bios of key project staff that will implement and supervise activities.
- CVs should include education, employment history, a list of the proposer’s most important previous publications, the journals in which they appeared, book reviews, and important honors (NAS, AAAS, best paper awards, etc.) and other awards.
- Full CVs are not requested; 1-3 pages per person is generally sufficient.



## Appendices

Supplementary material to the grant proposal may be included in one or more appendices. The following information should be included as an appendix, if applicable.

- Bibliography of papers, articles, books, texts, or other sources cited in the proposal.

- End notes
- Letters of Support if the success of the project depends on the support of key figures other than the principal investigator and project staff.
- Other supplementary material the proposer feels appropriate.

The total length of all appendices taken together should not exceed 30 pages.



## Proposal Administration Form (Separate Document)

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In order to process a successful grant proposal, the Foundation needs to collect certain administrative information about your institution. [Visit the Forms page](#) in the Apply for Grants section of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation website to download the Proposal Administration Form.

To ensure prompt payment upon a successful grant application, a completed Proposal Administration Form must be submitted with or soon after the grant proposal as a separate document.



## How to Submit a Completed Grant Proposal

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Grant proposals invited by a program director of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation should be submitted as an email attachment, preferably as a single file, directly to him or her. If a program director has not invited you to submit a proposal, *do not submit a proposal*. Instead, compose and submit a Letter of Inquiry to the relevant program director via email. For guidelines on Letters of Inquiry, [please see the Foundation's website](#).