**Instructions to Reviewers**

Please make sure you have read, signed, and returned the *Conflicts-of-Interest and Confidentiality Statement for Proposal Reviewers for ORSP[[1]](#footnote-1)*. Afterwards, read the NSF EPSCoR Track 4 solicitation[[2]](#footnote-2) and then the internal UM review criteria on this Score Form. Then, access the proposals assigned to you in the portal. For each such proposal, read, score, rank, and provide comments according to the **specific criteria below**. You may find it helpful to complete this Score Form for each proposal before entering any reviews in the portal. Once you have determined all the specific criterion scores and any specific comments for each pre-proposal, assign an **Overall Rank** and provide **Overall Comments** for each. Then, enter all your scores and comments in the InfoReady Review portal and submit the reviews. This is a single blind review process.[[3]](#footnote-3) ***The more detailed and more constructive, respectful, and positive the comments, the more helpful they will be***.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Overall Rank and Comments**

**Rank:** Overall, on a scale of **1** (most competitive) to **n** (least competitive), where **n** = the number of proposals you reviewed, how competitive does the final proposal for this applicant have the likelihood to be at NSF? **Each proposal you reviewed should have a unique ranking.** If you assign two proposal the same ranking, you will be asked to revise your rankings and resubmit.

*Rank (circle one*): ***<- MOST COMPETITVE*  (1 2 3 4 5 …. n) *LEAST COMPETITIVE->***

**Overall Comments to Applicant:** Please provide constructive comments on the overall quality of the internal and the potential competitiveness of the final proposal, in terms of perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. The more detailed and constructive feedback you can provide in these comments, as well as in the comment sections for the specific criteria below, the better your review will help the PI develop a competitive full proposal to NSF, or if not internally selected this year, put forward a more competitive internal pre-proposal in a future year.

**Comments to Administrator:** If you have any comments for the administrator of the limited submission process, but not for the applicant, please share them here.

**Specific Scores and Comments**

For each of the specific criteria below, use your discretion, experience, and best judgement in interpreting the NSF program solicitation and guidelines to assign what you think is a fair score. The *Questions to Consider in Reviewing this Category*, many of whichare derived from the NSF guidelines, are provided to help you form an overall opinion of that program element; they should not be interpreted as an exhaustive list of considerations or as a set of “must haves” to receive a strong score for that criterion.

**Specific Criterion: Intellectual Merit**

*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(5: excellent; 4: very good; 2: good; 2: fair; 1: poor)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Does the PI position this research within the **specific NSF program(s)** that would be most likely to fund regular research projects in this topic area?
* Are you convinced that the fellowship will—and ideally understand *how* it will—**create a** **new partnership**, **advance an existing partnership**, or enable the PI to shift their research towards a potentially transformative **new direction**?
* Does the fellowship idea strike you as **exciting** and **vibrant**?
* Does it seem clear to you *whether*, and ideally *how*, this fellowship has the potential to positive impact or **transform the PI’s *career* trajectory**?
* Does it seem clear to you *whether*, and ideally *how*, the **fellowship impacts will be sustained** for years beyond the grant period?
* Does the PI make a clear case for how the research to be conducted during the fellowship period—especially during the time the PI is at the host site—has the potential to **advance the scientific *field*** (even if you do not feel qualified to evaluate the quality of the case made)?

**Specific Criterion: Clarity of Writing**

*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(5: excellent; 4: very good; 3: good; 2: fair; 1: poor)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Is the proposal **easy to read**? For example, are white space, images, charts, pictures, emphasis, punctuation, sentence breaks, paragraph breaks, or other methods used effectively to break the monotony of the text and create an easy reading experience? Was the pre-proposal a pleasure to read, a chore to read, or something in between?
* How **easy** is it for you **to find key information** needed to complete this review?
* Does the proposal ignite your **enthusiasm** as a reader?
* Is the proposal **free of errors** in grammar and punctuation?
* Does the proposal use internally consistent terminology w/o being repetitive?
* Does the proposal make the most effective use of the space available?
* Does the writer appeared to have used only original sentences and phrases (not re-used sentences or phrases that you’ve seen before in other proposals)?

**Specific Criterion: Plan and Specificity**

*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(5: excellent; 4: very good; 3: good; 2: fair; 1: poor)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Does the application clearly state the research goals of the fellowship?
* Does the application clearly state the activities that occur during the fellowship?
* Does the application clearly state the specific, quantitative (and therefore measurable) expected outcomes of the fellowship?
* Is there a proposed mechanism to measure success?
* Is a project timetable present, and if so, does it seem sufficient and easy to read/understand?
* Is it clear what specific opportunities will be made possible via the PI’s extended visit(s) to the host site? For instance, which facilities they will be accessing and to what degree?
* Is it clear whether there is either a specific trainee identified, or a plan to identify one, and what that trainee’s role will be?

**Specific Criterion: Sufficiency of Letter from Administrative Supervisor**  
*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(2: sufficient as is; 1; Ok but could be better; 0: insufficient)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Does the letter from the PI’s administrative supervisor appear to be from an appropriate supervisor for the PI—e.g., a department chair, (or, less likely, a center director, or dean)?
* Does the letter from the administrative supervisor explicitly confirm the nature of the faculty member’s appointment (tenured associate, tenure-track assistant, or other longer-term [over 3 years] faculty appointment) consistent with the eligibility requirements stated in the NSF solicitation?
* Is it clear that the supervisor understands when the faculty member expects to conduct the extended visit(s) and that, if any release time is required, it will be readily granted by the supervisor?
* Does the supervisor seem to think this fellowship will be a good thing for the PI and the department?
* Are there any suggestions for how the administrative supervisor’s letter could be improved between now and the time the full proposal is due to NSF, to be more responsive to the solicitation?

**Specific Criterion: Strength of the Proposed Partnership**

*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(5: excellent; 4: very good; 3: good; 2: fair; 1: poor)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Does it seem clear to you *whether*—and ideally *how*—the host site is among the nation’s most prominent research sites—whether due to the physical facilities or environment, the prestige of the host collaborators(s), or some other compelling reason? Do you get the idea that reviewers in the PI’s field will find the host site or collaborator a compelling draw for an EPSCoR Research Fellowship?
* To the extent practical within the limited pages available for the internal proposal, does the PI clearly establish the parameters for the partnership, including specifying who at the host site will be working with the PI to ensure the goals of the fellowship are met?
* Does the letter(s) from the host-site collaborator(s) make it clear that they understand the nature of the proposed fellowship what support they will need to provide, and demonstrate their willingness to provide that support? What improvements, if any, could be made to the letter(s) to strengthen this support between now and the time the full proposal would be submitted to NSF?
* Keeping in mind the various ways that people can collaborate from a longer-than-commuting distance, how convinced are you that, without this expensive relocation (or series of trips to) the host site made possible by this unique funding mechanism, the PI would not be able to create or advance this collaboration, or significantly redirect their research into this new direction, or would not be able to do so as quickly, as well, or as impactfully?
* Does the PI convincingly explain why the proposed interactions could not occur without temporary relocation or a repeated trips to the host?
* Is only a single host site identified, as required?
* Is the host site very clearly far enough away to make commuting impractical?
* Will the fellowship involve advancing a partnership with a prior graduate or postdoctoral advisor (which is discouraged in the solicitation)? If so, is a very compelling case made for how this will be a new direction for this partnership?

**Specific Criterion: Broader Impacts**

*Rating Choices (circle one):* **(5: excellent; 4: very good; 3: good; 2: fair; 1: poor)**

*Please provide constructive comments or suggestions for improvement:*

*Questions to consider in reviewing this category:*

* Is it clear to you whether—and what—tangible **benefits** from this fellowship are likely accrue **to the PI’s home department**, **the University of Mississippi** more broadly, or the **State of Mississippi**—beyond just the benefits to the PI’s career?
  + Does the PI propose proactive (yet reasonable) approaches that will directly lead to these benefits?
  + Is it clear that the supervisor understands the benefits that might accrue to the department or institution as a result of this fellowship, and that their vision for those is the same as the PIs?
* Beyond the required benefits of increasing capacity of the department, institution, or jurisdiction, are any **other** appropriate, convincing, and reasonably achievable **broader impacts** expected/articulated for this fellowship?

1. Confidentiality & COI: <http://research.olemiss.edu/sites/default/files/ORSP-Reviewers-COI-Statement.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Solicitation: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/epscor-research-infrastructure-improvement-epscor-research> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Blind Review: The InfoReady Review portal is designed to de-identity reviewer scores and comments when they are automatically provided to the applicants at the time the notification of award or non-award is sent; only the two InfoReady Review administrators managing this competition in InfoReady Review (Jason Hale and Mary Lea McMillan) will know which reviewers scored and commented on which applications. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The administrator of this internal competition will not change your scores, but reserves the right to make gentle edits to your comments by correcting misspellings or grammatical errors, or softening sharply toned criticisms. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)