

NCI PS-OP U01 ([PAR-15-021](#)) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Updated 9/24/14

PD/PI Questions

Q: Is there a required percent effort for the Physical Sciences-Oncology Project (PS-OP) PD(s)/PI(s)?

A: No.

Q: Does the multi-PD/PI plan need to address all of the faculty and coordination during the project or should it focus on the PD/PIs?

A: The major focus of the multi-PD/PI plan should be the PD/PIs and how they will share responsibility of leading a project (*i.e.*, a leadership plan). The collaborators could be mentioned in terms of how the PD/PIs will plan to coordinate their contribution to the project.

Q: What is the definition of physical scientist for the purposes of this funding opportunity?

A: Physical scientist is defined loosely and broadly for this funding opportunity. Disciplines can include engineering, chemistry, computer sciences, materials sciences, mathematics, physics, or other related fields. Physical scientists should have expertise in at least one of these areas. Expertise can be established through training and/or a body of work that demonstrates impact in the field.

Institution Questions

Q: Will U01s be awarded to a PS-OC institution, or are institutions other than PS-OCs also eligible?

A: Eligibility is not limited to PS-OC institutions. A full description of institution eligibility is described in the funding opportunity announcement (Section III).

Q: Are non-US institutions eligible to apply for the U01?

A: Yes, as indicated in the funding opportunity announcement, non-US institutions are eligible to apply for the U01. A strong justification must be included if the lead institution is a non-US institution. The foreign justification should include a description of the PI and other key investigators, specifically focusing on the novelty of the study and how it may be unique to the research program (*i.e.* not necessarily being studied in the USA). It should also include how the project could impact and contribute to research in the USA. Please refer to information provided at these links: Policy notice: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-010.html>; Policy statement http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2012/nihgps_ch16.htm; Tips: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/files/Tips_for_International_Applicants.pdf.

Collaboration Questions

Q: Does a PS-OP have to be formally connected or attached to a Physical Sciences-Oncology Center (PS-OC)?

A: No.

Q: The PS-OPs are bringing together people with diverse expertise. Is it a requirement for everyone to have published together?

A: There is no requirement that everyone on the team has previously published together. However, it will likely be considered a strength if at least some members of the team have previously published together.

Q: Are NIH intramural investigators allowed to participate as Project personnel or collaborators?

A: NIH intramural investigators may participate as Project personnel or collaborators but they cannot receive funds from either the PS-OP FOA.

Q: How can investigators participate in the Physical Sciences-Oncology Network if they are not funded through a PS-OP or Physical Sciences-Oncology Center (PS-OC)?

A: Connect with investigators from the Network that are potential collaborators. For example, many PS-OCs advertise their annual symposiums and Pilot Project funding opportunities on their Center websites which can be found on the [PS-ON website](#).

Q: What are the limits on foreign components and collaborations?

A: There are no restrictions on foreign components and collaborations for the PS-OPs.

Q: Are multiple institutions allowed for the PS-OPs?

A: Yes multiple institutions are allowed. If including multiple institutions will create challenges in areas such as communication or sharing of biospecimens, these issues should be addressed in the application.

Q: When listing potential collaborations, should we identify specific investigators that we would want to work together with on a project?

A: Try to avoid this, as it could create potential conflicts of interest. Instead, list strategies for the type of expertise you would utilize for creating collaborations that would tie into your research projects.

Pilot Project Questions

Q: How should the optional Pilot Projects be described in the application?

A: There is no need to describe specific potential Pilot Projects, only whether funds will be set aside for the optional projects.

Q: Are Projects required to designate a portion of the budget for Pilot Project funds?

A: No. It is optional for Projects to designate a portion of the budget for Pilot Project funds. The maximum amount that can be designated for Pilot Projects is 5% of the direct costs per year in the proposed budget.

Q: How are Pilot Projects determined?

A: The approach for soliciting and awarding Pilot Project applications is determined by the PI. Pilot projects can be used to support new projects (within the scope of the award) either within the awarded Institution or to support collaborations outside of the Network or awarded Institution.

Trans-Network Project Questions

Q: What are the Trans-Network projects?

A: The Trans-Network Projects are where 2 or more Projects and/or Centers collaborate to address a new question that compliments expertise between those institutions.

Q: Who discusses and decides on the Trans-Network Projects?

A: The PS-ON Steering Committee discusses and votes on the Trans-Network Project approach on an annual basis.

Q: How should the Trans-Network projects be described in the application?

A: There is no need to describe specific potential Trans-Network Projects, only that the required amount of funds will be set aside for the projects (minimum of 6% of the direct costs per year in the proposed budget).

LOI Questions

Q: Are letters of intent (LOI) required?

A: No, LOI are optional. However, they are helpful for NIH/NCI staff when determining the appropriate review expertise needed to evaluate the applications.

Q: What should be included in the letters of intent (LOI)?

A: The LOI is an informal and brief message that can be sent in the body of an email or as an email attachment. LOI must include: **(1)** descriptive title of proposed activity; **(2)** name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of the PD(s)/PI(s) **(3)** names of other key personnel; **(4)** participating institution(s); and **(5)** number and title of this funding opportunity. Additional recommended elements are: **(1)** a brief description of PS-OP organizing framework (3-5 sentences); **(2)** relevant expertise; and **(3)** keyword(s).

Application Focus and Content Questions

Q: Are the PS-OPs restricted to cancer problems and questions?

A: Yes, all PS-OP projects should be addressing important questions in cancer biology or oncology using physical sciences perspectives and approaches.

Q: Are studies utilizing clinical data allowed?

A: Yes.

Q: The PS-OP FOA mentions restrictions on informatics, what is allowable?

A: The PS-OP FOA does not support informatics technology development.

Q: Do the PS-OPs require supporting preliminary data similar to and R01?

A: Preliminary data will be beneficial.

Q: How much preliminary data does a collaboration, specifically a new collaboration, need to show? Is independent data enough or do they need to show integrated data?

A: Collaborative preliminary data would be a strength. Alternatively, an application could demonstrate how the collaborative research would be more substantive than the individual research.

Q: Are U01 applications similar to R01 applications?

A: Yes, U01 applications are similar to R01 applications in that they should be a single, discrete, specified project. The U01 is a cooperative agreement mechanism that is used when there will be substantive programmatic involvement by NIH staff, which is not the case for the R01 mechanism. Note that the program announcement

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has specific review criteria in addition to the standard review criteria. Also, the budget is capped in the U01 program announcement.

Q: As indicated in the funding opportunity announcement, one of the suggested thematic areas is Spatio-Temporal Organization and Information Transfer in Cancer. Could you please describe what is meant by information transfer?

A: Information transfer is meant to describe the communication of molecules/signals at different length scales and the effects on cellular behaviors, phenotypes, decision making, etc.

Q: How much emphasis is placed on translational research projects?

A: Projects are not required to have immediate translational potential. The program supports basic and applied research.

General Application Submission/Resubmission Questions

Q: Are resubmission applications allowed?

A: Yes, both resubmission (A1) and new submission applications are allowed.

Q: What is the appropriate time to begin to have conversations with the NIH scientific/research contact(s) regarding plans to submit an application?

A: You may send an email inquiry regarding your plans to submit an application to the NIH scientific/research contact(s) anytime, either before or after the letter of intent (LOI) deadline. Since there are only 6 weeks from LOI deadline to the application receipt date, sending inquiries prior to the LOI deadline would be beneficial.

Q: Can the same application be submitted to multiple FOAs?

A: In general, applications must be substantially/sufficiently different to be considered unique applications in order to be submitted to another FOA. For specific questions please inquire with the scientific/research contact(s) / program director(s) of the FOA(s) of interest.

Q: Is there a list of past successful grants, PIs and institutions available to the public?

A: The list of awarded projects and centers are on the program website, <http://pson.cancer.gov>. Information about all funded NIH applications can also be found using the NIH Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT) at <http://report.nih.gov>.

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Q: In other NCI programs, the U01 had to be associated with the U54; is this the case here?

A: No, a project is not required to be associated with a currently funded PS-OC (U54). New U01 applications may be completely independent of any existing Center or Project.

Review Questions

Q: When assembling the special emphasis panel that will review the applications, how will members be identified? How much input will NIH Program Officers have in determining members of the panel?

A: The major criteria for choosing special emphasis panel members will be based on individuals' expertise in a particular research area relevant to the applications and the lack of a conflict(s) of interest with the applicants. The NCI Scientific Review Officer (SRO) will use keywords from letters of intent and the content of the applications to convene a special emphasis panel that best represents the applications' research areas.

Q: Will the special emphasis panel be made up of a mix of experts in the physical sciences and cancer biology?

A: Yes. The special emphasis panel will include physical scientists and cancer researchers with relevant expertise according to the content the FOA (PAR-15-021) and the applications received.

Q: Can IRB approval be submitted after the application receipt date but prior to review?

A: Yes, but it must be received a minimum of 30 days prior to review. See [NOT-OD-10-115](#) for additional details.

Q: Will there be enough time to decide whether or not to resubmit for the next submission date?

A: This will depend on the review date.