

New Directions (ND) Grants

MENU



Program Goals

The goals of the American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund are:

- To support fundamental research in the petroleum field, and
- To develop the next generation of engineers and scientists through support of advanced scientific education.

The New Directions Grants Program aims to stimulate a *new direction* of research for established faculty, and to support the careers of their student scientists and engineers.

New Directions Grants

The New Directions (ND) grants program provides funds to scientists and engineers with limited—or even no—preliminary results for a research project they wish to pursue, and who intend to use the PRF-driven preliminary results to seek continuation funding from other agencies. ND grants are to be used to illustrate proof of concept/feasibility. Accordingly, they are to be viewed as seed money for new research ventures.

A "new research direction" is something different from previous research performed by the lead principal investigator (lead PI). But, it may involve a field of science or engineering in which others are already working. Therefore, the proposed research should not be in the same direction as—or overlap with—current projects in the lead PI's research group. Excluded from consideration will be

- Lead PIs who have had previous support or current funding for the project, and
- Proposals presenting ideas that are a logical extension of ongoing research from the lead PI's laboratory.

Preliminary results and/or communications are not required.

One co-principal investigator (co-PI) is permitted on an ND grant proposal. The proposed research does not have to be a new direction of research for the co-PI. However, the co-PI must meet all other eligibility criteria as if he/she were the lead PI, and provide the same information requested of the lead PI in the application. The lead PI (who should be denoted as such) and his/her institution (designated as the grantee institution) would

subcontract the co-PI through the co-PI's institution. Any number of collaborators may participate on the project. However, no funds from the ND grant may be used to support the collaborators or their respective students.

Award Information

- **Amount:** \$125,000 over 2 years.
- **Estimated number of grants awarded:** ~75 each year.

Nature and Scope of the Research

ACS PRF Research Grants are made to non-profit institutions for regularly-appointed scientists whose research may be sponsored in accordance with the ACS PRF Transfer Agreement (</content/dam/acsorg/funding/grants/prf/prf-transfer-agreement.pdf>):

The recipient (ACS) shall use all funds exclusively for advanced scientific education and fundamental research in the 'petroleum field,' which may include any field of pure science which in the judgment of (ACS) may afford a basis for subsequent research directly connected with the petroleum field.

Note that fundamental research is required as opposed to applied research or methods development. When submitting an application, you will be asked to select a scientific discipline (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/about/research-areas.html>) that PRF supports.

The PRF New Directions grant program is not a source of funding for ongoing, extant research projects. Rather, it is designed as a source of funds for new concepts and new projects for the lead PI and his/her research group. The lead principal investigator must demonstrate that this is an entirely new research direction from what the lead principal investigator has done to date. Proposals deemed not to be a "new direction of research" will be denied without external review, or may be rejected by the PRF Committee. In addition, poorly crafted proposals that are deemed to be "noncompetitive" will be denied without external review.

All proposals will undergo a compliance check for the following required elements:

- Completeness and correctness of the application;
- Fundamental nature of the research topic;
- Relevance to petroleum or fossil fuels; and
- Extent to which the proposed research is a new direction for the principal investigator.

Eligibility Criteria

Regularly-appointed faculty members at academic institutions in countries where ACS PRF can administer grants are eligible. Certain other long-term scientific appointments may be eligible. In addition, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The non-profit institution submitting the ND proposal must certify that each individual listed as a principal investigator on the cover page qualifies as a principal investigator under the institution's Principal Investigator policies.
- In view of the long-standing policy of The ACS Petroleum Research Fund to give priority to support of students (undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral), each principal investigator (lead and co-PI) must be eligible to serve as the formal, official supervisor of graduate students in graduate degree programs. Emeritus faculty who may supervise post-doctoral fellows are also eligible to apply.
- The terms of appointment of the principal investigator (and, if appropriate, the co-PI) must promise reasonable continuity of service through the life of the grant.

Generally, the above criteria are automatically met by tenured or tenure-track principal investigators. If you or the co-PI are not tenure-track, attach a brief statement to your application describing your appointment and include a Department Chair's letter affirming that you meet all three of the eligibility criteria cited above. Read more about Eligibility, Terms, and Conditions (</content/dam/acsorg/funding/grants/prf/programs/nd/nd-etc-07252024.pdf>) for ND Grants. Please contact the appropriate Program Manager, if you have questions about your eligibility for this research grant program.

Funding Criteria

The PRF Committee makes relative rankings of proposals and recommendations for funding on the basis of the following criteria (in order of importance):

- Newness of the proposed research for the lead PI.
- Overall quality, significance, and scientific merit of the proposed research, including the extent to which it will increase basic knowledge and/or stimulate additional research.
- Impact of PRF funding the research, including the effect on the principal investigator's overall research program.
- Qualifications or potential of the principal investigator(s) and adequacy of the facilities to conduct the research.
- Extent to which advanced scientific education will be enhanced through the involvement of students in the research.

Budget Guidelines

The PRF Committee requires at least 60 percent of the total proposal budget be devoted to support the education and training of students (graduate students, undergraduates, graduate stipends and/or postdoctoral fellows). If you have any questions about allowable budget allocations, please contact the appropriate Program Manager **before** submitting a proposal. For proposals that are funded, the budget becomes part of the grant agreement. Revisions to the grant budget can only be made **with prior approval** of ACS PRF.

Amount: Proposals request \$125,000 for a two-year period. The total \$125k budget may be divided among years according to the needs of the project. The normal ACS PRF budget year extends from September 1 through August 31.

- **Excluded Charges:** No overhead costs may be charged, which includes secretarial and/or administrative salaries. Funds may not be used to support laboratory technicians, contractors, consultants, or visiting faculty.
- **Principal Investigator Stipend:** Only principal investigators in the United States may request summer stipend support. The maximum amount for summer stipend support for both PIs combined (lead and co-) is \$8,000 per grant year, *including fringe benefits*, up to a maximum of \$16,000. This limit does NOT change as a result of time extensions.
- **Support of Students:** Total student support must be at least 60% of the grant budget. Students are defined as graduate students, undergraduates, and/or postdoctoral fellows. Student support categories include stipends/salaries/benefits, graduate tuition, and Field Work. Field Work expenses may include transportation, lodging, etc. and must be described in the budget justification. Funds budgeted for a student at one of the three levels may subsequently be shifted to student support at a different level without prior approval from ACS PRF, but may not be shifted out of student support.
- **Travel:** A maximum of \$2,000 per grant year, or \$4,000 total, may be used for conference travel for the PIs and their students. This limit does NOT change as a result of time extensions. Support of student travel to scientific meetings is encouraged. There are no restrictions on foreign travel. Note that scientific work performed away from the home institution is considered field work and is budgeted separately.
- **Capital Equipment:** Requests for capital equipment on type ND grant proposals are discouraged. However, a limited amount of capital equipment funds (\leq \$5,000) may be included in the proposed budget, with justification and description of institutional cost-matching (if any) in the budget justification.
- **Publication Costs:** A maximum of \$2,000 in publication costs is allowable over the entire project period. This limit does not change as a result of a time extension. Publication costs may include open access fees, language editing, and covers.

Limitations

- Principal investigators (lead PI or co-PI) may submit only one research proposal per meeting with a maximum of 2 resubmissions on essentially the same topic.
- Principal investigators (lead PI or co-PI) may not hold more than one active PRF research grant at a time.
- Principal investigators (lead PI or co-PI) with an active PRF research grant, including a grant on time extension, may not submit an application for a new grant.
- Principal investigators (lead PI or co-PI) may have only one ND grant application considered in a 12-month period. Thus, a principal investigator (lead PI or co-PI) who has an ND proposal denied may not submit another ND proposal until the PRF Committee meeting one year later.

Program Managers

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Proposal Submission

At this time, we are not currently accepting research proposals for the New Directions (ND) grant program.. The Spring Submission window will be from Monday, February 10, 2025 to Friday March 7, 2025 (Considered at the October 2025 ACS PRF Committee Meeting). The Fall Submission window will be from Monday, August 11, 2025 to Friday September 5, 2025 (Considered at the May 2026 ACS PRF Committee Meeting).

- New Applicants: Pre-Registration Required (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-registration-help.html>)
- July 2024 Open House:: Application Submission Top 10 (</content/dam/acsorg/funding/grants/prf/online-help/prf-openhouse-applicationsubmission-v1-071724.pdf>)
- ND Application Instructions (</content/dam/acsorg/funding/grants/prf/programs/nd/nd-instructions-feb-2024.pdf>)
- Proposal Submission Overview (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-proposal-submission-help.html>)
- Proposal Submission FAQ (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-submission-faq.html>)
- Online Help - Proposal Submission (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-application-help.html>)
- See Eligibility, Terms, Conditions and Guidelines (</content/dam/acsorg/funding/grants/prf/programs/nd/nd-etc-07252024.pdf>) for details regarding eligibility and the submission process for an ND grant.
- PRF Safety Requirements (</funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/safety-requirements.html>)