

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL DEADLINE
JUNE 1, 2012 22:00 UTC

NEW FRONTIERS IN ASTRONOMY AND COSMOLOGY AN INTERNATIONAL GRANT COMPETITION IN CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF SIR JOHN TEMPLETON

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I. Research Grant Application Procedures

Please read the [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) document](#) and these Research Grant Application Procedures in their entirety prior to drafting your proposal. Access to the information that you provide is limited to reviewers and project administration, and will be held in confidence.

FORMAT

All proposals must be in English, and typed with one-inch margins. Page size is ANSI A or Letter size, 8.5 x 11 inches. Font size is restricted to no smaller than 11-point and no larger than 12-point. Font type must be Arial, Helvetica, or Times New Roman. The ScholarOne submission site accepts Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), and Microsoft Word and Excel documents up to Microsoft 2010. **Do not encode protections or place restrictions on access to your files; this will interfere with uploading documents to the submission site.** *Proposals that do not follow these format specifications will not be accepted.* Emphasis should also be placed on completeness, timeliness and clarity of content. The full proposal must include all content that is outlined in the following:

CONTENT OUTLINE

The following is a list of submission items that will be required for all proposals:

1. Executive Summary [4 page limit]
2. Cover Sheet [\[Word file downloadable here\]](#)
3. Body of Proposal
 - a. Project Description [10 page limit]
 - b. Curriculum Vitae of Principal Investigator [3 page limit]
 - c. Biographical Sketch for each Co-Investigator [1 page limit per Co-Investigator]
 - d. Budget Justification Narrative
4. Detailed Budget [\[Excel file downloadable here\]](#)
5. Project Timeline [\[Excel file downloadable here\]](#)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The proposal, including all required content and format, must be submitted electronically through the ScholarOne website: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/newfrontiers>. Be sure to **use the User ID and Password** that you established when you initially registered to the site.

A total of five (5) separate documents will be uploaded through your existing ScholarOne account in the following order:

- 1. Executive Summary.** The Executive Summary should be created as a Microsoft Word document limited to four pages.
- 2. Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet Template is in Word format. Once you've completed the Cover Sheet including appropriate inked signatures, please **scan the hard copy and save as an electronic PDF file.**
- 3. Body of Proposal.** In the following order of appearance, these components of the application should be created in one continuous Microsoft Word document: (a) Project Description (10 page limit); (b) Curriculum Vitae of Principal Investigator (3 page limit); (c) Biographical Sketch for each Co-Investigator, including the Principal Investigator (1 page limit per Co-Investigator); and (d) Budget Justification Narrative.
- 4. Budget Summary.** The Budget Summary Template is in Excel format; this file should be uploaded as an Excel file upon submission.
- 5. Timeline.** The Project Timeline Template is in Excel format, and can be uploaded as an Excel document.

Once you have these five (5) documents prepared and stored in an accessible drive on your computer, you will be ready to upload each file in the following order: 1. Executive Summary; 2. Scanned Cover Sheet in PDF format; 3. Body of Proposal in Word format; 4. Budget Summary in Excel format; and 5. Project Timeline in Excel format. If you experience any difficulty in downloading or viewing the three templates, please send an e-mail to bigquestions@odjob.uchicago.edu.

After you have uploaded all of your documents, *ScholarOne software will prompt you to preview your proposal prior to submission*. At that time all files will be automatically converted into a single PDF file. **If you are satisfied with your final draft, click “submit”**. More specific, step-by-step instructions are provided at the ScholarOne submission site.

Note: If you submitted your proposal through ScholarOne and later realized that your application was incomplete or contained errors, please send an e-mail to bigquestions@odjob.uchicago.edu to request that your application be *un-submitted*. As long as the correction is made before the deadline (June 1, 2012, 22:00 UTC), you may un-submit your submission and repeat the same application process to submit a revised version of your full proposal. If you need to do this, be sure to do the following: (1) Send us an e-mail to bigquestions@odjob.uchicago.edu to request that we *un-submit* your initial application; and (2) Once you have received an e-mail notification that your application has been formally *un-submitted*, you may repeat the same application process to submit a revised version of your proposal. Also, remember to re-submit all content, including the portions that did not need revisions.

DETAILED CONTENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Executive Summary (4 page limit)

The Executive Summary is a summary of the proposed research activity, limited to four pages, and **suitable for publication**. The summary should be written in the third person and include a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. It must clearly address in separate statements (within the summary) the four criteria of merit:

- (1) *Potential* for significant contribution to our basic foundational understanding of nature, and the likelihood for opening new, fruitful lines of inquiry. Preference will be given to proposals that succeed in arguing that new areas of research may open up as a result of the research or, alternatively that the mainstream approach to Big Questions and dilemmas can be upset by the proposed research (up to 30 points);
- (2) Intrinsic *intellectual merit, scientific rigor* and *originality* of the submitted proposal (up to 30 points);
- (3) *Qualifications* of the applicants and proposals (up to 20 points);
- (4) Persuasiveness of the *practicality* of the plan and of the applicant's ability to use the grant to continue to advance the themes explored in the proposal submitted as the basis for the application (up to 20 points).

2. Cover Sheet (MS Word template to be scanned into a PDF file)

This form was created in a Microsoft Word format and should be downloaded by clicking one of the hyperlinks that are imbedded within these guidelines. [The Cover Sheet Template can be downloaded here](#). The template can be downloaded from the program website and from the ScholarOne submission site as well.

The Principal Investigator, who is ultimately responsible for the scientific conduct of the proposed project, must ink sign the Cover Sheet. If applicable, an Authorized Signing Official, who is certifying the proposed project and its budget, must sign the Cover Sheet as well.

If the proposed project uses human or animal subjects, please be certain to note any institutional approvals required and/or secured for the project. Documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or human subject approval authorization, or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval of the use of animal subjects will be required before initial payment may be made.

Also be sure to identify a financial contact, or key contact person who will handle all or most of the financial aspects of your project. If you are awarded a grant, this person will assemble your invoices, manage supporting documents, and submit invoices to The University of Chicago for payments.

Once the Cover Sheet is complete and all required inked signatures are obtained, please **scan the MS Word document and convert it to an electronic PDF document**.

3. Body of Proposal

a. Project Description (10 page limit)

The central part of the proposal will be a narrative description of the project itself. All proposals must be in English, and typed with one-inch margins. Page size is ANSI A or Letter size, 8.5 x 11 inches. Font size is restricted to no smaller than 11-point and no larger than 12-point. Font type must be Arial or Times New Roman. This document may be single-spaced. Please limit it to no more than 10 pages (not including bibliography). This description should include:

- The Big Question and corresponding sub-question from the RFP document that the proposal will address;
- The specific research focus/topic;
- Objectives for the period of the proposed work;
- Detailed explanations of grant activity, methodologies (i.e. theoretical, experimental, computational, laboratory, Other), and plans for analyses; and
- An elaboration on the four criteria of merit that are listed in the RFP document. The four criteria are also listed in the instructions for Executive Summary.

Note: There is no page limit for the bibliography portion of the Project Description.

b. Curriculum Vitae of Principal Investigator (3 page limit)

c. Biographical Sketch for each Co-Investigator (1 page limit per Co-Investigator)

The Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators must include a biographical sketch (not to exceed one page each) that includes his/her professional experiences and positions and up to three publications that are most relevant to the proposed investigation. The biographical sketch must include a description of scientific, technical and management performance on relevant prior research efforts. Those participants who will play critical management or technical roles in the proposed investigation should demonstrate that their qualifications, capabilities, and experience are appropriate to provide confidence that the proposed objectives will be achieved. Professional biographical sketches are to be written in the third person and suitable for publication. Applicants who are applying as a team are limited to a total of six (6) investigators: one (1) Principal Investigator, who will be the sole contact for the proposal, and up to five (5) Co-Investigators.

d. Budget Justification Narrative (no page limit)

A narrative of budget justification is required justifying each line item in the Budget Summary Template. Please explain the costs associated with each line item from the cumulative or "Total Projected Costs" column only (please do not justify each 12 month period separately). *Presence of cost-sharing is encouraged, while it is not mandatory. Please include some detail on your sources of other funding, if any.* There is no page limit, but you are encouraged to be succinct. If you are an international applicant, please list the currency exchange rate used in creating your budget in U.S. dollars, and provide the source of the exchange rate.

4. Detailed Budget (MS Excel template)

Please use the Budget Summary Template to create a budget summary for each 12-month period according to the dates of the proposed funding periods (i.e. 10/1/2012-9/30/2013, 10/1/2013-9/30/2014) identified at the top of the sheet. [The Budget Summary Template can be downloaded here](#). This form was created in a Microsoft Excel format. Please conform to this template.

Please refer to the instructions below for completing the Budget Summary. We ask that you also include cumulative or “Total Projected Costs” within the budget summary and that you **justify only the cumulative costs** in the Budget Justification Narrative in section 3.d.

Itemized Budget Guidelines:

I. General

A. Each grant proposal must contain a budget summary in the required format. [The Budget Summary Template can be downloaded here](#). Budget amounts must be in U.S. dollars. Please enter whole dollar amounts.

B. Identify each year’s request (i.e. “10/1/2012-9/30/2013”, “10/1/2013-9/30/2014”) and provide Total Projected Costs for each line item. The final column on the right of the template calculates the cumulative amounts that are requested from The University of Chicago.

C. Acceptable use of grant funds includes the following:

- Student or postdoctoral salary and benefits for part of the academic year.
- Summer salary for academics.
- Support for specific projects during sabbaticals.
- Assistance in writing or publishing books.
- Modest allowance for justifiable equipment, computers, publication charges, and other supplies. Expenditure of over 20% of the project budget for equipment must be sufficiently justified.
- Modest travel allowance.
- Modest overhead, no more than 15%.

Presence of cost-sharing is encouraged, while it is not mandatory.

II. Budget Line Items

Tight budgeting is encouraged in order to maximize the impact of the project as a whole, with emphasis on scientific return per dollar rather than per proposal. The following is a brief outline of budget documentation requirements by line item. (NOTE: Justification/explanation is required on the line items below and should be documented in the Budget Justification Narrative – Part 3.d. of the proposal content.)

A. Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits. List individually, all senior personnel (names and abbreviated titles). Also provide the institutional fringe benefits rate to be funded by this grant, and the total *estimated* percentage of time dedicated to the project (For example: “John Smith, Asst. Prof., 22% Fringe, (40% Time)”).

Grant funds may not be used to augment the rate of salary of faculty members during the period covered by the term of faculty appointment.

In most circumstances, particularly for institutions of higher education, salaries of administrative or clerical staff are included as part of indirect costs. However, salaries of administrative or clerical staff may be requested as direct costs for a project requiring an extensive amount of administrative or clerical support where these costs can be readily and specifically identified with the project.

B. Consultant Services. Consultants are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill and who are not employees of the performing organization. Costs of professional and consultant services are allowable when reasonable in relation to the services rendered. Payment for consultant services should be comparable to the normal or customary fees charged and received by the consultant for comparable services.

Anticipated consultant services must be justified and information furnished on each individual's expertise, primary organizational affiliation, normal daily compensation rate, and number of days of expected service. Consultants' travel costs, including subsistence, may be included. If requested, the proposer must be able to justify that the proposed rate of pay is reasonable.

C. Subaward. Except for the procurement of such items as commercially available supplies, materials, equipment or general support services allowable under the grant, no significant part of the research or substantive effort under this grant may be contracted or otherwise transferred to another organization without prior authorization. The intent to enter into such arrangements must be disclosed in the proposal, and a separate budget should be provided for each subawardee, if already identified, along with a description of the work to be performed. Otherwise, the disclosure should include a clear description of the work to be performed, and the basis for selection of the subawardee. *Indirect costs are not applied to subawards.*

D. Equipment. Items of needed equipment should be listed individually by description and estimated cost, including tax, and adequately justified in the Budget Justification Narrative. Equipment is defined as any item or property with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, and a service life of one year or more. Please attach bids or previous invoices to justify the purchase of equipment. Expenditure of over 20% of the project budget for equipment must be sufficiently justified. *Indirect costs are not applied to equipment.*

E. Travel. In line item, E.1. Research Project Travel Expenses, address the type and extent of travel and its relation to the project. Itemize by event and cost. Fare allowances are limited to round trip, jet-economy rates. This line item refers to travel, if any, that is required for your project. The travel expenses for the Awards Ceremony (October 12-13, 2012) are funded by The University of Chicago; therefore, the expenses for this event should *not* be reflected in your Budget Summary and Budget Justification Narrative. However, a project review meeting will take place in Chicago in June 2014. At this meeting, grantees will present project updates and receive feedback from peers and Project Board Members. The expenses for the June 2014 meeting will not be covered outside of the budget for your project. In line item, E.2. Project Review Meeting (June 2014) Travel Expenses, please be sure to INCLUDE the travel and lodging funds that you will need to travel to Chicago in June 2014. You may request up to three nights of hotel lodging for the domestic Principal Investigator, or up to five nights of hotel lodging for the international Principal Investigator. The [U.S. General Services Administration's \(GSA\)](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287) per diem rates for meals and lodging may be a useful guide for estimating travel expenses for the June 2014 meeting. Current U.S. GSA per diem rates are available at URL: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.

F. Other Direct Costs. Any costs charged to a grant must be reasonable and directly allocable to the supported activity. The budget should identify and itemize other anticipated direct costs not included under the headings above, including materials and supplies, publication costs, computer services, participant/subject costs, communications, and other direct expenses:

- 1. Materials and Supplies** – Indicate types required and estimate costs.
- 2. Participant Costs** – Indicate costs associated with testing on subjects including fees and travel for human subjects as well as care costs for animal testing. The line item is NOT for payments to “participants” in meetings or conferences.
- 3. Publication Costs** – Costs associated with publication.

4. Computer Services – The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical and educational information, may be requested only where it is institutional policy to charge such costs as direct charges. A justification based on the established computer service rates at the proposing organization must be included. The proposal budget also may request costs for leasing of computer equipment. Special purpose or scientific use computers or associated hardware and software may be requested as items of equipment when necessary to accomplish the project objectives and not otherwise reasonably available. Equipment is defined as any item or property with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, and a service life of one year or more. Purchase of equipment should be included under line item D.

5. Communications – Possible communications costs include on-line services used for the direct work of this grant, shipping costs directly associated with the work of this grant, or separate telephone services needed to complete the work of this grant.

6. Other - Itemize and justify.

G. Total Direct Costs: Sum of line items A through F.

H. Indirect Costs. Indirect costs/overhead (also known as Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A)) are any costs that are not directly allocable to the supported activity and usually apply to administrative expenses incurred by the affiliated institution's research administration. Indirect costs are not levied on subawards (C), and equipment (D).

Note for Independent Scholar Applicants: Independent Scholars who are not affiliated with a university or organization are not eligible to request Indirect Costs, therefore any administrative overhead expenses in proposals from such applicants should be budgeted as Direct Costs and not Indirect Costs.

Tight budgeting is encouraged in order to maximize the impact of the project as a whole, with emphasis on scientific return per dollar rather than per proposal. The maximum amount that can be requested is 15% of the indirect cost base or Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) which is equal to the total direct costs minus subawards (line item C.) and equipment (line item D.). Here are a few examples of calculating indirect costs:

a. If the total direct costs equal \$200,000 and the budget does not include subawards or equipment, then the indirect cost base and the total direct costs are the same. The project may request up to \$30,000 in total indirect costs (200000×0.15).

b. If the total direct costs equal \$200,000, and there is \$45,000 in direct costs for a sub-contract and some equipment, then the indirect cost base will be \$155,000 ($200000 - 45000$). The project may request up to \$23,250 in total indirect costs (155000×0.15).

I. Total Costs: Sum of line items G. and H.

5. Project Timeline (MS Excel template)

The Project Timeline should detail the major activities of the project over a 24-month period. [The Project Timeline Template can be downloaded here](#). Within the spaces provided in the Project Timeline template, briefly describe the Major Project Activities for each quarter indicated. Itemize important project milestones (output and outcomes). Indent your text that describes each of 3-6 project activities you will track to reach each milestone. Please conform to this template in landscape orientation.

II. Documents Required at Award Stage

If you become an award winner as a result of this RFP, you may be required to provide revised versions of any or all proposal documents as well as some of the following additional documents: IRB or IACUC Approval Letters, Tax-exempt Status, or Consulting and Expenditure Responsibility Agreement as applicable. For award winners who are affiliated with institutions, copies of the institution's most recent audited financial statements will be requested if selected as an award winner. All award winners will be prompted to submit such additional materials after the results of the grant competition are announced in September 2012. As individual projects progress, Principal Investigators are required to submit brief progress reports every six months. All documents must be submitted in English, and all budget information must be in U.S. dollars.

A. IRB and IACUC Approvals (if applicable)

Evidence of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (or submission for approval) for research involving human subjects is required. Please submit your IRB requests early, and in the event they have not been fully approved by the time of full proposal submission on June 1, 2012, please be sure to note the date, status and assurance number of the pending approval on your Cover Sheet Template. If you are chosen as a grantee, you will be required to submit your current IRB or IACUC Letter of Approval. Documentation of IRB and/or human subject approval authorization will be required before initial payment may be made. Please note that if you are using human or animal subjects, you must be affiliated with an institution since these studies require approvals from your institution's IRB, or approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

B. Tax-exempt Status

At the award stage, you need to provide evidence of tax-exempt status from your sponsoring institution. 501(c)(3) organizations must include copies of IRS determination letters and EIN number. If you are not affiliated with a university or non-profit institution, you must submit a consulting and expenditure responsibility agreement.

C. One-page Project Summary for Publication

III. Other Terms and Conditions

A. Cost Reimbursement Award: While awards are funded by the John Templeton Foundation, all decisions are made by the University of Chicago. Awards are managed by the University of Chicago on a cost-reimbursable basis.

B. Authority to Bind Principal Investigator (PI) into Contract: Each PI must provide full name, title, institution affiliation, and address including country. Failure to manually sign your proposal on its Cover Sheet may disqualify it.

C. Additional Information Requested: Please indicate if you, as a Principal Investigator, and/or your affiliated research administration has been cited and/or fined within the last five (5) years by any Federal, State or Local regulatory agency. If so, please provide the following information: Date; Identity of the agency issuing the citation or fine; Description of the violation; and Final rulings of the agency. Note: Applicants who are debarred from federal funding/contracts/awards are not eligible for funding through this grant competition.

D. Advice of Omission or Misstatement: In the event it is evident to a PI responding to this RFP that The University of Chicago has omitted or misstated a material requirement to this RFP and/or the services required by this RFP, the responding PI shall advise Project Coordinator, Julia Brazas (bigquestions@oddjob.uchicago.edu) of such omission or misstatement.

E. Cost of Preparation: The University of Chicago will not pay any costs incurred in the full proposal preparation, printing or demonstration process. All costs shall be borne by the Principal Investigator of the proposed project.

F. Notification of Withdrawal: Full proposals may be withdrawn by the applicant prior to the date and time specified for submissions with a formal written notice by an authorized representative of the PI. Proposals submitted will become the property of The University of Chicago after the RFP submission deadline.

G. Semi-annual Progress Reports: As individual projects progress, Principal Investigators are required to submit brief progress reports every six months. A schedule of submission due dates will be provided with the subaward agreement. Payments may be withheld in the event that the Principal Investigator fails to submit appropriate and timely reporting.

IV. Point of Contact

Julia Brazas, Project Coordinator, shall be the sole point of contact regarding this Request for Proposals. All questions concerning both the administrative and technical aspects of this RFP shall be sent via e-mail to bigquestions@oddjob.uchicago.edu.

Julia Brazas, Project Coordinator
New Frontiers in Astronomy and Cosmology
Astronomy & Astrophysics Center

The University of Chicago
Astronomy & Astrophysics Center • 5640 South Ellis Avenue • Chicago, IL 60637
Phone 773 702-1683 • Fax 773 702-8212 • bigquestions@oddjob.uchicago.edu

V. Glossary of Terms

501(c)(3): 501(c)(3) is a section of the Internal Revenue Code instituted by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service United States Department of the Treasury. Organizations described in section 501(c)(3) are commonly referred to as charitable or non-profit organizations.

Authorized Signing Official: An Authorized Signing Official is an authorized representative or administrative official who, on behalf of the proposing organization, is empowered to make certifications and assurances and can commit the organization to the conduct of a project that this program is being asked to support.

Committed Cost-Sharing: All contributions, including cash and third party in-kind, can be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching funds when such contributions are verifiable from the recipient's records, not included as contributions for any other federally-assisted project or program, are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives, are allowable under the applicable cost principles, and are not paid by the Federal Government under another award (except where authorized by Federal statute to be used for cost sharing or matching).

Cost Reimbursement Award: Awards made through this program are cost-reimbursable grants. In this type of grant, the University of Chicago agrees to reimburse the grantee for work performed and/or costs incurred by the grantee up to the total amount specified in the an agreement between The University of Chicago and the contracted institution or organization.

Equipment: Equipment is defined as any item or property with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, and a service life of one year or more. Purchase of equipment should be included under line item D. Items of needed equipment should be listed individually by description and estimated cost, including tax, and adequately justified in the Budget Justification Narrative. Please attach bids or previous invoices to justify the purchase of equipment. Expenditure of over 20% of the project budget for equipment must be sufficiently justified. *Indirect costs are not applied to equipment.*

Grantee: A grantee is the institution, organization, or other entity that receives a grant and assumes legal and financial responsibility and accountability both for the awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activity. Grants are normally made to organizations rather than to individual Principal Investigator/Project Director(s).

IACUC: The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is a self-regulating entity that, according to U.S. federal law, must be established by institutions that use laboratory animals for research or instructional purposes to oversee and evaluate all aspects of the institution's animal care and use program.

IRB: An institutional review board (IRB), also known as an independent ethics committee (IEC) or ethical review board (ERB), is a committee that has been formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans. In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (specifically Office for Human Research Protections) regulations have empowered IRBs to approve, require modifications in planned research prior to approval, or disapprove research. IRBs are responsible for critical oversight functions for research conducted on human subjects that are scientific, ethical, and regulatory.

Principal Investigator: The Principal Investigator is the project director or the individual designated by the grantee, and approved by the sponsor, who will be responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project. If more than one, the first one listed will have primary responsibility for the project and the submission of reports. All others listed are considered co-investigators, and share in the responsibility of the scientific or technical direction of the project.