

NEUP

Nuclear Energy
University Programs

U.S. Department of Energy

Research and Development Review Process

The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy uses a rigorous, independent peer-review process to eliminate bias and to ensure research and development projects it funds through its Nuclear Energy University Programs (NEUP) are based on merit and relevance to DOE-NE's mission.

It is a multi-step process that starts when DOE issues a call for research and development (R&D) pre-applications and ends when it announces the R&D selections.

Here is a step-by-step explanation of NEUP's review system:

Pre-Application Phase

- Pre-applications are submitted to identified technical areas: Fuel Cycle Research and Development, Generation IV Nuclear Energy Systems, Light Water Reactor Sustainability, and Mission Related Investigator Initiated Research.
- Each pre-application is assigned two technical reviewers from the DOE-NE R&D Program Offices and the Technical Integration Office (TIO)/Technology Development Office (TDO).
- Reviewers evaluate and score each pre-application on its relevance to the DOE-NE mission and scientific/technical merit with respect to the applicable program element.
- Based on those scores, NEUP requests full proposals from selected applicants.

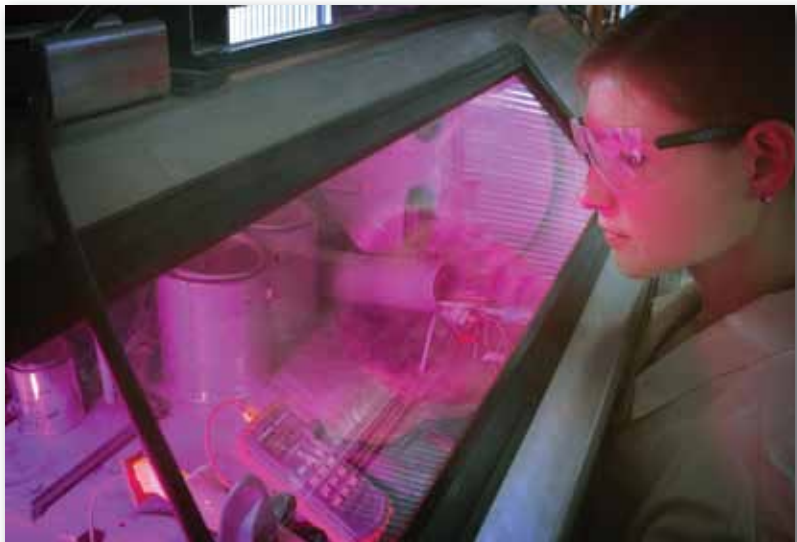
Full Proposal Phase

NEUP follows a three-step review process for the final R&D full proposal phase.

1. Semi-Blind Merit Review

- The R&D full proposals are evaluated by at least **three** independent expert reviewers from industry, academia, or national laboratories for technical merit. The goal is to have at least two of the reviewers be from academia.
- During this stage, reviewers score each proposals based on the project narrative only. The narratives do not identify researchers or lead universities. **The goal is to score the proposals on technical merit only.**

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- After the technical scores are recorded, reviewers evaluate complete proposals, that include budget and research team information, to score for capabilities criteria.
- **Reviewers are not allowed to go back and change their initial technical scores based on the identity of the principal investigators and lead universities.**

2. Board Review

- Selection boards, comprised of DOE-NE Program Manager and TIO/TDO Program Directors, for each workscope area, review the R&D applications to assure that the scope of work is still relevant to the programs. NEUP staff oversee the process.
- Except for outliers, selections within a given workscope are expected to parallel numeric merit scores.

- Proposals with statistically significant deviations are automatically flagged for more detailed examination.
- Final score includes tallies from the Pre-application relevancy review and the average of three merit reviews.
- Selection boards provide list of recommended projects for selection based on the final scores and the availability of funding for each scope area.

3. Final Review

- NEUP reviews recommended list of proposals for selection and evaluates geographic distribution, participation of minority institutions, and other balancing criteria.
- Final list of proposals recommended for award are presented to DOE-NE officials for review and final approval.

For more information

Dr. Marsha Lambregts

(208) 526-1336

marsha.lambregts@inl.gov

www.ne-up.org

www.nuclear.energy.gov



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