



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Does a scholar need to have an advanced degree such as a PhD to serve as the project director of a Collaborative Research grant?**

No, but the project director's resume should include evidence (publications, presentations, and other experience) that demonstrates the ability to carry out the project. Note also that a degree candidate may not be the project director, codirector, or sole collaborator.

- 2. May our team include a scholarly collaborator from another country?**

Yes, and NEH requires at least one scholar not based in the U.S. for Planning International Collaboration applications. You may compensate international collaborators with NEH funds as consultants, but you cannot pass NEH funds on to foreign institutions. Note also that a scholar at a U.S. institution must contribute significantly to the project.

- 3. May I serve as a project codirector if I am enrolled in a degree-granting program but already hold a PhD? I am working on an additional master's degree in an unrelated field.**

No. If you are enrolled in a degree-granting program of any kind at the time of application, you may not be the project director, codirector, or sole collaborator. You may, however, serve in other roles on the project team.

- 4. Neither I nor my collaborators will be able to work on the project during the academic year. Can we work on our project only during the summers?**

No. The program supports sustained full-time or part-time activities over the course of the entire period of performance.

- 5. Must we have a contract with a publisher before applying in the Manuscript Preparation funding category?**

No. Although having a contract is helpful, proposals without one can be successful, so long as there is an appropriate and feasible plan leading towards manuscript submission to a publisher at the end of the period of performance.

6. We plan to apply for a period of performance of 18 months under the Manuscript Preparation category. May we request \$200,000 in funding?

No. In both the Manuscript Preparation and Scholarly Digital Project categories, periods of performance that include partial years must be prorated by month. Therefore, the maximum you may request for 18 months is \$150,000 (\$100,000 for the first year, plus \$50,000 for the final six months).

7. When should the performance period end for a Manuscript Preparation project?

Your period of performance must be at least one year and no more than three years, but it should end when you submit the manuscript to the publisher, even if there will be subsequent revisions following peer review. You cannot predict how long it will take to receive readers' reports, or the extent of required revisions. The aim of the Collaborative Research program is to support the most intensive period of research and writing necessary to produce the manuscript.

8. We are a team of collaborators from several different disciplines. Should we pick "interdisciplinary" as the field for our project on the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs?

No. You should pick a primary and secondary discipline before you pick "interdisciplinary" as your tertiary, since "interdisciplinary" is not a well-defined academic field.

9. I'm a scholar of education, but the Funding Restrictions prohibit projects aimed at developing teaching theories or assessing educational impact. How do I know if my project is eligible?

While the program does not support projects aimed at developing curricula, teaching methods, or teaching theories, or projects that assess the impact of an educational program or curriculum, it can support a project aimed at studying the history or sociology of education more broadly. If you are uncertain if our project is eligible, consult with NEH staff before applying (email collaborative@neh.gov).

10. We would like to maximize our chance of receiving an award, so we plan to submit a second application for the same project to another NEH program. Is that allowed?

Possibly, but keep in mind that, per [2 CFR §200.403\(f\)](#), NEH does not permit overlapping costs on two or more awards for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets. NEH may disallow overlapping project costs, and an individual's level of effort cannot exceed 100% across multiple active federally funded awards.

11. We can't explain some of the items on our budget form in the space available. Where can we provide additional information for these items?

You must attach a budget justification to describe how the amounts requested from NEH for each line item of the budget will support the achievement of proposed objectives.

12. May we choose to hold a team meeting outside of the United States?

Yes, but there must be a project-related and justifiable reason for meeting outside the United States. Saving money on lodging is not a sufficient justification. Any foreign travel must be undertaken on U.S. flag carriers (coach or equivalent), wherever such service is available.

13. We need a scanner to digitize archival materials. Can our budget include the purchase of a scanner?

No. As a matter of programmatic policy, you cannot use Collaborative Research awards to purchase computers or peripherals, including scanners and printers.

14. Can we request funds for an adjunct to fulfill the teaching duties of a scholar who will be working on our project instead of teaching?

No. You may not request funding for an adjunct not working on the project, but you may request funds to compensate the time and effort of the scholar working on the project. All grant funds must directly support work on the proposed project.

15. If we still have questions about allowable costs or administrative requirements after we have read the Notice of Funding Opportunity and the FAQs, whom should we contact?

Contact your institution's research development, sponsored research, or grant administration office, which will likely be familiar with federal budget requirements. If the staff there have questions about allowable costs or administrative requirements, they should contact NEH's Office of Grant Management at grantmanagement@neh.gov.

16. What constitutes a good title for our project?

Your title should be descriptive of the project, substantive, and free of specialized language. It should be easily understood by the general public. Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. Avoid a title that requires clarification by a subtitle. For example, "A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1900" is clearer than "Fakes and Fakers: A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S."

When possible, include places and dates indicating a project's scope. For example, "Faith and Belief among New York City Catholics, 1945-1970" is clearer than "Faith and Belief in the Catholic Community."

If you mention a person in your title, include dates and a description. For example, "A Biography of German Philosopher Klaus von Guberstopper (1834-1910)" is clearer than "A Biography of Klaus von Guberstopper."

17. Our project description runs over the character and space limitation on the SF-424 form. Is that acceptable?

No. Anything that is over the character and space limitations in both the project title and project description fields is automatically deleted during the application submission process at Grants.gov.

18. We applied last year and were unsuccessful. Will this be held against us if we apply again this year?

No. NEH regards all applications as new. Previous unsuccessful applications are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to the reviewers, who will not be the same reviewers who evaluated your previous application. We recommend that you not mention previously unsuccessful applications in your narrative.

19. Are there common pitfalls that we should avoid?

Avoid jargon and highly specialized vocabulary. If you must use some of the latter, do so sparingly and define your terms.

Do not assume that gap-filling is sufficient for high significance. Engage with the literature in your field or fields and explain how your project advances understanding beyond what scholars already know, adds significantly to existing knowledge, or transforms how scholars approach a topic—and explain why your new contribution matters.

Do not assume that all the peer reviewers evaluating your application will be experts in your *specific* area. Write for humanities scholars broadly.

Avoid the minor errors that result in applications being ruled ineligible (these include exceeding mandatory page limits, proposing degree candidates as directors or codirectors, disregarding formatting requirements about font size or margins). Note that converting a word document to a pdf may change the page count; doublecheck the pdf length of each attachment before submitting.