SFARI | SIMONS FOUNDATION AUTISM RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Pilot and Research Award Request for Applications (RFA)
Frequently Asked Questions and Glossary

These frequently asked questions (FAQs) aim to cover topics related to the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) RFA letter of intent and full proposal processes, Simons Foundation policies and online submission on proposalCENTRAL (pC).

If you have a question regarding the RFA guidelines or policies not answered below, do not hesitate to contact the Simons Foundation at grants@simonsfoundation.org or call 646-654-0066.

Letter of intent (LOI) FAQ

Where do I submit the LOI or full proposal?
New users first need to register on proposalCENTRAL (pC). For all users, log in and select CREATE NEW PROPOSAL or click on the GRANT OPPORTUNITIES tab. The SFARI programs will be listed during the LOI submission period. Click APPLY NOW to start the application and access the template. After all sections are completed and your LOI PDF is uploaded, you will be able to hit the SUBMIT button to send the application.

How do I create a proposalCENTRAL user account?
Go to https://proposalcentral.altum.com and click CREATE ONE NOW under NEED AN ACCOUNT? Fill in the required fields, check the boxes to agree to proposalCENTRAL's "Terms of Service and Acceptable Use Policy" and then click SAVE.

Can I email or mail an LOI or full proposal?
No, the Simons Foundation accepts only applications submitted online through pC.

Do I need institutional sign-off to submit an LOI?
No, a signed face page is required only for the full proposal.

Can someone else (assistant, staff member, etc.) submit my application for me?
Yes, you can add users with administrator access to the pC application so that someone other than the Principal Investigator (PI) can edit and submit the application.

Can postdoctoral associates apply as PIs?
No, postdoctoral associates may not apply as PIs. All applicants and key collaborators must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and have a faculty position or the equivalent at a college, university, medical school or other research facility. Funds may not be used for stipend supplementation unless specifically authorized under the terms of the program from which funds are derived.

Can foreign institutions apply for a grant?
Yes, foreign institutions with a 501(c)(3) equivalency may apply.

Can multiple PIs apply for a grant?
In rare circumstances, the applicant organization may designate multiple individuals as PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the project, intellectually and

logistically. For more information on the responsibilities of PIs, please refer to the personnel definitions in the SFARI glossary below.

Can I change the named PI?

Yes, linked instructions for how to change the named PI can be found in the application.

The person who starts an application will be named as the PI on the Applicant/PI page. If the Applicant/PI section does not show the correct person (e.g., someone else started the online application and you are the PI, or you started the application and someone else is the PI), you must update this section before submitting. PI details carry over to the full proposal.

Can Principal Investigators submit multiple applications (including Explorer, Pilot and Research Awards)?

Yes, PIs may submit multiple applications, but please contact the science staff at sciencerfa@simonsfoundation.org to discuss before submitting. However, it is unlikely that two awards will be made to the same PI within one RFA cycle.

Can Co-Investigators and additional personnel be listed on multiple applications?

Yes, Co-Investigators and additional personnel can be listed on multiple applications.

As the applicant PI, should I be listed as key personnel in the application on pC?

No. Please list only additional key personnel on the application (i.e., Co-Investigators, non-applicant PI(s), Postdoctoral Research Associates, etc.).

Where do I enter additional Co-Investigators and additional key personnel?

You can save personnel details in the KEY PERSONNEL section on the LOI application.

What are the file format, font style and size requirements of the LOI?

Please submit a PDF of the LOI document. Type should be set in 11-point, legible font. All margins should be set at 0.5 inches.

Do I need to submit biosketches with the LOI?

Yes, biosketches are required for the Principal Investigator(s) only.

Can I submit a budget with the LOI?

No, the estimated total annual costs should be included on the LOI template. A detailed budget is not requested with the LOI.

Where is the SUBMIT button?

The SUBMIT button is located in the last section of the LOI application. You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. If the submission deadline has NOT passed, use the VALIDATE button to check for missing requirements. If the problem persists, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

If the deadline has passed, the submission period has closed and you will not be able to submit.

I get an error message citing a missing section when I try to submit.

The VALIDATE button reviews your application for missing sections. The submission instructions list the required sections and attachments. You must complete the missing sections listed. If you are still receiving error messages after completing and saving the indicated sections, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

Are deadline times adjusted for time zones?

No, please be advised that application deadlines on the application are in Eastern Time. We recommend registering early and submitting applications with ample time for corrections prior to the deadline hour. Site traffic can slow page-load times. The SUBMIT button will not work after the deadline time has passed.

Is there a confirmation email when I submit?

A confirmation email is sent upon submission of the LOI and full proposal. Please contact pcsupport@altum.com if you submitted your application and have not received a confirmation email within ten minutes. Make sure that spam filters allow emails from pcsupport@altum.com. The LOI will be in the SUBMITTED tab when you next log in.

Does the Simons Foundation grant extensions for LOIs?

No extensions will be given. If you have any difficulties, please email us at grants@simonsfoundation.org or call (646) 654-0066. Please do not contact pC directly.

Full proposal FAQ

How do I submit a full proposal?

With an accepted LOI, you gain access to the full proposal application on pC. Log in and click through to IN-PROGRESS applications. The LOI sections are linked to the application. Once all sections are complete and the attachments are uploaded, the SUBMIT button will be activated.

For the full proposal, are references, figures and figure legends included in the narrative eight (8) page limit? How should they be included?

References, figures and figure legends are not included in the page limit for the full proposal. Please attach them at the end of the eight (8) page narrative in the same PDF file. The Simons Foundation's preference is for figures to follow the narrative rather than be embedded in the text.

What are the font style and size requirements?

Type should be sent in 11-point, legible font. All margins should be set at 0.5 inches.

What can I include as an appendix?

In-press papers can be included as appendices, as well as any papers that you consider essential for the work of the review committee (not more than three (3) papers). Any other material should be included, if possible, in the narrative. If you have video attachments for your proposal, please upload as an appendix (all file types are accepted).

Is there a minimum percent effort for Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators?

We seek applications from independent investigators who can devote a substantial portion of time to this effort. There is no minimum percent effort required for any personnel, but we expect personnel, in particular PIs and Co-investigators, to have efforts that reflect their roles in the project.

What do I do if there are multiple PIs on the application?

- Applications with multiple PIs from different institutions who would like to be paid separately must upload the following items in the PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS section:
  - Signed signature page for each PI (available for download in the PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS and DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS sections).

- o Budget template for each non-applicant PI (available for download in the PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS and DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS sections).
  - o The direct costs for all non-applicant PIs must be included in section 8 (BUDGET PERIOD DETAIL) in the CONSORTIUM & CONTRACTUAL DIRECT section, and indirect costs for all non-applicant PIs should be included in the INDIRECT COSTS section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each non-applicant PI.
- Applications with multiple PIs from different institutions who will be paid directly by the contact PI's institution are considered subcontracts. Subcontracts must submit:
  - o Subcontract Detailed Budget (available for download in the PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS and DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS sections) for each subcontract.
  - o Subcontract direct costs must be included in the CONSORTIUM & CONTRACTUAL DIRECT section, and subcontract indirect costs should be included in the INDIRECT COSTS section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each subcontract.
  - o Only one signature page from the institution of the applicant PI submitting the application is required.
- Applications with multiple PIs from the same institution do not need to submit additional materials. Additional non-applicant PIs should be listed as key personnel in section 6 (KEY PERSONNEL) and in section 8 (BUDGET PERIOD DETAIL), and only one signature page is needed. Please note that the applicant PI will be the designated contact PI for the project. The contact PI will be responsible for directing the project, and will act as the main point-of-contact for the foundation by coordinating all administrative deliverables.

What do I do if there is a subcontract on the application?

Applications with a subcontract (including PIs who will be paid directly by the contact PI's institution) must submit:
- o Subcontract Detailed Budget (available for download in the PROPOSAL SUBCONTRACT DETAILED BUDGET and DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS sections) for each subcontract.
- o Subcontract direct costs must be included in the CONSORTIUM & CONTRACTUAL DIRECT section, and subcontract indirect costs should be included in the INDIRECT COSTS section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each subcontract.

Are indirect costs included in the annual budget limits?

Yes. For example, the annual limit for a Pilot Award is $150,000, which includes indirect costs, at 20 percent for a one (1)-year budget total of $150,000. Please note that indirect costs cannot be taken on equipment with a unit cost of more than $5,000, or on tuition or SSC and Simons VIP biospecimens.

Does the Principal Investigator need to sign the signature page?

No, only the signing official is required to sign the signature page.

How can I find out more about available biospecimens and other data available from the Simons Variation in Individuals Project (Simons VIP) and Simons Simplex Collection (SSC)?

You can access and request information about Simons VIP and SSC biospecimens and data on SFARI Base. Please see our resources website (http://sfari.org/resources/sfari-base/request-data-and-biospecimens) for more information. If you do not have a SFARI ID, you must create one. If you have problems with the log-in or have questions regarding the collections, please email collections@sfari.org.

Do the annual budget limits include the cost of purchasing SSC and Simons VIP biospecimens?

No, SSC and Simons VIP biospecimen estimated costs are not included in the budget limit. Prices for SSC and Simons VIP biospecimens can be found in the price list on our website.

Does the Simons Foundation require letters of support or collaboration?

We do not require letters of support or letters of collaboration for Co-Investigators. If a letter is prepared, it can be uploaded as "Appendix – In-press papers on related topics."

Can I make changes to the application once it has been submitted?

Before you can make changes to your submitted application, you must first contact the Simons Foundation. Please email grants@simonsfoundation.org or call (646) 654-0066. Applications can only be changed prior to the 22 March 2017 deadline.

Is validating my proposal the same as submitting it?

No. "Validating" the proposal checks for errors and omissions and will alert you to missing requirements of your LOI or application. If the application is complete, you must then click the SUBMIT button. You will receive an email within ten minutes, and should contact pcsupport@altum.com if you do not receive confirmation and do not see your application in the SUBMITTED tab or with the status changed to SUBMITTED.

The deadline for notification has passed. What is the status of my proposal?

You should receive notification within 24 hours of the deadline. Please check your spam filter settings if you have not received notification by then.

SFARI Glossary

Award types

SFARI Explorer Award
Application type for proposals requesting support for exploratory experiments that will strengthen hypotheses and lead to the formulation of competitive applications for subsequent larger-scale funding by SFARI or other organizations. Innovative, high-risk/high-impact proposals are encouraged. We especially encourage applications from investigators who are new to the field of autism, but who have expertise that could be brought to bear on this complex disorder. The maximum budget is $70,000, including indirect costs, for one (1) year, non-renewable. Applications are accepted year-round and decisions about funding are made within about a month by SFARI science staff.

SFARI Pilot Award
Application type for innovative, high-impact proposals requesting support for small-scale projects, or for early-stage experiments that will build on preliminary data or a prior track record and lead to competitive applications for funding by SFARI or other organizations. Investigators new to the field of autism are encouraged to apply for Pilot Awards. The maximum budget is $150,000, including indirect costs, per year for up to two (2) years.

SFARI Research Award
Application type for proposals from investigators with demonstrated expertise requesting support for compelling, high-impact research on an experimental hypothesis for which, in most cases, preliminary data have already been gathered. The foundation will also consider projects focusing on a central hypothesis where success depends on close collaboration between two or more labs. We expect to fund proposals for a maximum of $275,000, including indirect costs, per year for up to three (3) years, but under exceptional circumstances will consider proposals at higher levels. All budgets over $275,000 per year require pre-approval by SFARI science staff (please contact sciencerfa@simonsfoundation.org).

Indirect costs on all SFARI grant types are limited to 20 percent of the modified total direct costs.

Personnel definitions

Principal Investigator
The individual(s) judged by the applicant organization to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct the project or program supported by the grant. He or she is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization and SFARI for the proper conduct of the project or activity, including the submission of all required reports. He or she will act as the main point-of-contact for the foundation. There is no minimum percent effort required for a Principal Investigator (PI), but it is expected that the PI will join the collaborative community of SFARI Investigators, and he or she will partake in some conferences, workshops and symposia that the foundation organizes.

In rare circumstances, the applicant organization may designate multiple individuals as PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the project, intellectually and logistically. Each PI is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization, or, as appropriate, to a collaborating organization, for the proper conduct of the project or program, including the submission of all required reports. The presence of more than one identified PI on an application or award diminishes neither the responsibility nor the accountability of any individual PI.

The first PI listed, under whose name the application is submitted, will serve as the contact PI for administrative purposes. The contact PI must be affiliated with the institution submitting the application. The contact PI will be responsible for communication between SFARI and the rest of the leadership team.

The role type 'Co-PI' will not be used by SFARI.

Co-Investigator
An individual involved with the PI in the scientific development or execution of a project. The Co-Investigator must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent and be employed by, or be affiliated with, the applicant/grantee organization or another organization participating in the project under a consortium agreement. A Co-Investigator is considered key personnel, but the Simons Foundation does not require a minimum effort from the Co-Investigator. The designation of a Co-Investigator, if applicable, does not affect the PI's roles and responsibilities, **nor is it a role implying multiple PIs.**

Consultant
An individual providing professional advice or services on the basis of a written agreement. These individuals are not normally employees of the organization receiving the services. Consultants also include firms providing professional advice or services.

Postdoctoral Research Associate
An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or the equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path. The Postdoctoral Research Associate performs specific services in exchange for compensation, and he or she is treated as an employee of the grantee institution, with benefits.

SFARI funds may only be used for personnel considered employees of the grantee institution who are eligible for benefits. Funds may not be used for stipend supplementation unless specifically authorized under the terms of the program from which funds are derived.