

California Sea Grant College Program Proposal Review Process

The California Sea Grant College Program solicits proposals for a variety of funding opportunities. The process described below is for submission to the annual omnibus competition, which this year includes the CA Ocean Protection Council funds. In addition to the omnibus competition, the program administers National Sea Grant College Program competitions that include a variety of fellowships, National Strategic Investments, and special one-time funding opportunities; the process described below does not pertain to these other special competitions.

Each year a call for preliminary project proposals is widely distributed throughout California. Of the nearly 100 preliminary proposals received annually, approximately 25% advance to the full proposal stage, of which one third will be approved for funding.

The Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP) conducts the initial review of preliminary proposals. Input from RASGAP is directed toward identifying and meeting priorities for state funding according to the needs identified in the document entitled "California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy" (IRO) and "OPC Five-Year Strategic Plan" located on the California Sea Grant website (<http://www.csgc.ucsd.edu>) or on the California Ocean Protection Council website (<http://resources.ca.gov/copc>).

The California Sea Grant Committee, comprised of academic scientists with expertise in the areas funded by the program, conducts the final review of preliminary proposals. At this stage, screening is based on the project's innovative approach, uniqueness of the idea, importance, quality of science, and appropriateness to Sea Grant. Each proposal is considered on its own merits without regard for campus or institutional affiliation. Full proposals are requested on those topics that rate highly on these criteria.

Full proposals are mailed to external merit reviewers. The RASGAP meets a second time to prioritize full proposals based on specific interest to the State of California as identified in the IRO and in the "OPC Five-Year Strategic Plan." The California Sea Grant Committee also meets a second time to evaluate full proposals with the benefit of the written merit reviews. Criteria for selection at this step include: (1) rationale; (2) scientific merit and impact or outreach quality; (3) innovativeness; (4) programmatic justification; (5) practical impact and user relationships; (6) relationship to Sea Grant priorities; (7) qualifications and past record of investigators or past record of program components; and (8) strength of outreach program including educational activities. Merit reviews, user collaboration, expected impact (scientific and practical), and letters of support from potential users help determine whether these criteria are met.

When all the input from the external merit reviewers, the California Sea Grant Committee, and RASGAP is received, the California Sea Grant Management Team makes the final decisions regarding approval of proposals for funding. The National Sea Grant Office then approves those decisions.

New and continuing proposals are compiled by the California Sea Grant College Program into an institutional proposal containing: project and program summaries, budget pages, full proposal narratives, curricula vitae, and letters of support. The institutional proposal, called the California Sea Grant College Program Omnibus, is submitted to the National Sea Grant College Program for funding and implementation on February 1 of the following year.

Declined preliminary proposals may be appealed in writing to the California Sea Grant Director at the preliminary stage only and within two weeks of notification. If you have any questions, or desire more information about this process, please do not hesitate to call the California Sea Grant office at (858) 534-4440.