

**Young Faculty Award 2016**  
**DARPA-RA-16-05 Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1) The RA specifies single-investigator proposal only, and precludes subcontracting. Am I allowed to include another faculty member at my university, if they are included in a supporting role, and not listed as a Co-PI?**

Yes. Additional faculty members may only be included in a supporting role. It is up to the applicant to structure his or her research team in a way that best supports the research goals.

- 2) I am a young investigator at a non-profit research institute that does not have tenure-track positions. Do I qualify as part of an equivalent non-profit research institution?**

If the proposer is from a non-profit science and technology research institution a determination of eligibility must be made using the following guidance:

- The PI is within 5 years of the appointment hire date.
- The employing organization does not offer tenure track appointments.
- The appointment is a continuing appointment (soft-money appointments and/or visiting appointments do not apply and will not be considered).

- 3) Is a Ph.D. required?**

No.

- 4) I am considering applying to other Young Investigator programs sponsored by other agencies. Does that disqualify me from proposing to (or being selected for) the DARPA YFA grant?**

No. As described in **Sec III.A Eligible Applicants**, submission to young investigator programs sponsored by other agencies is not restricted.

- 5) I would like to request a meeting with a specific YFA topic POC. Is this possible?**

No. Unfortunately, due to the high volume of responses to this RA, YFA topic POCs are unable to accommodate such meetings. However, if you have a specific administrative question you may send it to [DARPA-RA-16-05@darpa.mil](mailto:DARPA-RA-16-05@darpa.mil).

**6) Under what topic is my research most applicable?**

It is up to you to choose the most appropriate topic area for your proposed research. As stated in the RA, please note that "DARPA reserves the right to assign proposals to a different topic area than that which was indicated by the proposer."

**7) My idea fits into multiple topic areas. May I submit to multiple topics and/or submit multiple applications?**

No. You may submit only one YFA application, and may specify only one topic area. It is up to you as the proposer to choose a topic area from the 15 technical topic areas listed in DARPA-RA-16-05 that most closely aligns with your proposed idea.

**8) I am [a non-U.S. citizen/a Permanent Resident/Green Card/etc.]; can I apply to YFA? Do I need to be able to obtain a security clearance to be eligible for YFA?**

There is no language in the RA prohibiting a non-U.S. citizen/Permanent Resident/Green Card holder/etc. from applying to this RA; all such persons MAY apply to this RA as long as the application comes from a U.S. institution. It is NOT a requirement of the RA that proposers be eligible to obtain a U.S. security clearance.

**9) I started my assistant professor position in the spring of 2011. How is the 5-year time window calculated?**

The 5-year time window is calculated from your date of hire for your current tenure-track appointment to assistant or associate professor, to the date that proposals are due (April 5, 2016). If you were appointed to a tenure-track position before April 5, 2011, you are not eligible to apply.

**10) If I was previously in a tenured position, but have changed universities and am currently in an untenured (but tenure-track) position, am I still eligible to submit a proposal?**

Yes, as long as you are still within the 5-year date of hire window.

**11) If I am an Assistant Professor not in a tenure-track position (even though my institution offers tenure-track positions) am I eligible to submit a proposal?**

No.

**12) Are both the Executive summary slide and biosketch included in the 8-page limit as stated in the proposal format instructions?**

Yes.

**13) Will the YFA solicitation go out every year, and will the topic areas vary over the years?**

We are unable to make good-faith predictions about future solicitations. While this program has received positive feedback in the past, the future of the program depends on the availability of funding. The topic areas for YFA solicitations tend to vary, but are designed to meet the needs of DARPA Program Managers at the time that the solicitation is issued. Some new topics could be added while others may change only slightly.

**14) Can I view a sample abstract of a previously-awarded proposal?**

No.

**15) I am interested in collaborating with other faculty members. How should I structure my collaboration in the proposal?**

The Research Announcement prohibits subcontracting or co-principal investigators. It is up to the applicant to structure his or her research team in a way that best supports the research goals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their YFA submission with their Office of Sponsored Research (or equivalent) several weeks in advance of the submission deadline.

**16) I am an untenured Assistant professor. However, my promotion and tenure package is currently being reviewed. If I am granted tenure sometime during the spring of 2016, am I eligible for this DARPA YFA?**

As long as you are untenured (but within 5 years of having been appointed to a tenure track position) on the proposal due date of April 5, 2016, then you are eligible to propose.

**17) Should we include a budget for equipment, and is there a funding limitation on equipment purchases?**

If you will need to purchase equipment to perform your research, then it should be included in your budget via a priced Bill-of-Materials (see page 24 of the research announcement). All equipment priced at over \$1,000 requires supporting documentation, such as a vendor quote. There is no specific limit for equipment purchases; however, your total budget for the 24-month base period cannot exceed \$500,000.

**18) Should proposers include a budget for the Director’s Fellowship in the third year?**

Yes. As noted in Section III (page 24), the Cost Proposal should include a “summary of total program costs by phase (Base, Director’s Fellowship Option) and calendar fiscal year.” Note that there is a maximum budget of \$500,000 for the Director’s Fellowship (page 26).

**19) If I took a leave of absence (i.e. maternity, sabbatical, etc.) within 5 years of being hired to a tenure-track position, should this period be included in the 5 year window?**

Situations like this are highly case-dependent. Each university or research institution maintains a tenure-track appointment date for each employee, and this is the date that should be listed in a proposal. If the university is willing to take a leave of absence into account and subsequently changes the date of appointment, then that date may be listed on the proposal. DARPA will only accept the official date according to the university.

**20) Are preliminary results required, allowed but not required, or not allowed in this solicitation?**

Preliminary results are allowed but not required.

**21) Are Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) eligible for grant funding under this RA?**

No.

**22) The research announcement specifies that the tables included in the cost proposal should be provided in MS Excel format with formula calculations intact to allow traceability of the cost proposal numbers. It is our experience with grants.gov submissions that data is flattened during the submission process. How should we submit these files?**

Please submit the files in the format specified according to the Research Announcement guidelines. As there is no page limit for the cost proposal, you are welcome to display a breakdown of numbers in a format that provides the greatest clarity. If selected for award, the contracting officer will be able to request the working MS Excel file(s) from you directly.

**23) Does the 8 page limit only apply to B. Technical Proposal and Statement of Work in Section II of Volume I? Is additional information (references and funding list) counted toward the page limit**

The 8 page limit applies to Volume I, Section II, which includes: (A) the executive summary slide, (B) the technical proposal and statement of work (SOW), and (C) the biosketch. Volume I, Section III provides a space for additional information. If you include a

bibliography, relevant papers (up to three), or funding lists in your submission, these should be submitted in Section III, and are not counted against the 8 page limit.

There are no page limits to the cost proposal (Volume II).

**24) DARPA-RA-16-05 says: "Proposals responding to this RA should clearly describe the DoD problem being addressed..." Are there any recommended resources to learn about specific DoD problems?**

DARPA seeks to understand and solve a wide variety of DoD problems. Current research efforts can be found on the DARPA website, located here: <http://www.darpa.mil/our-research>. Several of the technology offices also have "focus" or "thrust" areas. These should not be treated as comprehensive lists, and DARPA leaves it up to the proposer to suggest potential applications for his or her research.

**25) Is there a place in the submission package to include Letters of Support and Collaboration?**

These can be included in Volume I, Section I of the proposal, if you choose to submit them. For collaborators receiving a salary, this should be included in the budget.

**26) Is a Letter of Support from the University Department Head required for the submission?**

No. However, a transmittal letter will need to come from your institution. Please reach out to your University's Office of Sponsored Research for further information and guidance.

**27) What is the effort requirement for the PI? We plan on having other FTEs working on this project so we want to budget appropriately for the PI.**

DARPA cannot determine this for you. The PI's level of effort should be substantial enough to ensure that the proposed research can be completed during the grant period.

**28) My proposed idea is [insert research idea]. Is this of interest? Can I get confirmation that my research fits within the scope of one of the fifteen technical areas listed in DARPA-RA-16-05?**

The topic areas are purposefully broad to allow proposers to have maximum creativity in their responses. No further guidance will be provided outside of the technical information listed in the RA.

**29) I want to propose to a topic area but my research will require me to use fabrication services that are not readily available at my university. If we are not allowed to use subcontractors, how should I structure my proposal?**

Given the current ground rules of the RA, and the nature of the YFA program, it is reasonable to assume that fabrication services would be priced as commercial vendor services and not as research subcontractors (or team members).

**30) Does the base limit of \$500,000 include indirect costs?**

Yes.

**31) Regarding the Executive Summary slide (Volume I, Section II.A), should this be included in addition to an executive summary in Section II?**

No. The Executive Summary slide should be a stand-alone document that summarizes your research using the questions provided as prompts. You should follow the format established in the attachment. You do not need to include an additional executive summary in Volume I, Section II.

**32) Regarding the Heilmeier Catechism questions in Volume I, Section II-B, Does DARPA want each of these questions explicitly written out and then answered (which could make the proposal straightforward to read), or is it preferable to address each of the questions in a standard proposal narrative outline?**

The Heilmeier Catechism questions are guidelines to help structure your proposal. DARPA cannot provide guidance on how these questions should be answered.

**33) Page 24 of the RA requests that Cost Volumes clearly identify the individual labor categories of employees supporting the proposed research. Is there a DARPA list of labor categories and associated qualifications?**

There is no such list maintained by DARPA. You may use the categories established by your institution.

**34) The RA states that there will be a number of visits and exercises at a “variety of DoD sites and facilities” for which attendance is encouraged. Where are the locations of these other DoD sites and facilities, besides DARPA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia?**

The travel budget amount is at the discretion of the proposer. The exact locations of military site visits have yet to be determined. A notional budget could include at least one east coast trip and one west coast trip. The program review meetings will likely be held in Arlington, Virginia.

**35) May proposers include research students or visitors in the proposed travel budget?**

Proposers should submit a realistic and appropriate travel budget. If you propose a travel budget for multiple individuals you will be expected to justify this in the cost proposal. All requests for travel funding (for both the Principal Investigator and others) will be reviewed by the DARPA Program Manager as well as the Grants Officer for those proposals selected for award. Any requests for travel funding that are deemed excessive will likely be reduced during negotiations, if selected.

**36) According to the RA, proposers intending to include animals in their study need to include a document detailing animal use. Where should this document be placed in the proposal package?**

Page 29 of the RA states "For projects anticipating animal use, proposals should briefly describe plans for Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) review and approval." A description of these plans may be included in Section I (Administrative) of Volume I.

**37) I am interested in submitting a proposal to the 2016 YFA Research Announcement but my research topic does not fall under any of the 15 listed topics. Does DARPA encourage proposals outside of these 15 listed topics?**

The following language comes directly from the RA: "This RA solicits single investigator proposals for research and development in the specific technical areas of interest to DARPA's Microsystems Technology Office (MTO), Defense Sciences Office (DSO), and Biological Technologies Office (BTO) articulated below. **Proposers must specify ONE and only one of these topic areas for their proposal and identify this on the cover page.**" Therefore, proposers cannot propose to a topic not specifically listed in this RA. If you feel that your research is not directly related to one of the 15 topic areas, you may look into submitting a proposal to any of the DARPA Open Office-wide Broad Agency Announcements; however, any such proposal cannot be referred to as a "YFA" proposal.