

Frequently Asked Questions

[Priorities and Dates](#)

[Eligibility to Apply for a Grant](#)

[Process for Submission of a Grant](#)

[Methodology & Design Considerations](#)

[Budget Issues and Questions](#)

[After a Grant is Funded](#)

Priorities and Dates

Is there a specific start date that should be used?

Funding is generally received by July 1 of the year the grant is approved for funding. The NLN does not require applicants to use a specific start date. Most grants submitted start between July 1 and September 30 of the grant year.

Is the funding period for 1-year? If so, is there an option for a no-cost extension to complete data analysis?

Grant proposals can be written for one-year or two-year terms. As with anything, research studies can face unanticipated issues and require an extension. Upon submission of appropriate support materials, requests for no-cost extensions are approved with a due date for the final report specified.

We have implemented a new model of clinical education for undergraduate students in our BSN program and want to evaluate how it is working. Would this topic fall under the priorities for this grant?

The NLN has decided that equal emphasis will be placed on all priorities located at [Research Priorities in Nursing Education \(nln.org\)](#). The final decision on how well a proposal reflects the priorities is made by the review panel after reading the total proposal. Note, however, the NLN funds academic research studies and not quality improvement projects.

What are the key dates related to the NLN Education Research Grants Program?

The NLN Educational Research Grants are awarded annually. For each grant cycle, grant application instructions are posted on the NLN web site in early October. Grant proposals are due by early February.

Letters of notification are sent and funds distributed to schools/institutions by July 1. (Most awarded studies start by September of the same year). Recipients of the Nursing Education Research Grants are formally announced at the NLN Education Summit in late September/early October.

Is there any way we can see a sample of a well written grant from previous years?

Currently we do not have examples of funded grants on the website. We do not have permission from awardees to put this information on the website. However, our website provides a listing of all previously funded grants, as well as a [free archived webinar](#) on preparing a successful nursing education research proposal.

[Back to Top](#)

Eligibility to Apply for a Grant

Can an NLN Member Organization submit more than one application? If so, is there a limit?

Yes, an NLN member organization may submit multiple applications for funding. There is no current limit on the number of submissions. All proposals are submitted for blind review by carefully selected experts in nursing education research. Grant award recipients are selected through a peer review process using the [NLN Proposal Review Rubric](#).

I am an NLN member. I will be working and living in Canada in the coming year. Can I still submit a grant application?

Yes. All members of the NLN who do not have a conflict of interest are eligible to apply for a grant. You are not required to live or work in the United States to apply for a grant.

My colleague and I plan to submit a proposal for the nursing education grant program. We propose a multi-site study and need to know if both sites must be members of NLN. The PI is a current NLN member.

The PI must be a NLN member, but there is no requirement that other members of the research team be NLN members.

What are the eligibility requirements to apply for an NLN research grant? I am uncertain whether our proposed project will take place in the practice setting or focuses on how new graduates adjust to the role of staff nurse.

This research would be supported if the research question(s) focus on the students' preparation for the role of graduate nurse. It would not be supported if the focus is on the development of new staff.

I am interested in applying for a NLN grant as partial funding of my doctoral dissertation. Can I apply for this grant if my research proposal is for a doctoral dissertation?

Yes, but you must have your proposal approved by your committee and Institutional Review Board before applying.

If I submit a proposal that is research for my dissertation, does my dissertation chair need to be identified as PI or Co-PI?

No, you would serve as the PI of your research.

Can I submit my proposal to different grant options on the NLN grants page?

A grant proposal may **NOT** be submitted for more than one grant option on the NLN grants page during one cycle. If the proposal is not approved for funding, writers may consider seeking an [NLN scholarship award](#) if applicable. Or they are welcome to submit another proposal during the next grant cycle.

Does the PI have to be a nurse?

A nurse must be a member of the team, but it is not required that they are the PI; final decision will fall with NLN grants staff.

[Back to Top](#)

Process for Submission of a Grant

Can I contact the NLN Research Review Panel members for consultation, advice and/or direction on a grant I am planning to submit to the NLN?

All questions related to grants should be directed to research@nlm.org. However, neither the NLN nor the NLN Research Review Panel provide technical assistance for PIs who are preparing grants.

Since all files are submitted electronically, it is possible for a file to become corrupted or damaged in some way. How will the NLN handle such an application?

If an electronic file is corrupted and has been submitted on or before the due date, the applicant will be notified and asked to resubmit the file.

In the case of a technical problem with the NLN's application system or a natural disaster or other large-scale emergency, does the NLN grant application extensions?

If the NLN experiences a technical problem that prevents applicants from submitting applications by the announced due date or if there is or has been a recently documented natural disaster in a given region of the country an extension would be granted to all affected applicants.

No extensions will be granted for personal circumstances.

Once I have submitted a grant, who will read or review my grant? How are decisions made to fund a grant application?

All grant applicants first receive independent reviews using a blind review process. In other words, these reviewers receive no identifying information. Each reviewer is qualified in terms of their areas of expertise, experience with nursing research, and as a reviewer. A review form listing each criterion along with a Proposal Review Rubric is provided to these reviewers.

The results of the blind review along with the full proposal with identifying information are then evaluated by the members of the NLN Research Review Panel for final funding decisions. After reviewing all grant applications submitted that year this Committee makes the final funding recommendation.

How do you submit letters of support and documentation of successful proposal defenses for doctoral award proposals in the Blind Review File?

Applicants may send copies of documents on official letterhead with the name of the school visible. Most signatures can also be visible to demonstrate that the proposal received appropriate approval. However, any items that in any way link the proposal back to the applicant, including their own signature on the document, should be "blacked out". There should be no way to link the proposal back to the individual applicant.

Should biosketches, IRB approval letters, and letters of support be omitted from the Blind Review File for NLN Research in Nursing Education grant proposals?

Applicants should not include biosketches, IRB approval letters, or letters of support in the Blind Review File. An applicant may state in the appendix that support letters/IRB approval letters have been obtained, but the actual letters should not be included. These documents should only be included in the Comprehensive Review File.

[Back to Top](#)

Methodology & Design Considerations

How can I best answer the ‘so what’ question for my research proposal? (justification – linking research question to the problem, specific site(s), location, population, scope)

The proposal should educate the reviewer to the gap in the literature or current theory. It should convince the reader of the significant impact the current study may bring to nursing science, theory, research, policy, and/or education. One needs to address the overall importance of the potential findings. How will this study add to the body of literature and understanding of a specific problem or phenomena?

- Avoid sweeping generalizations
- Clarity when identifying what will be studied
- Identify overarching question(s) to be answered with key variables
- Discuss the limits or boundaries of the study

The grant review rubric asks about the theory for one’s proposal. I mentioned a theory, but I am not sure what else to include about the theory with respect to my research proposal.

The interrelationship among theory, research, and educational practice is crucial. Theory helps make connections between meaningful variables and potential outcomes. The theory should be apparent in all components of the research process from conceptualization, research question(s), instrumentation, and interpretation of findings. It should not be an afterthought or add on. It is the structure that holds a proposal together and how we advance the science of nursing education. A great reference to review is Lisa Day’s chapter “The role of theory in nursing education research” in Patterson & Krouse (2017). *Scientific inquiry in nursing education*. National League for Nursing.

I am considering collecting data at my school. Would an application that is multi-site receive a higher review score?

There is a greater likelihood of a higher score when your sampling design is strong, especially when it is multi-site. Clearly indicate why you chose study locations. More meaningful evidence can be gathered from more diverse broader sample. Concentrate on developing a rigorous research design with potential impact to improve your review score.

Do I need to include all of my instruments? (interview guide, instruments, demographic form)

You should include all instruments used in the study described in the proposal narrative. Copies of the instruments should be included in an appendix and are not included in the proposal page count. This allows the reviewer to evaluate whether the instruments are appropriate measures for the study variables. Instruments with evidence of reliability and validity support the rigor of the study. If it is a commercially available product, a detailed description with sample questions may be included instead.

We are planning to implement an intervention and collect data at multiple sites. What is important for us to include? (fidelity)

The investigator should describe how fidelity is maintained throughout the course of the study for the reviewer. For example, dose, strength, and frequency of the intervention, training, and quality checks of intervention implementors should be clear. Be sure to include the process(es) for ensuring intervention and data collection consistency across sites.

I am going to have an hour intervention with pre- & post-test measures. What suggestions do you recommend? (dosing)

Convince the reviewer why the dose is sufficient for the desired outcome(s). State why you are using the length of intervention dose and support it with theory or prior research. Cite previous studies wherein a standardized dose was used or cite other studies where you think the intervention dosage was weak. Provide a clear indication of timing of the intervention(s) and related measures, especially repeated interventions. To strengthen the design, be sure to link the intervention and measure(s). Consider conducting long-term follow up to assess strength of the intervention. These approaches help provide a rationale for why you are conducting the proposed intervention and specific dosing.

I noticed there is a lot of research in nursing education that uses self-report of confidence or satisfaction as outcome measures. Should I be considering these outcome concepts? (measurement)

There have been many studies in nursing wherein the outcome measures were self-reports, specifically on confidence or satisfaction. It is time to advance the science and move past these outcomes. Outcome measures should be relevant to the target of the intervention whether a single person or a specific group. Include actual measures of individual or program performance as outcomes.

We want to look at new graduate nurses' transition to practice and believe this is important to nursing education. Will a proposal examining this be considered? (design, clearly identify link to student education)

Yes, a proposal looking at new graduate nurses' transition to practice will be considered if there is a well-defined connection to pre-transition nursing education. Be sure to identify that the research grant proposal addresses an issue in nursing education and not nursing practice.

I am proposing to conduct an evaluation of a simulation intervention for my research grant submission. What are the critical components that I must include to ensure the rigor of the design and proposal?

Critical components for simulation studies should include the intentional integration of the healthcare simulation standards of best practice (HSSOBP) from conceptualization to evaluation, the debriefing framework should be clear, and sound theoretical underpinnings (beyond experiential learning).

We are considering submission of a proposal that is an evaluation of a program we developed for our school. Is this something that would get funded? (design)

A research grant proposal that is an evaluation of a program will be considered when there is a well-defined demonstration of the impact on nursing education beyond basic programmatic evaluation and single site. The NLN does not fund quality improvement projects for individual programs.

How can I best incorporate diversity into the proposal protocol and narrative? (sample selection)

Diversity must be a part of a research grant proposal narrative. The researcher must address common understandings of diversity including race, class, gender, sexual orientation to name a few. The proposal should identify specific experiences reflecting diversity and demonstrate a respect for the value of differing ideas, experiences, and interests. Be sure to include a clear description of the diversity of the intended target population. Discuss potential limitations. Should the target population lack diversity, be sure to include a discussion of the potential limitations of the study outcomes.

I want to be more inclusive in my data collection approach. What suggestions do you have to demonstrate inclusivity in data collection for my grant proposal?

Accurately collecting data on sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation is crucial in building trusting relationships between researchers and potential participants. If we want to report data that reflect the individuals we teach or work with, then we must be inclusive in the language that we use in our demographic forms and instrumentation. However, only collect the data that are relevant to your research question(s) and your ability to describe your sample. Consistent language in data collection is also important as we compare findings across studies. The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine has guidelines to ensure accurate inclusive data collection:

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26424/measuring-sex-gender-identity-and-sexual-orientation>

How can I best sustain the impact of my study once my research is completed? (sustainability of research)

The sustainability of the research agenda is best maintained when the researcher can convince the reviewers of how the research findings will continue when funding ends. The researcher should also consider identifying potential funding resources that could be accessed to continue the effort. When the proposed study is single site or lacks diversity, explain how the researcher will eventually move to a multi-site project with greater diversity among samples. Include a discussion of implications for future research or education post grant to demonstrate the sustainability or potential impact of the research post completion.

If the proposal is a scoping review, address sustainability by describing next steps once the findings are available. Example - Will the investigator create a pilot study or a tool?

[Back to Top](#)

Budget Issues and Questions

Your guidelines do not allow salary for the PI or co-investigator. We'd like to include in our budget a \$2500 stipend for the PI. However, the only way we can use this stipend (due to the way our financial system is set up) is as salary. Is this allowed?

The stipend is not to be used as a replacement for the PI's salary at the institution. It can be processed in your financial system as salary but the researcher must receive the full stipend in addition to their full university salary. In addition, many university financial systems require that fringe benefits be paid on ALL compensation. If that is the case, the fringe benefits incurred as a result of the stipend must be paid from the stipend. On your budget submitted to the NLN, the \$2500 should be listed as a stipend and the amount paid as fringe benefits should be noted and subtracted from the stipend.

Is the PI stipend of \$2500 per year or per study? In other words, can the PI stipend be \$5000 in the proposed budget for a two-year grant?

No, the total stipend in a single funded grant budget can be no more than \$2500.

My institution does not allow me to accept a stipend. What other options for the investigator reimbursement do I have?

The NLN grant allows a PI to have the option of either requesting the \$2500 stipend or requesting instructional release time up to a maximum of \$5000 for one semester. The intent of the instructional release monies is to acknowledge the time that is involved in conducting the research as well as some universities policies on stipends.

For the Research Grant, may the \$5,000 allowed for instructional release time be split among the PI and two Co-Investigators?

You may split the instructional release time amount among the investigators, but the total amount may not exceed \$5000.

Is it permissible to have a paid consultant from your own institution to assist with a specific part of the grant?

Yes, it is permissible. Rationale for the consultant and hourly rate needs to be included.

Would a PDA (personal digital assistant) be considered to be durable equipment?

Yes, a PDA falls under the definition of durable equipment.

Can I include software for a PDA in the grant application?

While PDA software is not considered durable equipment, it may be included in the event that it is specific to your research and is not general office or research software.

Can the qualitative software QSR NVivo, which is used to analyze the qualitative data in the proposed study, be included in the budget?

QSR NVivo is software used to analyze qualitative research data and would be considered general research software.

Why do I need to include items in my budget in the narrative of my proposal if I include them on the budget form?

Including budget items in the narrative will help you justify why you are asking for funding in the proposed budget. If properly explained or defined in the narrative, the budget will support and be a strength for the proposal.

[Back to Top](#)

After a Grant is Funded

If my proposal is selected, when would funding become available?

Funding is generally received by September 1 of the year the grant is approved for funding.

After I submitted my grant application, I learned that my co-investigator accepted a position at another university and will not be participating in my study. Do I need to notify the NLN of this change?

Yes. Additionally, if the PI is moving to another setting, the NLN should be notified for approval. If for some reason the PI will not be able to conduct the research and a new PI is being considered, the NLN should be notified for approval. All personnel changes must be submitted on the [Research Grant Budget Template and Modification Form](#) and submitted to the NLN for approval.

Can a grant be modified after a grant has been funded?

There are some circumstances when modifications have been permitted. However, the NLN only funds costs specified in the original grant budget directed toward the originally proposed research. Requests for grant modifications must be submitted on the [Research Grant Budget Template and Modification Form](#) and submitted to the NLN for approval.

If my grant would not be funded this year, may I revise and resubmit next year?

A proposal may be resubmitted; however, it will be processed as a new application and not a revision of a previously submitted proposal.

[Back to Top](#)