

**Four common CAREER questions regarding education activities and Broader Impacts**  
For more info, refer to the [NSF CAREER FAQs](#)

**What weight does the NSF assign to the two review criteria (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts)?**

Per NSF: Weights are not assigned to either review criteria. Both are important.

BRDO advice: While an excellent research plan is essential, your proposal will not be funded without a well-rationalized education plan that is integrated with your research and meets at least the minimum requirements in your discipline.

**What number and scope of educational activities does the NSF expect?**

Per NSF: Quantity is not as important as quality and the integration of research and education.

BRDO advice: Expectations vary across NSF programs and directorates. To research what's expected, review recently funded CAREER awards in your discipline using the [NSF award search feature](#), talk to colleagues who have successfully applied for CAREER, and very importantly—consult with an [NSF CAREER program officer](#) in your discipline. As a rule of thumb, we recommend proposing 2-3 major educational activities with measurable aims that are integrated with your research.

**For education activities, how important is originality versus the tried-and-true?**

Per NSF: Education activities should be a balance between existing, evidence-based practices and innovative plans.

BRDO advice: Of your 2-3 key educational activities, try to include at least one “one shiny new thing”—a *novel idea that is well reasoned and well integrated* with your research plan. It often works well to work with an established program or partner and add a novel element to their offerings based on your unique expertise.

**What level of effort and financial commitment does the NSF expect for the education activities?**

Per NSF: Your plans should reflect your own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the interests and needs of your organization. While excellence in both research and education is expected, activity of an intensity that leads to an unreasonable workload is not. (NSF does not provide parameters for the level of effort and budget that is expected for educational activities).

BRDO Advice: Expectations vary widely within the different directorates, so there is no “right” answer to this question. Your education plan must be realistic and achievable. Take care that you allocate adequate effort and funding to achieve your aims. A very rough rule of thumb is to allocate ~5-10% of total funding for education. It is possible to allocate less by leveraging campus and off-campus resources & partners—but you must clearly describe these resources in your proposal and budget justification.