

# Applying to the NSF Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) Program: A PI's View

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# Am I in the Right Place?

## Eligibility requirements:

- ▶ School must be certified as “primarily undergraduate,” at most offering a limited number of graduate degrees, as specified by NSF.
- ▶ PI’s department must offer courses toward a bachelor’s degree but **not** courses toward a Ph. D. degree.
- ▶ Can involve collaboration with other institutions (RUI and non-RUI).
- ▶ CAREER proposals cannot use the RUI designation.

## How does the review process differ for a RUI proposal?

Not that much. RUI proposals are considered alongside all the other proposals to a particular program and follow the same criteria. The main effects of a RUI designation are:

- ▶ Program Officers are likely to choose at least one reviewer from a primarily undergraduate institution.
- ▶ Proposal includes an additional 5-page “RUI Impact Statement,” which gives the opportunity to highlight benefits to the “research and educational environment of the institution.” This can be a great opportunity to strengthen the elements of the proposal addressing the NSF’s Broader Impact criterion.
- ▶ All reviewers are given additional instructions reminding them of the increased teaching demands and more limited support infrastructure at primarily undergraduate institutions, which may lead to a slower rate of research progress. These instructions also draw attention to the RUI Impact Statement.

# Why RUI?

- ▶ A strong RUI proposal can highlight a project's potential to contribute to the broad range of NSF's mission: scientific research, education, and infrastructure.
- ▶ An example of what sets NSF apart from “mission” agencies (NIH, DOE).
- ▶ RUI proposals can offer excellent “bang for the buck.” (Grad students are expensive!)
- ▶ There is a strong case to be made that the nation's most important opportunities to improve STEM competitiveness and achievement lie at the undergraduate level.

I am eligible and my project fits with the RUI program's mission. Is there any reason not to include a RUI designation for my proposal?

Not that I know of.

## Is there another great opportunity for faculty at RUI institutions that I should know about?

Yes! The Research Opportunity Award (ROA) program provides supplements to existing NSF grants that allow RUI researchers to join NSF-funded projects at another institution, known as the “host.”

- ▶ Host is typically a large institution, though RUI host is also possible.
- ▶ No net cost to host (but host must be NSF-funded).
- ▶ Relatively painless application, submitted by host.
- ▶ Streamlined review (program officer only).
- ▶ Ideal for small/pilot projects (typical amount is \$25k).