North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station
Research Project Guidelines

PURPOSE
The North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (NDAES) projects are required for several reasons. First and foremost, since the NDAES receives funds from our federal partner USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for certain research activities we have an obligation of accountability to the federal government. Secondly, NDAES projects help individual investigators and teams of investigators develop and accomplish their short- and long-term research goals that conform to the NDAES mission.

WHO SUBMITS?
Each NDAES faculty member is expected/required to have their own individual project if their AES appointment is 30% or greater. In addition to individual projects, team projects may be written if it is appropriate for the situation. Participation in a multi-state project may substitute for an individual AES project. New faculty members in the college who have NDAES research appointments of 30% or greater should prepare and submit an AES project within one year of joining NDSU.

Projects should encompass an individual faculty member’s program of work (e.g., grants obtained should align with overall project objectives). If work beyond these objectives is performed (either new grants or change of interest), a new or additional project should be developed.

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS and TIMELINE*

January 1: New NDAES projects are due for submission to the AES Associate Director’s office on or before January 1.

Internal Review: To meet the January 1 deadline, project proposals should be submitted to the department chair/head or Research and Extension Center (REC) director on October 1 to facilitate an internal review. The internal review will consist of a review by the chair/head/director and by two NDSU peer researchers. Special attention should be paid by the chair/head/director to ensure the proposal is in proper format at the stage of the internal review. If collaborators or cooperators are included on the proposal, time must be allowed for them and their immediate supervisors to review the project prior to submission of the proposal for review.

NDAES Review: Once a proposal has been processed through the internal review, the chair/head/director submits by email an electronic version of the project proposal to the NDAES associate director’s office and indicates in the email the two reviewers who provided the internal review. The project will then be submitted to the NDAES Review process, that consists of at least two reviewers from the Project Review Committee (PRC). PRC Reviewers will then have approximately one month to review the proposals. Project Directors will subsequently be notified of the NDAES Review outcome and of any necessary revisions.
May 1: All revisions and reporting system requirements will need to be completed by May 1. *For new faculty, please contact Ona Vig (ona.vig@ndsu.edu) if date of appointment does not align with this timeline.

NDAES REVIEW OF PROJECT

1. *One electronic copy* of the project (developed using the preparation guidelines that follow) and chair/head/director email message will be submitted to the Associate Director’s office (sent to ona.vig@ndsu.edu and rod.lym@ndsu.edu).

2. Associate Director’s office will ensure that the project conforms to the guidelines. If project conforms to guidelines, the project will then be given to PRC for evaluation by at least two reviewers who are assigned by a lead reviewer. If the project does not conform to the guidelines, it will be sent back to the Project Director for corrections prior to the NDAES Review by the PRC. The lead NDAES reviewer will determine if the project will go forward for approval or if further revisions are needed based on input from the PRC. The PRC is represented by each unit within the NDAES, plus at least one representative from both Extension and the REC.

3. Upon completion of reviews, the Associate Director will write a letter to the project director indicating any changes that may need to be made. Receipt of final, revised and signed proposal from the Project Director is expected by May 1.

PROJECT FORMAT

Projects must be *double-spaced, in 12 point font, have numbered pages, and be no longer than 8 pages in length from the section “Heading” to the “Importance to the State of North Dakota” section.* Projects not following the correct format will be sent back to the investigator prior to NDAES review.

CONTENT AND ORDER OF PROJECT FORMAT

**Heading:** (centered at top of page)
North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station
North Dakota State University
Department of _________________

**Project Number:**
Leave blank.

**Project Title:**
Title must be concise and reflect problem areas. USDA/NIFA guidelines limit all titles to 175 characters.
Duration may not exceed five years. The federal reporting cycle is October 1 to September 30, so most projects will have a starting date of October 1 and a termination date of September 30. Duration of up to five years is recommended but projects of shorter duration are acceptable. Scientists can envision research that is longer in duration. They should recognize that they will be required to segment their research and that they will be required to re-write at a maximum of five years.

**Personnel:** Insert a heading for each of the three personnel categories as applicable.  
**Project Director(s):** List project director and co-project director(s) Co-PDs are other NDSU faculty with a major role in the project. Lesser levels of participation are collaborators.

This section should also indicate an accurate percentage of time (SY) allocated to the project for each PD. The percentage is based on 100% of the research appointment (e.g., if the PD has a 70% research appointment and does not have another active AES research project, the effort shown can be 0.7 SY). If there are questions regarding the correct assignment of time, please contact the unit chair/head/director, Ag Budget Office director, or the Director’s office prior to completing this section. **List as SY time commitment and indicate if the effort is research (AES) or extension (EXT, extension effort would only be shown for integrated projects).**

**Collaborators:** List NDSU collaborators. Collaborators are NDSU researchers or units that are active partners but not PDs in the research project. Clearly, but briefly, specify the responsibilities of each collaborator. Indicate the SY time commitment for all collaborators. Each collaborator’s commitment is usually 1–10% for the project but a higher percentage may be appropriate. **List as SY time commitment and indicate if the effort is research (AES) or extension (EXT, extension effort would only be shown for integrated projects).**

**Research Support Staff:** List as PY (research associate, post doc etc.) or TY (research technician)

**Introduction and Non-Technical Summary:** In lay terms, briefly describe the following using these four sections/headings:
- The Introduction and Issue (state the issue and why it is important)
- Goals and Objectives - list each objective numerically.
- Target audiences (list your target audience and explain how they will benefit)
- Activities (how your activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives.

This section is limited to 8,000 characters.

**Methodology:** Describe the ways in which the project will be conducted, with emphasis on the scientific methods and any unique aspects or significant departures from usual methods. This section is to provide a general design of the project. To begin, re-state each of the objective statements followed by a description of the procedures/methods for that objective. The procedure
statements should show that the research needs and plans have been considered carefully and the proposed work has the potential to provide data and information which will permit accomplishing the objectives.

While the details of the experimental design do not need to be specified, provide sufficient information to indicate that an appropriate design is planned. Limited to 8,000 characters.

**Integrated* Research and Extension Activities:**
Projects that include integrated Research and Extension activities are highly encouraged. The NDAES and the NDSU Extension Service are required to spend 25% of their Hatch and Smith-Lever allocations on integrated activities. Integrated activities are defined as jointly planned, funded, and interwoven activities between Research and Extension to solve problems. This includes the generation of knowledge and the transfer of information and technology.

*If a project is written as an integrated project, please insert a short paragraph in this section that explains the integrated activities. Limited to 4,000 characters.

**Importance to the State of North Dakota:**
Clearly delineate the value/implications of the project to the citizens of North Dakota. Specify, in nontechnical language, a statement for each Agricultural Experiment Station research project indicating 1.) the projected economic impact of each project to the State of North Dakota, and 2.) how the project relates to the general agricultural community in the state.

**Multistate Activities:**
Leave this section blank unless otherwise instructed.

Multistate activities are collaborative efforts that reflect the programs of institutions in at least two States or territories. Each participating State or Territory must collaborate on objectives and be involved in the outcomes. You must be formally involved with someone from another state who is working on the objectives of this project.

**If applicable, Animal Care, DNA/RNA, Radioactive Materials, or Human Subjects approval is needed before the project may be submitted to NIFA for final approval.**
Approval Page (make this one separate page):

Space should be provided for signature and date by unit administrator for all PDs; administrators of collaborating and cooperating units; and Director, North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station. Submission of a project to the Director is an indication that the lead PD has provided copies of the project to each signing administrator, made them aware of any relevant changes, and that they approve of the level of participation specified. All projects that involve work at an REC will need to be approved by the director of that center (indicated by their signature on this page). The Director will sign the final version after it has been reviewed by the PRC, do not send the project proposal to the AES Director for signature.

_______________________________________________________________________________
PI’s Unit Administrator’s signature Date
_______________________________________________________________________________
Collaborating Unit(s), Administrator’s signature Date
_______________________________________________________________________________
Cooperating Unit(s), Administrator’s signature Date
_______________________________________________________________________________
Director, North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station Date