

PCORI Online: Research Awards Pre-Award Training

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



This FAQ document pertains to the new Pre-Award Management System for Research Awards.

Getting Started

This section of the FAQ provides guidance on:

- Research Awards User Roles
- Logging In and User Access

Please keep in mind the following **Research Awards user roles** and definitions:

User Role	Definition
Principal Investigator (PI)	Institution's primary Point of Contact (POC) throughout the lifecycle of the contract award; responsible for the programmatic conduct of the research awards project.
PI Designee	An individual selected by the Principal Investigator (PI) to act as a backup or alternate for submitting the LOI and Application.
Administrative Official (AO)	Responsible for the proper administration of the contract , including overseeing the submission of the contract activation, contract renewals, and other required materials.

Question	Response
When will the new system be implemented?	The new PCORI Online will be used for Cycle 1 2017 and all cycles thereafter . If you are currently in the process of applying to Cycle 2 2016 or Cycle 3 2016, please continue using the previous system.
Will the Limited Competition D&I LOI submissions go into the new system?	Yes; the Dissemination and Implementation LOIs and Applications will be submitted through the new PCORI Online. For more information please email disseminationquestions@pcori.org .
How do I log-in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate to https://pcori.force.com/engagement • Enter your User Name (your User Name is typically the email address you use when interacting with PCORI) • Enter your Password • Click 'Log in' <p>Note: If you are a current PCORI Awardee and have not logged in since September 2016, your account has likely already been added to the system and you will need to reset your password.</p>
Can I use my log-in information from the previous PCORI Online?	<p>Log-in information was not migrated from the previous system. Please register as a 'New User' to get started with the new PCORI Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate to https://pcori.force.com/engagement • Click 'New User' • Complete the New User Form • Check your email for instructions on how to log-in
The system doesn't recognize my User Name. What should I do?	If you have any trouble logging in, please reach out to help@pcori.org . As a reminder, your User Name is the email address you use when interacting with PCORI.

Who should have access to PCORI Online and applicable Applications/Projects?	AOs, PIs, and PI Designees should have access to PCORI Online. If any of these individuals does not have access to the correct Applications/Projects, please reach out to help@pcori.org .
Who can be an AO? May s/he be a qualified, third party consultant?	The AO must be part of the prime institution.
Can there be more than one AO?	No; there can only be one AO.
Does the AO need to be a different person than the PI?	Yes; the AO needs to be different than the PI.
Are multiple PIs (or co-investigators) permitted for the Letter of Intent or full Application's research team?	Yes; multiple PIs (or co-investigators) are permitted. The Co-PI is an individual recognized by the prime institution and the PI as someone who shares scientific and administrative leadership responsibilities for a project with the PI.
What is the difference between project designee and Co PI?	The Co-PI is an individual who the PI relies on to contribute substantively to the scientific development and direction of the project in addition to the execution of the project. The PI Designee is usually an administrator who helps the PI submit the LOI and Application.
Can there be more than one PI Designee?	Yes; there can be up to two PI Designees assigned.
Can the PI and the Designee have the same log-in information?	No; each will need his/her own account.

LOI Submission

At the top of the LOI, you will find the following tabs which will assist with navigating the various sections of the form. This section of the FAQ provides guidance on:

- LOI Navigation
- LOI Submission

LOI Tabs		
Contact Information	Add basic contact information for the Organization/ Institution, including the PI, AO, and any Designees.	Contact Information
Pre Screen Questionnaire	Respond to initial screening questions.	Pre Screen Questionnaire
Resubmission	Indicate whether the organization is resubmitting a previous Application, or has been invited to resubmit an Application from a previous cycle.	Resubmission
PI Information	Enter detailed information about the PI's experience with research and grants management.	PI Information
Project Information	Provide relevant project information, including the focus disease or condition, projected costs, target populations, and analytic methods.	Project Information
Project Personnel	Add the names of Project Personnel who will make up the Awardee Project team.	Project Personnel
Project Personnel Partners	On this tab, name all partner individuals or organizations as they should appear on the award project page.	Project Personnel Partners
Templates & Uploads	Download any applicable templates, and upload attachments to include with the Application.	Templates & Uploads

Question	Response
Contact Information tab	
Do I need to complete the Contact Information tab before saving a draft of my LOI?	Yes; you must provide your Organization's information (name, department, etc.) in order to save a draft LOI, as well as assign a PI and AO that are registered with PCORI Online. To assign a user, click the lookup icon and search for their name. If their name does not appear, they must register in PCORI Online as a New User. Please note that the AO and PI cannot be the same individual.
Should the individuals listed on this tab have access to the new PCORI Online?	Yes; AOs, PIs, and PI Designees on your Project Team should have access to PCORI Online. If they do not have an account, they must register as a New User. If anyone on your project team does not have access to the correct LOIs/Applications, please reach out to help@pcori.org .
Pre Screen Questionnaire tab	
What should I do if I respond 'Yes' to one of these questions?	If you answer 'Yes' to one of the questions on the Pre Screen Questionnaire tab, we recommend you discontinue your LOI submission since your LOI will not progress past the review stage.
Resubmission tab	
What is considered a resubmission?	An application is considered a resubmission after it has completed PCORI's merit review process (i.e., the PI has received a summary statement) and was not funded. A previous submission in the form of an LOI only (without a full application) is not considered a resubmission. If an application was deemed nonresponsive and did not progress through the full review process, the PI is required to submit a new LOI. If you are submitting the same application to the same PFA, then this would be considered a resubmission. If you submit the same application to a different PFA, this would not be a resubmission.
How can I find the ID number of my previous submission?	If you need assistance finding the ID number of your previously submitted application(s), please reach out to pfa@pcori.org .
Project Personnel tab	
How extensive is the Project Personnel list expected to be?	At the LOI stage, your project team does not have to be finalized; at a minimum, please include the PI during LOI submission. In general, project personnel should have expertise and background to successfully implement the Research Project. Please note that each PFA and project has different requirements. If you have more questions regarding your project personnel, you can always follow-up with us at pfa@pcori.org .
Who are 'Key Personnel?'	Key Personnel include individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive and measurable way. The contribution is independent of financial compensation. Key Personnel typically include those that require access to PCORI Online, specifically the AO, PI, and PI Designees. PI Designees will be considered key personnel because they will access the system to update the LOI and Application.
Do all Project Personnel have to have a PCORI Online user account?	No; only Key Personnel will need a PCORI Online account, including the PI, AO, and PI Designees.
Templates and Uploads tab	
Where can I access the LOI Template?	LOI templates are available on our Funding Opportunities page. Select the PFA you are interested in applying to, and templates are located in the "Applicant Resources" section of the page.
Can we upload Word documents?	We ask that Applicants submit uploads in PDF. This is in our Application guidelines and template instructions.

Is there any naming convention for the LOI Template?	Yes; the naming convention is PI LastName_(last five digits of LOI number)_LOI.pdf. These instructions are available in the Application Guidelines and templates.
LOI Submission	
Can I create a PDF of the draft LOI to facilitate internal reviews?	Yes; when you click 'Review/Submit,' you will have the option to 'Print' prior to final submission. We recommend you Print to either OneNote or PDF to save a read-only copy to your computer.
Can a person other than the PI/PI Designee submit a LOI in PCORI Online?	Only the PI or PI Designee can submit the LOI.
Once the LOI is submitted, do I receive an email confirmation?	Yes; the AO and PI will receive an email confirmation upon LOI submission.
How will I be notified of the LOI decision?	The AO and PI will receive an email notification indicating whether they have been invited to submit a full Application.

Application Submission

At the top of the Application, you will find the following tabs which will assist with navigating the various sections of the form. This section of the FAQ provides guidance on:

- Application Navigation
- Application Submission
- Application Approval
- PCORI Information Requests

Application Tabs		
Contact Information (LOI)	Add basic contact information for the Organization/ Institution, including the PI, AO, and any Designees.	Contact Information
Pre Screen Questionnaire (LOI)	Respond to initial screening questions.	Pre Screen Questionnaire
Resubmission (LOI)	Indicate whether the organization is resubmitting a previous Application, or has been invited to resubmit an Application from a previous cycle.	Resubmission
PI Information (LOI)	Enter detailed information about the PI's experience with research and grants management.	PI Information
Project Information (LOI)	Provide relevant project information, including the focus disease or condition, projected costs, target populations, and analytic methods.	Project Information
Project Personnel (LOI)	Add the names of Project Personnel who will make up the Awardee Project team.	Project Personnel
Project Personnel Partners (LOI)	Name all partner individuals or organizations as they should appear on the award project page.	Project Personnel Partners
Project Information	Provide more detail regarding your proposed research, including abstracts, narratives, and goals.	Project Information
Budget	Provide details related to the budget of the project.	Budget
Milestones	List concrete, specific events or accomplishments that will be documented as contractual tasks of your project.	Milestones
Templates & Uploads	Download any applicable templates, and upload attachments to include with the Application.	Templates & Uploads
Certification	Certify that the information provided in the Application is complete and accurate.	Certification

** The first seven tabs have been pre-populated from the LOI submission, and are designated (LOI).*

Please note that any changes to the following information from the LOI submission will require PCORI's written approval prior to Application submission:

- **Principal Investigator**
- **Study design**
- **Specific aims**
- **Institution**
- **Research question(s)**
- **Comparators**

Question	Response
Project Information tab	
Does the Projected End Date include the Peer Review period?	Yes; the Projected End Date includes the Peer Review period. This is different from the research project end date, which does not include peer review.
Budget tab	
The Budget Tab consists of the following eleven pages: 1) Personnel, 2) Consultant Cost, 3) Supplies, 4) Scientific Travel, 5) Programmatic Travel, 6) Other Travel, 7) Equipment, 8) Subcontractor Direct Costs, 9) Subcontractor Indirect Costs, 10) Detailed Budget – Total Indirect Costs, and 11) Budget Summary	
Can we change the budget total from what we proposed in the LOI?	Yes; the budget total can change from the LOI to Application phase as long as the budget stays within the limits of the funding guidelines. However, please notify us at pfa@pcori.org if you plan to change your budget since you were invited to submit an Application based on the information provided in the LOI.
How do you adjust for inflation in Personnel costs for subsequent years?	Applicants will manually adjust for inflation in Personnel costs for subsequent years. To do so, copy the original personnel budget to all years, then manually update each year separately that is affected by inflation.
How should Key Personnel be entered into the budget if salary is not requested but effort is devoted?	Enter \$0 as the budget salary and clarify in the Budget Justification that they are committing effort without support. Please note that Budget Justification will be completed separately as a Word document, and uploaded to the Templates & Uploads tab as a PDF.
How do you enter a project budget for less than the 5 years?	Each page of the Budget tab will allow you to edit up to 5 years. However, for a project that is less than 5 years, you will just enter the project budget for your project years. For example, if your study is only 3 years long, you would leave years 4-5 blank, with the exception of entering in the Start and End dates. In order to save, Start and End Dates must be entered for all years listed on each budget page, regardless of the proposed project timeline. Please note that certain pages include an additional year (Year 6) as a Peer Review Period. For projects that are less than 5 years, Applicants should still enter their Peer Review budget into Year 6.
How do I account for Peer Review budget? Is the Peer Review budget automatically completed?	No; Peer Review budget is <i>not</i> automatically completed by the system. Applicants should input the Peer Review budget in Year 6, where applicable. For projects that are less than 5 years, Applicants should still enter their Peer Review budget into Year 6.
Is there any place for Budget Justification?	Yes; the Budget Justification will be completed separately as a Word document, and uploaded to the Templates & Uploads tab as a PDF.
Milestones tab	
Will the milestones auto-sort by due date?	No; the milestones will not automatically sort by due date. They will appear in the order you add them to the table.
Will recommended milestones be given based on the funding opportunity?	There will be a list of example Milestones in the Application Guidelines.

Templates and Uploads tab

Can we upload Word documents?	We ask that Applicants submit uploads in PDF. This is in our Application guidelines and template instructions.
Application Submission & Approval	
Can the AO see the Application while it is being prepared?	Yes, the AO can see and access the Application while it is being prepared through the LOI and Application Dashboard. If the AO does not have access to an LOI or Application, please reach out to help@pcori.org .
Can a PI submit multiple Applications for multiple projects?	Yes; the PI can submit multiple Applications for multiple projects as long as s/he are applying to a different PFA for each different project.
If a PI Designee clicks submit, will the Application go to the PI for review & approval (similar to Progress Reports)?	No; for the Application, the PI or the PI Designee will submit to the AO, and the AO will review and submit to PCORI. There is not a separate step for PI approval. Please note that for the LOI, the PI Designee can submit to PCORI without PI or AO approval.
Does the AO have to approve the Application?	Yes; the AO will receive an email notification when the PI has submitted the Application and AO approval is required. The AO will then either reject the Application for further updates, or approve the Application and submit to PCORI.
How does the AO return the Application for revision?	If the AO would like to return the Application to the PI or PI Designee for updates, s/he should 'Reject' the Application. Once the updates are made, the PI/Designee should then submit again to the AO for review, approval, and submission.
Once the AO 'Approves,' is the Application sent to PCORI?	No; the AO will 'Approve' the Application, click 'Save,' and lastly click 'Review/Submit.' From this page, s/he should click 'Submit' to submit the full and completed Application to PCORI.
How and when can an AO withdraw an Application?	The AO can withdraw an Application at any time, including after the deadline date has passed. To do so, s/he should return to the LOI & Application Dashboard and click the icon under 'AO Approve/Withdraw.'
PCORI Information Requests (PIRs)	
Who receives the PIR notifications?	The PIR letter will be sent to the AO, PI, and PI Designee. A reminder to submit the PIR will be sent to the PI. Once the PIR response is submitted through PCORI Online, the AO and PI will receive a confirmation email.

Additional Help & Resources

Question	Response
What should I do if I get an error?	You may receive an error if you did not answer all required questions on the previous tab. In order to avoid an error, please complete the LOI and Application tabs in order, and click 'Save & Next' to proceed to the next tab. For further assistance, reach out to help@pcori.org .
Who can I contact for assistance with my LOI/Application?	For project assistance, please reach out to pfa@pcori.org .
Who can I contact for technical assistance?	For technical or system assistance, please reach out to help@pcori.org .