Delaware Sea Grant College Program
Request for Proposals
Funding Period February 1, 2028 through January 31, 2030

Letter of Intent Due Date: Friday, February 12, 2027, 3:00 p.m.
Full Proposal Due Date: Friday, April 23, 2027, 3:00 p.m.

Delaware Sea Grant is soliciting research proposals for a two-year funding period that begins on February 1, 2028. In addition to budgeted research costs, funded projects will receive graduate student support, defined as a stipend, institutional-required fringe benefits, 40% of tuition costs[1], and institutional-required indirect costs for the two-year period.

Support for research and graduate student education provided through this request for proposals (RFP) comes from leveraged federal and state funds. Delaware Sea Grant is obligated to maximize the return on this investment for Delawareans. Please read this document carefully. It is intended to achieve this goal by guiding prospective researchers towards the development of successful proposals by cooperatively identifying needs, research goals and objectives, and meaningful outcomes. This competition for funding is designed to produce impactful applied research[2], with opportunities for extension, education, and outreach[3].

Proposed projects should address coastal challenges and opportunities that are important to the state of Delaware. Proposals from a broad range of disciplines regarding a range of topics that align with the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan are encouraged. The Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan specifically identifies research needs associated with adaptation to changing coastal conditions, exploration of the blue economy in Delaware, and ecosystem restoration. In addition to these needs, there are countless other opportunities to advance the objectives of Delaware Sea Grant through applied research. Researchers should carefully consider the priority issues and objectives presented in the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan to identify areas where applied research will help advance the organization's mission and vision. Researchers may also consider needs identified by working groups throughout the state, including "Community-Based

[1] Stipend, institutional-required fringe benefits, tuition costs, and institutional-required indirect costs will be based on those of the institution applying for graduate student support

[2] Consistent with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrative Order 216-115A, this RFP considers applied research to be "original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective. Applied research is undertaken either to determine possible uses for the findings of basic research or to determine new methods or ways of achieving specific and predetermined objectives." (NOAA Administrative Order 216-115A, revised 2/23/2018: https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/handbook_NAO-216-115A.pdf)

[3] In accordance with *Fundamentals of a Sea Grant Extension Program* (http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/projects/advocacy/files/extension-fundamentals.pdf), the broad goal of extension, education, and outreach is to effect change by having individuals, groups, or institutions use science-based information. Delaware Sea Grant considers extension to be using research results to inform decision-making; education to be the teaching of Sea Grant and other relevant coastal and environmental information as part of a formal learning process (e.g., focused on K-16 students/teachers); and outreach to be education that occurs in a more informal setting (e.g., summer camps, festival exhibits).

Research Needs" identified by the Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL), and the Delaware Saltwater Intrusion Knowledge and Question Exchange. For additional research needs it is recommended that researchers connect directly with Delaware Sea Grant staff.

Available Funding

Two tiers of funding are available:

- **Topic-Focused Research Projects:** These "traditional" research projects will receive up to $75,000 per year and may be single or multi-investigator projects within a single discipline (science, engineering, social, behavioral, or economic sciences) that address significant coastal issues facing Delaware.

- **Interdisciplinary[4, 5] Research Projects:** These multi-investigator projects will receive up to $115,000 per year for the two-year funding cycle. The intent of proposed interdisciplinary projects shall be to explore multi-faceted research questions at the intersection of science or engineering and social, behavioral, or economic sciences. To be eligible to receive the higher level of funding for interdisciplinary research, proposed projects must include investigators with expertise in at least two distinct disciplines (e.g., physical, chemical, or biological sciences, or engineering, partnered with social, behavioral, or economic sciences).

Interdisciplinary Research Projects will be eligible for support for up to two graduate students, one must be in each discipline; Topic-Focused Research Projects will be eligible for support for a single graduate student. The number of Interdisciplinary and Topic-Focused Projects that are funded will depend on the quality and number of proposals received and will be made at the discretion of the Director of Delaware Sea Grant in accordance with the competition guidelines presented in this RFP.

The proposal process involves two main steps:

1. Submit a letter of intent by 3 p.m. ET **Friday, February 12, 2027**
2. Submit a full proposal by 3 p.m. ET **Friday, April 23, 2027**

Eligibility

Delaware Sea Grant encourages participation from the broad science and social science research community within Delaware and invites participation by investigators new to the Delaware Sea Grant RFP process.

[4] Consistent with the definition adopted by the National Academies, this RFP considers interdisciplinary research to be "a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice." (Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research, Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy. 2004. Facilitating interdisciplinary research. National Academies. Washington: National Academy Press, p. 2)

[5] The final determination of whether a project will be considered topic-focused or interdisciplinary will be made at the discretion of the Director of the Delaware Sea Grant College Program.

To be eligible, principal investigators must be affiliated with an academic institution, research laboratory, or other institution with a research or science-based mission in Delaware, including non-profit organizations. Co-principal investigators on projects may be from institutions outside of Delaware. Please note that individuals from state and federal agencies and private sector for-profit and foreign organizations cannot apply for direct support; however, their non-federal contributions may qualify as matching funds for the project. Detailed information regarding required match is presented subsequently. Principal investigators are encouraged to include Delaware Sea Grant Advisory Service personnel as project collaborators; however, Advisory Service staff should not have oversight of project budgets and should not advise Delaware Sea Grant funded graduate students. Delaware Sea Grant Advisory Service staff are also prohibited from requesting salary support. To be eligible to submit a full proposal, applicants must submit a letter of intent.

Please use the following guidelines to prepare a proposal. Delaware Sea Grant encourages prospective researchers to read this document carefully, and discuss potential research ideas with Delaware Sea Grant staff. Any remaining questions concerning the RFP may be directed to Christian Hauser, the Delaware Sea Grant Associate Director, at hauser@udel.edu.

Background

Delaware Sea Grant supports applied coastal and marine research and extension, workforce development, public outreach, and education. It is a member of a national network of 34 institutional Sea Grant programs that are located in coastal and Great Lakes states and U.S. territories. Delaware Sea Grant operates under the guidelines of the National Sea Grant College Program, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Delaware Sea Grant is reviewed and evaluated for progress in achieving Strategic Plan goals and outcomes across the functional work areas described below. Federal funding is dependent upon successful, competitive reviews.

Delaware Sea Grant is a partnership between university, government, industry, and the public and is dedicated to the wise use, conservation, and management of coastal and marine resources. The program seeks to bring together researchers from Delaware's academic institutions to address coastal challenges and opportunities through applied research. It also offers the unique capability to transfer research-derived technology and information to the public through its team of Advisory Service and Environmental Public Education specialists, and to leverage our University-based national network. Delaware Sea Grant views the integration of applied research and extension as a key component of the program.

Functional Work Areas

Operations of Delaware Sea Grant are guided by a strategic plan (Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan), which is an integrated response to the research, extension, education, and outreach needs identified within Delaware. The Strategic Plan details research and extension priorities and future directions organized by functional work areas.

Each functional work area has associated goals, priority issues, and objectives. Prospective researchers must indicate in their letter of intent and full proposals which priority issues and

objectives their work will address.

Budget and Match Funds

All proposals must include a budget for the funding period (specific budget requirements are detailed in subsequent sections). A 50 percent match of the awarded funds is required (i.e., one dollar of match is required for every two dollars of grant money received under this RFP). Match may be in the form of principal investigator salary, fringe benefits, up to 60% of graduate student tuition (if paid by the student's home institution/department), unrecovered Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs using your institution's negotiated rate, selected in-kind services, or additional funds from a specified institution, agency, industry or non-federal program. No funds from federal entities can be used as match. If applicants are struggling to either document or obtain sufficient match funds, please contact Christian Hauser (hauser@udel.edu) as soon as possible. Please note that Delaware Sea Grant will work with potential applicants to resolve any issues regarding match.

Letter of Intent Requirements and Review

***Letter of Intent*:** Letters of intent are required for all projects; to be eligible to submit a full proposal, applicants must submit a letter of intent. Before submitting a letter of intent, prospective researchers are required to schedule a meeting with the Associate Director of Delaware Sea Grant to discuss relevance and utility of the proposed research and possible opportunities for extension. This meeting should be scheduled by contacting Christian Hauser (hauser@udel.edu) via email.

The letter of intent process, including this meeting, is designed to give potential investigators feedback about anticipated funding success and ensure funded projects are relevant to Sea Grant's mission, stated goals, and implementation strategy. Letters of intent should present a succinct but sufficiently detailed synopsis of the project in order to evaluate its relevance. Encouragement of full proposal submission is not a guarantee of funding.

Submission: Letters of intent must be submitted by email to Christian Hauser (hauser@udel.edu) by **3 p.m. ET Friday, February 12, 2027.**

***Style and Format*:** Minimum font size 12 pt. Minimum margin size one inch. Letters of intent should be single-spaced.

***Content and Organization*:** Letter of intent submissions must include the following sections (1-3) in the order listed.

(1) Title Page: Maximum 1 page. This page must include, in the following order:

- Name, affiliation, and contact information for each investigator[6]

[6] Similar standards to peer-reviewed authorship should be used to select principal investigators, i.e., named investigators should provide substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; and should participate in drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content.

- Project title
- Project duration in months (not to exceed 24 months)
- Whether the proposal is for an Interdisciplinary Research Project or a Topic-Focused Research Project
- Total amount requested from Delaware Sea Grant and cost share provided
- A request for graduate student support, if needed, and the number of students for which support is being requested. Topic-Focused Research Projects may request one graduate student. Interdisciplinary Research Projects may request up to two graduate students.
- Applicable Delaware Sea Grant functional work area(s)

(2) Letter of Intent (main body of text): The letter of intent must be no more than 3 pages in length. It must contain the following sections:

Research Objectives: Describe what is being proposed, what the research will accomplish or determine, and how the project will improve understanding. For Interdisciplinary Research Projects, indicate the role of each investigator in achieving the objectives. *Recommended length: 1 page.*

Relevance to the Needs of Delawareans: Identify specific end users (i.e., target audience) who will benefit from this research (e.g., resource managers, education professionals, community officials, private sector businesses) and how they will benefit. Be specific. Who needs the information that will be generated from the research and why? Has the need for this research been communicated and if so, by whom? *Recommended length: 1 page.*

Sharing Project Results: Describe how research findings will be shared with the organizations and people that need and will benefit from the information that was generated. This can be as simple as a one-page fact sheet for regulators, or a one-on-one meeting with a specific end-user. This should be concise and should focus on sharing findings with a specific, identified target audience. *Recommended length: ¾ page.*

(3) References: List any relevant scientific or technical references included in the letter of intent text. References do not count against page length totals.

Letter of Intent Review: Letters of Intent will be reviewed by Delaware Sea Grant College Program management, Marine Advisory Service staff, and/or members of the Delaware Sea Grant Advisory Council for relevance to the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan and anticipated benefit to Delawareans.

Qualitative feedback will be shared verbally with prospective researchers to guide development of full proposals and to ensure that the value of proposed research to user groups is maximized. Regardless of the feedback, all prospective investigators that submitted a letter of intent are eligible to submit a full proposal.

Full Proposal Requirements and Review

***Full Proposal*:** Prior to submitting a full proposal, investigators are required to participate in a second meeting with the Associate Director of Delaware Sea Grant to discuss feedback from the

letter of intent review process. Investigators are strongly encouraged to consider this feedback as they develop full proposals.

Full Proposal Submission. Please adhere to the following guidelines to ensure full consideration during Delaware Sea Grant full proposal review process. Submissions will be through an online portal. After submitting a letter of intent, applicants will be granted access to the Delaware Sea Grant proposal and reporting system and will receive an automated welcome email with login information. Full proposal submissions will be due via this portal by **3:00 p.m., Friday, April 23, 2027**. Full proposals will be reviewed for adherence to the guidelines provided in the RFP prior to peer and technical review.

Please note, applicant submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects must state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution or appropriate entity and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.

Consistent with NOAA Administrative Order 216-128 Artificial Intelligence in NOAA, Delaware Sea Grant will permit applicants to use Generative Super Intelligence tools to assist with drafting and editing proposals, with the following baseline standards:

- The principal investigator and submitting institution maintain full accountability for the accuracy, objectivity, and scientific integrity of all submitted materials.
- Applicants must independently verify all facts, data, citations, and literature references produced by Super Intelligence tools.
- Applicants must transparently disclose within their proposal narrative whenever Generative Super Intelligence is used to substantially draft, develop, or synthesize content (beyond routine administrative aids like spell-check or autocomplete).

***Style and Format*:** Minimum font size 12 pt. Minimum margin size one inch. Proposals should be single-spaced.

***Content and Organization*:** Proposal submissions must include the following sections in the order listed.

(1) Title Page: Maximum 1 page.

- Name, affiliation, and contact information for each investigator
- Project title
- Project duration in months (not to exceed 24 months)
- Whether the proposal is for an Interdisciplinary Research Project or a Topic-Focused Research Project
- Total amount requested from Delaware Sea Grant and cost share provided

- A request for graduate student support, if needed, and number of students for which support is being requested. Topic-Focused Research Projects may request one graduate student. Interdisciplinary Research Projects may request up to two graduate students.
- Applicable Delaware Sea Grant functional work area(s)

(2) Abstract: The abstract must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitably written for dissemination to a non-scientific audience. It should be a self-contained document that identifies the investigator(s), project title, whether the project is an Interdisciplinary Research effort or a Topic-Focused project. The body of the abstract (maximum 250 words) should include a brief description of the project, the overall goals of the project, methods to be employed and anticipated impacts of the project (i.e., benefits, outcomes). This document must not include any proprietary or sensitive business information as Delaware Sea Grant will make it available to the public upon announcement of awards.

(3) The Proposal (main body of text): Full proposal text (the main body of text) may not exceed 15 pages. The proposal should contain the following categories:

Introduction and Research Objectives: Introduce the topic and describe the problem or opportunity of interest. What are the research questions addressed in this proposal? Summarize the research goals and objectives of the project: what is being proposed, what will the research accomplish or determine, and how will the project improve understanding. For hypothesis-driven research projects, list hypotheses to be tested here. For Interdisciplinary Research Projects, indicate the role of each investigator in achieving project objectives. Project objectives should be verifiable upon the project's completion. Ensure the descriptions are consistent with the required Two-Year Project Milestone Chart (Item 10) as described below.

Relevance to the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan and the Needs of Delawareans: Describe how this research addresses priority issues and objectives outlined in the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan. Indicate specific end users who will benefit from this research (e.g., resource managers, education professionals, community officials, private sector businesses) and how they will benefit. Be specific. Who needs the information that will be generated from the research and why? What change in behavior, management, or policy will result from the research? Has the need for this research been communicated and if so, by whom?

Partnerships: Describe existing and planned partnerships with industry, agencies, or organizations that will occur during the course of the research. Note existing partnerships, and highlight important impacts of prior research activities on those partners.

Project Details: Describe how the project will be carried out, including methodology, relevant partners and their role, and any equipment or facilities requirements that are currently available and/or need to be acquired to perform the research. Provide justification for any equipment requested. For Interdisciplinary Research Projects, describe coordination among investigators.

Delaware Sea Grant Funded Graduate Students: Describe how you will recruit and support a

graduate student through the duration of the project with Delaware Sea Grant funding. If you plan to use funding for current students, please state that. If you plan to recruit a new student please describe how that will be accomplished. If you do plan to recruit new students, please present a plan to broadly advertise and promote the opportunity to a broad range of potential students. Describe how the Delaware Sea Grant funded graduate students will be engaged in the proposed research project and how they will receive support and professional development over the course of their graduate education.

Engagement: Describe how individuals and community members, to the extent practicable, will be engaged in the proposed research. Ideas include: formally including partner organizations or community groups in the project, preparing signage that explains the project that could be placed at field sampling locations while field work is occurring, or engaging the public through social media with regular updates and requests for questions and feedback. These are just a few potential ideas that may be used. Please give this some consideration and describe how your project will engage Delawareans directly into the research process and the proposed project.

Extension: Extension is a hallmark of the Sea Grant College Program. Within the Sea Grant network, extension is considered to be the application of knowledge and understanding gained through research that is shared with individuals and groups of people for their benefit[7]. With this in mind, describe how research findings will be shared with the organizations and people that need and will benefit from the information that was generated. This can be as simple as a one-page fact sheet for regulators, or a one-on-one meeting with a specific end-user. Describe project deliverables and anticipated outcomes. This should be concise and should focus on sharing findings with a specific, identified target audience.

(4) Data Management Plan: Maximum 2 pages. Delaware Sea Grant is required by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to ensure that all environmental data collected with Delaware Sea Grant support are made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. Funded investigators are required to report environmental data and respond to requests for data sharing. Per NOAA's Data Sharing Directive for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts, environmental data are defined as "recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata."

For projects that will generate environmental data, investigators therefore must include a data management plan, of no more than two pages in length, to specify plans for making environmental data available and interpretable within two years of collection in compliance with NOAA's Data Sharing Directive for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts. If no environmental data, as defined above, will be collected, investigators may include a

[7] Fundamentals of a Sea Grant Extension Program, Second Edition. http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/projects/advocacy/files/extension-fundamentals.pdf

statement that no environmental data will be generated. By submitting a proposal, the investigators understand and agree to the following:

1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (within two years of the end of the award), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

2. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Data may also be submitted to an appropriate public data repository such as Dryad, Figshare, Dataverse, Pangaea, or others.

3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to a NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

5. Note that upon completion of the award a metadata report will be required to characterize environmental data, provide access instruction, and describe archival mechanisms. Data must be made available within 2 years of the end of the award unless an exemption is secured with written approval.

(5) References: List any relevant scientific or technical references included in the proposal text.

(6) Summary of accomplishments of previously funded Sea Grant projects: Investigators who have been previously funded by Delaware Sea Grant in the past ten years are required to submit a brief summary of accomplishments for up to two research projects that are most closely aligned with the proposed research. Information on research findings and publications,

impacts of the work, and students supported as part of the research should be highlighted. Maximum 2 pages.

(7) Project Budget: Use Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4, which can be found at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation[8]. The budget must include funds to support the proposed extension plan that are consistent with the anticipated level of effort. The initiation date for new projects in this proposal cycle will be February 1, 2028. Award maximums are set at $115,000 per year and $75,000 per year, including indirect costs, for Interdisciplinary and Topic-Focused Research Projects, respectively. Please note that costs associated with scientific publications (e.g., color printing fees, online publication) should be included in the project budget.

Delaware Sea Grant Funded Graduate Students: Do not include funds for graduate student support (neither stipend, nor 40% of tuition costs) in the project budget. Under a separately funded project, and contingent upon available funding, additional funds will be available to support a graduate research assistant on Delaware Sea Grant projects. This support will consist of a stipend, fringe benefits (if applicable), 40% of tuition costs, and applicable indirect costs for each graduate student. Interdisciplinary Research Projects may request up to two graduate students. Students receiving these funds will be required to participate in additional Delaware Sea Grant-sponsored activities designed to enhance their understanding of the connections between science and outreach, education, or extension by working with Marine Advisory Service and Environmental Public Education specialists. These activities are intended to broaden Sea Grant student experience. A description of the role of the graduate student in the research project is required in the body of the proposal.

Website and publication support: Projects involving significant efforts for website development or maintenance with IT staff should coordinate appropriate budget support with those offices prior to submission of the proposal in order to provide documentation of office commitment.

Ship time: Additional ship time funds are no longer available. Please include in the budget any estimates for vessel usage (R/V, time, number of cruises, etc.).

Matching Funds: A 50 percent match of the federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) is required on all Sea Grant proposals. If applicants are struggling to either document or obtain sufficient match funds, please contact Lori Hans (lhans@udel.edu) and Christian Hauser (hauser@udel.edu) as soon as possible in the proposal process to resolve any issues regarding match. Please contact your departmental grant / research administrator to complete your budget. Please include documentation of departmental approval of your match as required by your department guidelines (for the full proposal only). We encourage you to have conversations about match with your department for the letter of intent to avoid any complications for the full proposal; however, official departmental match approval is only required at the full proposal stage.

(8) Budget Justification: Please refer to the instructions and sample budget justification

[8] Please download: 90-4 Budget Form (Excel file) under Forms and Templates

located on the Delaware Sea Grant website. Justification is required for each year for each cost entered in the budget form in the same order as noted on the Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4.

(9) Curriculum Vitae (CV): Maximum two pages per investigator. Each CV should contain five distinct sections after the investigator's name and academic title:

- Education
- Experience
- Research Interests
- Professional Activities
- Publications (include no more than five publications for each investigator)

(10) Project Milestone Chart: See template located on our website (Project Milestone Chart).

(11) Letters of Support: Letters of support for the proposed work from end-users (such as resource managers, education professionals, community officials, private sector businesses, etc.) may be included. Such letters strengthen a proposal if they present a plan for collaboration, detailed knowledge of the project is demonstrated, authors describe appropriate and feasible applications of the research (results or methods development), end-user resources are leveraged to extend the outreach of the research, and/or the research is particularly timely or innovative in the opinion of the end-user.

(12) Non-binding list of competent reviewers: Applicants are required to submit a non-binding list containing at least 10 competent reviewers. Please note that Delaware Sea Grant is under no obligation to use any of the reviewers submitted by the respective applicants for funding, and all reviewers are screened for conflicts of interest with all proposed researchers. Include the name and contact information for each suggested reviewer.

Please note, PIs from institutions outside the University of Delaware are responsible for routing the proposal through their institution's research administration and for obtaining all required institutional endorsements prior to submission. If you have questions about proposal preparation or the required forms, contact Ms. Lori Hans via e-mail at lhans@udel.edu. Specific questions related to the technical review of research should be directed to Christian Hauser via e-mail at hauser@udel.edu.

Full Proposal Review Process:

Full proposals will be evaluated through a two-phase, competitive process, which will consist of: (1) external written peer review by experts in the field of proposed study focused on the rationale and scientific merit of the proposed work; and, (2) review by a programmatic panel giving consideration to the alignment of the projects with the stated goals and desired impacts for Delaware Sea Grant. The programmatic panel will occur after written peer review; equal weight shall be given to external written peer reviews and the panel review. Peer review criteria for full proposals are presented in Table 1; programmatic panel review criteria are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Peer and Technical Review Criteria

Category	Relative Weight	Criteria
Merit	10%	Have the investigators identified an important question or compelling research topic? How will the work contribute to the field of study?
Research Objectives	30%	Are the hypotheses, research questions, and objectives clearly developed? Is it good science?
Methods	40%	Are research activities and methodology appropriate and feasible? Is the timeline as described reasonable? For Interdisciplinary Research Projects, is there an appropriate level of coordination between disciplines? How will results of interdisciplinary projects be integrated to achieve results?
Data Management Plan	10%	Do the researchers provide for the archiving and public access of the project data? Could this information be easily accessed and used by others? Can this be verified? If no environmental data will be collected, investigators may include a statement that no environmental data will be generated.
Budget	10%	Is the budget reasonable and cost effective? Are more cost-effective alternatives available? Are travel costs (particularly requests for international travel) reasonable and appropriate?

Table 2: Programmatic Panel Review Criteria

Category	Relative Weight	Criteria
Relevance to the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan and Stakeholder Needs	30%	Will the research address the needs, goals, and objectives outlined within the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan? Does the proposal describe how the project is relevant to specific needs of Delawareans? Has a clear connection been made between the proposed research and possible community, policy, management, education outcomes, or industrial applications?
Partnerships	10%	Have existing and planned partnerships with industry, education, agencies, or non-profit organizations been adequately developed? Are the selected partnerships appropriate? Should additional key partners have been recruited to the project team? How have partners participated in development of the proposal? Have appropriate letters of support been provided?
Graduate Student Education	20%	Does the proposal adequately describe how a graduate student will be recruited and supported for the duration of the project? If a new student will be recruited, does the proposal present a plan to broadly advertise and promote the opportunity to a broad range of potential students? Does the proposal sufficiently address how the Delaware Sea Grant funded graduate students will be engaged in the proposed research project and how they will receive support and professional development over the course of their graduate education?
Engagement	20%	Does the proposal adequately describe how individuals and community members, to the extent practicable, will be engaged in the proposed project, including research and/or extension applications?
Extension	20%	Have the investigators presented a well-developed plan for how research findings will be shared with the organizations and people that need or will benefit from the information that will be generated? Is the audience appropriate for the focus of the research?

Each category will be rated as:

- Excellent (5 points)
- Very Good (4 points)
- Good (3 points)
- Fair (2 points)
- Poor (1 point)

Scores for each category will be combined with the category weights to provide an overall

weighted rating. Equal weight will be given to the peer review and programmatic panel review. The overall weighted rating will be used to rank proposals. Interdisciplinary and Topic-Focused Research proposals will be reviewed collectively. Proposals will be categorized as "highly relevant," "relevant," and "less relevant" based on rank.

Full Proposal Selection Criteria: Proposals selected for funding will come from those categorized as "highly relevant" and "relevant." The decision to recommend proposals for funding will ultimately rest with the Delaware Sea Grant Director and will be made at her discretion to address needs, gaps, and priorities of the Delaware Sea Grant program as outlined in the Delaware Sea Grant Strategic Plan. The number of Interdisciplinary and Topic-Focused Research Projects that are funded will depend on the quality and number of proposals received.

Full proposals that are recommended for funding by the Director will be forwarded to the National Sea Grant Office for final funding approval, which is contingent upon available federal funds. Recommendation by Delaware Sea Grant for funding does not guarantee final approval or funding by the National Sea Grant Office. Upon submission of full proposals, applicants agree to accept the decision of Delaware Sea Grant and the National Sea Grant Office as final. Applicants will be notified of their selection status upon approval from the National Sea Grant Office, which will include feedback on their proposal consisting of peer review and panel review comments.

Post-Selection Deliverables

If tentatively selected for funding by Delaware Sea Grant, investigators will have two weeks to submit the a project summary using the National Sea Grant Office Form 90-2 (under PIER Information in the following link) and an Abbreviated NOAA Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, both of which can be found here: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation[9]. These documents are required for final approval by the National Sea Grant Office. Failure to provide these forms within the timeframe indicated above will result in projects being removed from consideration.

Post-Award Deliverables

While our program actively works to reduce reporting burdens, Delaware Sea Grant, the National Sea Grant Office, and NOAA require mandatory yearly progress reports to evaluate both Delaware Sea Grant and progress of individual projects, some of which may be required at varied intervals. Annual progress reports may be completed by the Delaware Sea Grant funded graduate students dedicated to each project. In addition, all investigators must submit a final technical report that includes the entire funding period. All publications, theses, and dissertations produced as a result of Delaware Sea Grant funded research must be submitted to the Sea Grant Collection of the NOAA Central Library via Delaware Sea Grant. Delaware Sea Grant requires that all publications produced with program support (in total or partial) include acknowledgement of the NOAA award number provided by the Delaware Sea Grant. By submitting a proposal, the investigators agree to these terms upon receipt of funding. Future grant funding may be jeopardized pending completion of reports as outlined in the project terms and conditions.

[9] Please download: 90-2 PDF Worksheet (Fillable PDF) and Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (Word document)