

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Call for Proposals

In this packet, you will find all the information needed to submit a proposal to NCEAS.

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Overview and Deadlines

The National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis was initiated in 1995 to promote synthesis, analysis, and multidisciplinary collaboration directed toward addressing important questions in ecology and allied disciplines. **The Center seeks projects that address the development and testing of important ecological ideas and theories using existing data, cutting-edge analysis of ecological information, research on data access and use, use of sound science in policy and management decisions, and investigating sociological issues that pertain to the science of ecology.**

NCEAS supports [Working Groups](#), [Postdoctoral Associates](#), [Center \(Sabbatical\) Fellows](#) and [Distributed Graduate Seminars](#).

The Center provides comprehensive in-house computing capabilities, including support and training for resident and visiting scientists. As a result, NCEAS scientists become familiar with information management and develop a sense of its importance to their research. Training is enhanced because the Center is often viewed as a neutral party, dedicated to the general notion of data access rather than focusing on one type of data or approach.

It is critical that proposed activities take advantage of the Center's unique resources. NCEAS provides:

- an intellectually stimulating environment,
- exceptional scientific support and computing facilities,
- excellent linkages to a wide array of institutions and organizations dealing with similar issues,
- access to UCSB's large pool of expertise in the ecological and environmental sciences, and
- physically attractive location and facility in downtown Santa Barbara.

Data Expectations — Because NCEAS emphasizes using existing information, we have a strong commitment to developing means to locate, access, analyze and make data broadly available and to imbuing scientists and other users with a sense of sharing information. To this end we require that resident scientists and working groups agree, prior to initiating their activities at the Center, to making derived data (data resulting from analyses from which the original data cannot be reconstituted) publicly available. Furthermore, we **strongly** encourage researchers to document their original data and make these publicly accessible as well. See the NCEAS [Data and Information Policy](#) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy>) and Data Accessibility Section below for details.

Proposal Deadlines

NCEAS solicits proposals twice a year – in January and July – for all activities. Proposals may be submitted at other times under unusual circumstances, after consultation with the Director. Decisions about proposals submitted in January will be announced in late March. Decisions about proposal submitted in July will be announced in late September.

Who Should Apply

Proposals may be submitted by individuals of any nationality who hold a position in an academic institution, free-standing research institution, scientific society, governmental or policy agency, non-governmental organization, or a consortium of such institutions. Proposals are welcome from first-time applicants and from scientists and social scientists from fields other than ecology. Proposals may involve activities with partial support from matching funds or one or more other institutions or agencies.

What We Do Not Fund

- NCEAS does not fund projects if the activity should be funded by another entity or can just as easily take place elsewhere.
- NCEAS typically does not fund collection of new data or field research.
- NCEAS does not fund proposals requesting overhead or funds to be spent by the investigator at the investigator's home institution.

Expectations for NCEAS Scientists

Residency at NCEAS in Santa Barbara, California

Except in unusual circumstances, research will be conducted at the Center.

Intellectual Community

There are very few expectations for scientists at NCEAS beyond those associated with conducting scholarly research. However, we do expect resident scientists – Postdoctoral Associates and Center Fellows – to spend the vast majority of their time in residence at the Center and to interact with the other scientists while here. NCEAS is known for fostering interaction and collaboration, a characteristic that leads to the success of its visiting scientists. In return for NCEAS support, we expect that resident scientists will contribute their knowledge, interests and enthusiasm to the intellectual atmosphere.

Local Participation

We ask that UCSB scientists be allowed to participate in activities at the Center, where appropriate. Local scientists interested in a particular activity are asked to contact the leader to confirm that participation is welcome. We also ask that visiting scientists interact with NCEAS Postdoctoral Associates when interests and expertise converge.

Data Accessibility

The Center is committed to making the data and materials derived from NCEAS activities available to the broader scientific community. Please read the [NCEAS Data and Information Policy](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy>) for details on NCEAS treatment of data sharing and intellectual property issues.

Proposals must include an estimate of the derived data products (data resulting from analyses from which the original data cannot be reconstituted) and time table for making derived data publicly available. Resident scientists and working groups must agree, before initiating NCEAS research activities, to making derived data publicly available. Four months after resident scientists arrive at NCEAS, or after the first meeting of a Working Group or Distributed Graduate Seminar, derived data products must be identified and the time table for their release refined. The results will be tracked to ensure that derived data are made openly available. Furthermore, we strongly encourage researchers to document their original data and make it publicly accessible (see the [NCEAS Data and Information Policy](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy) at <http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy>).

The NCEAS scientific computing staff will contact Working Group or Distributed Graduate Seminar leaders prior to the start of their first group meeting and assist with the development of a realistic plan and timeline for the archiving of data and software products from the Working Group. NCEAS can provide some staff assistance with data management and analysis.

Acknowledgement of Funding Source

See our [suggested acknowledgement format](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/ackformat) at <http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/ackformat>.

Reporting

The primary responsibility of NCEAS scientists – visitors and residents – is to fulfill their goals regarding the scholarly activities undertaken at the Center. To this end, scientists are asked to produce a [summary of their efforts](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/resultsupdate) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/resultsupdate>) **within two weeks of departure** (many scientists complete this before they leave). In addition, Center support should be cited in publications, and copies of articles published should be sent to the Center. Questionnaires requesting updates on NCEAS products are sent periodically to participants. The results produced from NCEAS research activities are very important to measuring the success of NCEAS and we ask that participants return completed questionnaires as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Proposals

NCEAS proposals are relatively short (fewer than 2000 words, excluding cover sheet, citations, references, figures, tables, CVs and budgets) and yet need to include enough information in an effective form to allow for an accurate evaluation. Include the following information in your proposal, where applicable. Here are a few helpful links:

- [Formatting and Submission Instructions](#)
- [Proposal Review Process](#)
- [Tips from the Science Advisory Board](#)
- [Samples of Successful NCEAS proposals](#)

Include the following in your proposal, where applicable:

COVER SHEET	Working Groups	Distributed Graduate Seminars	Postdoctoral Associates	Center (Sabbatical) Fellows
Proposal Type - Indicate Working Group, Distributed Graduate Seminar, Sabbatical, or Postdoctoral	✓	✓	✓	✓
Descriptive Title	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short Title – Two or three words for use as a project name (25 characters max)	✓	✓	✓	✓
PI Name(s) and complete contact information	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Summary – A brief scientific abstract of your project	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expected Date of Ph.D. Completion (if applicable)			✓	
Proposed Start and End Dates – Proposed start and end date of your project (month, year)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proposed Data Release Date – Date you expect to submit data set(s) to NCEAS (month, year)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is this a resubmission? – Yes/No	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conflicts of Interest with Reviewers – Review list of SAB members on the NCEAS web site (http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/sab/current) and note any potential conflicts of interest based on NCEAS COI policy (http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/proposal/review)	✓	✓	✓	✓
BODY OF PROPOSAL	Working Groups	Distributed Graduate Seminars	Postdoctoral Associates	Center (Sabbatical) Fellows
Problem Statement – Clear and concise statement of what is to be done, why it is important, and how it will be accomplished	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proposed Activities – Brief description of methods and why they are appropriate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Names of Participants	✓	✓		
• Indicate whether participants are confirmed	✓	✓		
• Identify a technical liaison for NCEAS computing staff – This participant should have considerable analytical expertise.	✓	✓		
• Identify one participant who will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the NCEAS Data and Information Policy (http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy) are met	✓	✓		
• Identify at least one graduate student participant – This person should be a full intellectual participant, not a technician.	✓	✓		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names and affiliations of seminar leaders at 6-8 institutions – At least 25% of seminar leaders should be from U.S. institutions serving underrepresented minorities 		✓		
Timetable of activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anticipated results and benefits – Include description of data and software products and proposed public release date	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indicate how you heard about NCEAS Call for Proposals	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature Cited	✓	✓	✓	✓
Curriculum Vitae for each PI – Two (2) page maximum for each	✓	✓	✓	✓
Budget – See Working Groups and Center Fellows pages for more information	✓ Template			✓ Template
Letters of Recommendation – Three (3) letters should be sent directly by authors as email attachments to proposal@nceas.ucsb.edu . An email, confirming receipt will be sent to the referee within 24 hours.			✓	

Formatting and Submission Instructions

Proposals will be accepted in digital format only, as a Microsoft Word or PDF file. Proposals should be submitted as single, complete documents, formatted to standard letter size (8.5" W by 11" L) with graphics embedded directly in the document. The body of the proposal should follow the cover sheet. Information to be included in the cover sheet and body of the proposal is provided in the table above. Do not send compressed collections of files, such as .ZIP files.

Send the proposal document as an **email attachment** to proposal@nceas.ucsb.edu. **All those who submit proposals and references will receive an email confirming receipt within 24 hours of submission.** If you do not receive a confirmation email, please call (805) 892-2500 with the first PI's name and proposal title and someone will follow-up with you shortly. Please contact proposal@nceas.ucsb.edu if you have difficulty submitting your proposal, or if you have extenuating circumstances that would prevent you from submitting a digital version of your proposal by the deadline.

For answers to questions not addressed on this Call for Proposals site, please email proposal@nceas.ucsb.edu, visit the [NCEAS web site \(http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/\)](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu), or call (805) 892-2500.

Proposal Review Process

Proposals are evaluated for their scientific merit, novel approaches, and rationale for involving NCEAS. The Center's Science Advisory Board (SAB) reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the Director who, in consultation with the Deputy Director, makes the final decisions about which proposals to support.

Board Members are given a list of proposals under consideration and submit a list of those they prefer to review. Review assignments are made considering these preferences. Reviewers reclude themselves from proposal review when there might be a conflict of interest, according to the terms of the [NCEAS Review Process and Conflict of Interest Statement \(http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/proposal/review\)](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/proposal/review).

A context statement and reviews written by Board members (but not the actual scores given by reviewers) will be returned to the PI(s) without revealing the names of the reviewers. While reviews are provided to applicants, they may not reflect the discussions that take place at the Science Advisory Board meetings. These discussions are much less focused on specific content than the nature, scope, and innovation in the proposed project.

Proposals that are clearly inappropriate for NCEAS (e.g., those requesting overhead, funds to be spent at the investigator's home institution, or funds intended to fund new data collection, etc.) will be returned without review.

Tips from the Science Advisory Board

To help you develop successful proposals, the Science Advisory Board has developed a few rules of thumb to guide your proposal preparation:

- Proposals are evaluated primarily on the significance and novelty of the idea(s) under consideration and should be question-driven (i.e., not purely descriptive).
- Provide a clear rationale for why this should be, or can only be, done at NCEAS.
- Be clear and concise. Give brief examples of major points you are making or approaches you are using. "Trust me" proposals are not effective.
- For Working Group proposals, include a **diverse** array of participants who are committed to the project. Pay attention to gender balance and include individuals from underrepresented institutions and groups. For each participant, specify the expertise brought to the project and whether he/she has agreed to participate.
- Indicate where the data used in your project will come from and its availability.
- If the results are designed or imagined to be useful to resource managers, make clear, valid statements about why and how that is so.

Working Groups

Description

- Groups of up to 20 scientists work at NCEAS for a few days to a few weeks (generally smaller groups and longer stays are most effective), concentrating on specific issues that require in depth analysis of data and synthesis of ideas. Each Working Group typically meets 1-3 times a year. Approximately 6-12 new Working Groups are supported annually. The Center facilitates the meetings by making local arrangements.
- It has been the experience at the Center that working groups of 15 or fewer individuals meeting for at least 5 days are the most productive. Thus, we STRONGLY suggest that applicants consider these thresholds. Deviations from these levels should be discussed with the Director or Deputy Director and soundly justified in the proposal.
- Working Group proposals must designate at least one participant with considerable analytical expertise who will serve as the liaison with the NCEAS technical staff.
- Working Groups should also identify one or more participants who will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the [NCEAS Data and Information Policy](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/datapolicy>) are met.
- An important characteristic of NCEAS emerges from the interactions that take place among the resident scientists (Postdoctoral Associates and Center Fellows) and the visiting scientists in Working Groups. Thus, in the evaluation of proposals, we consider aspects of the proposed research and the nature of the participants that might promote effective interactions. This is inherently subjective, but we believe it is an important component of what makes the NCEAS model effective.
- It is expected that all Working Groups will involve a diverse group of participants, including women and members of under-represented communities.
- NCEAS is particularly interested in increasing opportunities for graduate student participation in the Center's activities. It is expected that all Working Groups will involve one or more graduate student participants. Graduate students should be full intellectual participants in Working Group activities and are not expected to serve in a support role for the group.
- Under certain circumstances, a Postdoctoral Associate (with comprehensive justification) may be employed to coordinate the group's work at the Center. The Postdoctoral Associate's work should not be that of a technologist or group administrator. Postdoctoral Associates are recruited via a national search or may submit a separate NCEAS proposal. Postdoctoral Associates must reside at the Center. Working Group proposals that request support for an associated Postdoctoral Associate must be strongly justified and show that the Postdoctoral Associate's work is not that of a technologist or group administrator.
- Funding occurs through an [NSF](http://www.nsf.gov/) (<http://www.nsf.gov/>) grant to [UC Santa Barbara](http://www.ucsb.edu) (<http://www.ucsb.edu>), which reimburses actual expenses (i.e., the Center does not award grants to other institutions). Applicants are encouraged to consider additional funding sources to leverage NCEAS resources.
- Some projects may address important issues in both ecology and evolutionary biology. If a proposal is clearly appropriate for funding by both NCEAS and by the [National Evolutionary Synthesis Center](http://www.nescent.org/) (NESCent) (<http://www.nescent.org/>), PI's may request joint funding of a Working Group by both Centers. PI's should submit identical proposals, conforming to NESCent style (<https://www.nescent.org/science/workinggroup.php>), to both NCEAS and NESCent by the earlier deadline date — i.e., NESCent deadlines are currently one month earlier than those for NCEAS. Working Group meetings will be held at both NCEAS and NESCent. A budget is not necessary in the NESCent submission, but should be included in the NCEAS submission for those meetings proposed to occur at NCEAS.
- Similarly PI's may inquire about possible co-sponsorship by partners such as QUEST and the ARC-NZ Research Network on Vegetation Function.
- PI's may wish to also [submit a proposal](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/rfp/dgs) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/rfp/dgs>) for a [Distributed Graduate Seminar \(DGS\)](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/research/dgs) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/research/dgs>). [Early DGS at NCEAS](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/research/pastdgs) (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/research/pastdgs>) emerged directly out of the activities of NCEAS Working Groups. These integrated, multicampus graduate seminars engage students in the collaborative ecological analysis and synthesis of the working group.

Financial Information

Support includes reimbursement for actual travel, lodging and per diem expenses. No salary support is provided, except in the case of Postdoctoral Associates. Participant costs, including airfare, hotel and per diem expenses, are paid with funds itemized in the approved budget. Working Group leaders are responsible for preparing lists of the names, addresses, and contact information for participants invited to their meetings.

If a proposal is approved, the projects will be given a total budget. Working Group Leaders are expected to remain within the budget, but will have flexibility within that limit. The Center anticipates that budgets of funded projects will normally be expended during the specific period indicated in the proposal. Significant deviations should be discussed well in advance with the Director or Deputy Director. If a working group is inactive for a period of 12 months, we will assume the project has been completed, even if unexpended funds remain, unless appropriate reasons for a delay are provided.

Budget Template

[Budget templates](http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/nceas-web/opportunity/BudgetTemplate_WG.doc) are provided below and in a Microsoft Word document for your reference and/or use at http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/nceas-web/opportunity/BudgetTemplate_WG.doc.

Working Group Budget	YEAR 1 (DATES)**	YEAR 2 (DATES)**	YEAR 3* (DATES)**
Travel***			
Domestic (US)			
Number of participants	---	---	---
Total travel expenses	\$ ---	\$ ---	\$ ---
International (non-US)			
Number of participants	---	---	---
Total travel expenses	\$ ---	\$ ---	\$ ---
Daily expenses			
Number of visitor days****	---	---	---
Total daily expenses (\$200/visitor day)	\$ ---	\$ ---	\$ ---
TOTAL	\$ ---	\$ ---	\$ ---

* Most projects last fewer than three years. Add additional columns as needed.

** Please enter approximate dates; actual dates will depend on the availability of NCEAS resources.

*** Use the following figures for average travel costs:

NCEAS will reimburse for an advance purchase, direct, economy-class ticket, up to the following amounts in \$USD:

(Note: All flights must be on U.S. or U.S.-affiliated carriers.)

- \$450 from Western US and Canada
- \$600 from Midwest US
- \$700 from Eastern US and Canada
- \$1,100 from Western Europe and South America
- \$1,800 from Australia, Eastern Europe and Asia
- \$2,000 from Africa and Russia

**** Number of visitor days = Number of visitors x Number of travel days

Distributed Graduate Seminars

Description

- The Distributed Graduate Seminars program is designed to allow 6-8 universities from any country to simultaneously conduct graduate seminar courses on the same topic.
- The course will be preceded by an organizational meeting of the scientific leaders from each institution, either at NCEAS or by teleconference, during which questions and parameters to be addressed will be determined and course logistics will be finalized.
- Each seminar leader will teach the seminar course in-person at his or her institution. Students in each of the seminar courses at the participating institutions will analyze the issue at hand (e.g., invasive species, global change, ecosystem services, predator-prey dynamics), using data and information from the local area or region.
- After the seminar is completed, two (2) students from each university and their scientific leader will be invited to NCEAS to conduct a "grand synthesis", analyzing and comparing patterns and results from the various locations.
- Students in each group will interact over the web during the course of the seminar to exchange questions, issues, approaches, and data resulting from their separate investigations. NCEAS will provide and manage the web-based collaborative spaces (e.g., multi-user data entry portals).
- The students benefit from the scholarly activity of the seminar, from networking with colleagues, and from learning information management tools. Seminar leaders benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues at widely distributed universities while engaging in meaningful and creative pedagogy at their home institutions. Previous Distributed Graduate Seminars have resulted in multiple publications authored by students and faculty, attention from the national and local media, and databases that can be accessed by the public on the NCEAS website.
- Approximately 25% of the participating institutions are expected to be institutions serving high proportions of groups underrepresented in science (see, for example: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>).
- Proposals may originate from or include undergraduate institutions.
- PIs are encouraged to contact the Deputy Director Stephanie Hampton (hampton@nceas.ucsb.edu, 805-892-2505) during proposal development.
- NCEAS will fund two (2) DGS groups each year, generally one proposal per submission date.

Financial Information

NCEAS provides travel, lodging and per diem expenses for the organizational meeting and the final synthetic meeting. In addition, NCEAS will provide up to \$1,000 per institution in discretionary funds to support course activities such as telephone use, photocopying or additional travel (e.g., for student travel to collect information). NCEAS will provide and manage the web-based collaborative spaces (e.g., multi-user data entry portals).

It is not necessary to submit a budget in proposals for Distributed Graduate Seminars.

Postdoctoral Associates

Description

The Center supports 12-18 Associates each year. Associates are appointed for one year with a second year available under normal circumstances. Associates who wish to apply to NCEAS for a third year of funding will be asked to give a presentation and short report to the Science Advisory Board. Working Group proposals that request support for a Postdoctoral Associate must show that the Postdoctoral Associate's work is not that of a technologist or group administrator.

Financial Information

Associates receive a salary of approximately \$41,000.00, plus benefits, a discretionary fund, mentoring funds, and access to all NCEAS and UC Santa Barbara facilities.

It is not necessary to submit a budget in proposals for Postdoctoral Associates.

Center (Sabbatical) Fellows

Description

Sabbatical visitors come to the Center for a few months to a year (longer stays are much preferred). The Center supports approximately six (6) Fellows per year. Fellows may propose a creative mix of Working Group activities as part of their proposals. They are expected to spend their time at the Center and interact with other NCEAS resident and visiting scientists. Confirmation of the Fellow's sabbatical arrangements with his or her home institution will be required prior to appointment.

Financial Information

Center Fellows are provided a housing allowance and up to 50% salary support for every month in residence, depending on the arrangements with their home institutions (i.e., if the home institution pays more than 50% of the sabbatical salary, NCEAS will provide proportionately less). Center Fellows receive a housing allowance to offset their local rent expenses up to \$1,500 for singles or \$1,750 for families. Salaries for Center Fellows are based on the individual's salary at his or her home institution. Some international Center Fellows may be eligible for salary adjustments based on equity considerations. International PIs with concerns should contact NCEAS before submitting the proposal.

Budget Template

Budget templates are provided below and in a [Microsoft Word document](#) for your reference and/or use.

Center Fellow Budget	(Start and End Dates)
Center Fellow Salary*	\$ ---
Travel (<i>One roundtrip or equivalent airfare</i>)**	\$ ---
Housing allowance***	\$ ---
TOTAL	\$ ---

* Center Fellow applicants should submit a letter from an administrative officer at their home institution outlining the arrangements of their sabbatical leave. This will facilitate financial planning at the Center and must be submitted before any funds can be committed.

** Use the following figures for average travel costs:

NCEAS will reimburse for an advance purchase, direct, economy-class ticket, up to the following amounts in \$USD:

(Note: All flights must be on U.S. or U.S.-affiliated carriers.)

- \$450 from Western US and Canada
- \$600 from Midwest US
- \$700 from Eastern US and Canada
- \$1,100 from Western Europe and South America
- \$1,800 from Australia, Eastern Europe and Asia
- \$2,000 from Africa and Russia

*** Use the figures provided in the Financial Information section above and multiply by the number of months you will be in residence.