

## Important Information Regarding PDF Attachments to Electronic NIH Applications

Several investigators submitting applications to NIH via Grants.gov for the February and March submission deadlines encountered problems related to PDF attachments. The following tips for creating and viewing PDF attachments are intended to aid investigators in preparing electronic NIH applications for future deadlines.

### Creating PDF Files

Please keep in mind NIH's requirements for PDF attachments:

- (1) When possible, avoid scanning text documents to produce the required PDFs. NIH recommends producing the documents electronically using text or word-processing software and then converting documents to PDF.
- (2) Use only standard characters in file names: letters, numbers and the underscore character.
- (3) Disable all security features in the PDF document.
- (4) Do not include any information in the header or footer area of the attachments. A header will be system-generated that references the name of the PD/PI. Page numbers for the footer will be system-generated in the complete application, with all pages sequentially numbered.

In addition, review your PDF attachments carefully before asking OSP to submit your application. In several cases, investigators noticed that portions of their text were garbled or unreadable after converting to PDF. OSP recommends the following options:

- (A) Convert your documents to PDF using the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Professional (currently 8.0).
- (B) Use the distiller built into NSF's FastLane application to convert your documents to PDF. Even if you are not preparing an NSF proposal, you can use the FastLane distiller to convert files to PDF. Registered FastLane users can access the distiller as follows:
  - Access FastLane at <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>
  - Select "Proposals, Awards and Status."
  - Log in
  - Under the "Quick Links" menu on the left side of the screen, select "Convert Files to PDF."
- (C) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has created a detailed set of guidelines for the creation of PDF files. Because of NASA's strict requirements for PDF attachments, the guidelines contain very clear instructions for creating PDF files that will avoid garbled or substituted fonts. It is particularly helpful for TeX/LaTeX users. NASA's PDF guidelines can be found at: [http://nspires.nasaprs.com/tutorials/PDF\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://nspires.nasaprs.com/tutorials/PDF_Guidelines.pdf)

## Viewing Attachments

The PureEdge Viewer application handles attachments in an unusual way. Although you are completing the application off-line, the software launches a web browser for viewing attachments. If you are having trouble viewing PDF files that you have attached to your application, try the following remedies:

- a) PureEdge Viewer must be set to launch Internet Explorer. It does not work well with other browsers. To be certain that Internet Explorer is set as the default browser, take the following steps:
  - Click on the “Settings” icon in PureEdge Viewer, which looks like a gear.
  - Deselect “Try to locate browser automatically.”
  - Click “Locate Browser.”
  - Navigate to Internet Explorer.
- b) Make sure that any pop-up blocking program in Internet Explorer is disabled.
- c) Set Internet Explorer to allow Active X Controls.

## Printing Attachments

Clicking the “print” icon on the first page of the application package will not print a complete copy of the application. In order to print proposal attachments, you must use the “View Attachment” button next to each individual attachment. Once you have opened the attachment, use the “print” command under the “file” menu.

## Training and Support

Faculty planning to submit an electronic NIH application are encouraged to schedule an appointment for an individual training session with a member of the OSP Research Systems group. The training session will cover the following topics: downloading the correct application package from Grants.gov, completing the required form fields, converting and attaching PDF files, connecting to the OSP server, and using Commons to check the status of a submitted application. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please contact Kathleen Foster ([kfoster@bu.edu](mailto:kfoster@bu.edu)) or Eleanor Greene ([ergreene@bu.edu](mailto:ergreene@bu.edu)) at x3-4365. Additional information about Grants.gov and the NIH Commons system is available on the OSP website at <http://www.bu.edu/osp>.