

**S-STEM Site Visit Protocol**  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

<Salutation>, my name is <name>, from <Abt or Sage Fox and brief description of firm and location>. Let me introduce the team who will participate in today's interview. <List.>

The National Science Foundation has contracted with us to evaluate the Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program, otherwise known as S-STEM. The goals of the evaluation are to understand the role of S-STEM in the educational and career trajectories of scholarship recipients and to examine the effects of the program on grantee institutions. We're also interested in the characteristics of exemplary S-STEM programs.

We're here today to talk with you about your experiences as they relate to the S-STEM program. In particular, we are hoping to understand <site-specific case study question>. Your comments will be included as part of a report to NSF about implementation practices and the program's benefits for students, STEM departments, and institutions. We hope that your participation in this interview will help improve the S-STEM program nationwide for the benefit of grantee institutions and scholarship recipients.

Before we begin our discussion, we would like to let you know that:

- You are not required to participate in this interview. You may decline to answer any questions we ask, and you may request to end the interview at any time;
- We will be recording and taking notes during the discussion; and
- We will not quote you by name or position as PI in our report to NSF.

Do you agree to participate in this interview under these conditions? Do you have any questions?

**1. Please provide us with a summary of the <S-STEM> program.**

Probes:

- a. What needs was the program designed to address?
- b. What are its overarching goals?
- c. What are the various program components and how do the various components of the program meet these goals? <Interviewer take note of program components mentioned>
- d. How does the program complement the STEM departments on campus?
- e. How does it relate to or collaborate with other programs on campus?
- f. How has the program evolved over time?

**We'd like to understand how the program is run in terms of the student perspective and in terms of administration and governance, especially given the limited program resources beyond the S-STEM scholarship. First, we'd like to talk about the student perspective.**

**2. How are students recruited into the program?**

Probes:

- a. What are the key recruitment activities?
- b. What does the application process entail? What works well and why?
- c. What recruitment challenges have you faced and how have you addressed these challenges?

**3. How are students selected into the program?**

Probes:

- a. How many applicants are there each year? How many are accepted?
- b. What criteria are used for selection? Who is involved in the selection process?
- c. What must the student do to remain eligible for the program?
- d. What challenges have you faced around selection? How have you addressed them?

**4. Could you please describe the way <each program component identified in response to question 1, for example academic advising, or career placement> is implemented?**

Probes:

- a. What is offered? How is it structured? How many students are involved (S-STEM and otherwise)? Who is eligible to participate?
- b. Who runs <program component>? What other people are involved?
- c. What role did <S-STEM> have in creating or changing <program component>?
- d. What challenges have you faced regarding <the program component>? How have you addressed them?

**5. Is the funding sufficient to meet the students' financial needs?**

Probes:

- a. How much do students receive each year or term?
- b. How long are they eligible to receive S-STEM funding?
- c. How do these awards relate to other sources of financial aid and support?

**6. What else would you do to support students if there was more S-STEM funding?**

**7. Are there other NSF projects on campus or other funding to support activities that benefit S-STEM participants? Please describe these.**

Now we'd like to better understand how the program is governed and administered.

**8. Do you have a governing body or advisory board?**

Probe:

- a. Who is on this advisory board and how do they support the program?

**9. Who are the key people involved in this project that have not already been mentioned?**

Probes:

- a. Are there any *other* support personnel or faculty members involved with the project? What are their roles?
- b. Who are the key people in the administration involved in this project? How are they involved?
- c. Are there external partners who play an active role in the program? For example, industry representatives or other colleges?

**10. Who do students interface with? Does this person proactively reach out to students?**

**11. How are the faculty, staff and administrators involved in this project coordinated?**

**12. Who handles project communications, including marketing?**

**13. What other targeted support programs are offered for STEM students beyond <S-STEM program>?**

Probes:

- a. Do these programs share monetary resources, infrastructure, or staff?
- b. <if there is another S-STEM grant on campus> Do the two S-STEM programs intersect in some way?

**14. How has S-STEM changed STEM education on campus?**

- a. Has it built capacity?
- b. Do you perceive lasting effects for students? For faculty?

**15. What shortcomings or unanticipated issues have been encountered regarding program management?**

- a. What have been your biggest challenges in implementing the grant?

**16. Overall, what have been the effects of <S-STEM program>?**

Probes:

- a. What have the effects been for students?
- b. What have the effects been on the department or institution?
- c. What, if any, capacity has been developed through <S-STEM>?

**17. Have you done any formal evaluation of <S-STEM>?**

<If yes> Probes:

- a. Who does the evaluation?
- b. What are the evaluation activities?
- c. Does the evaluation stand alone or is it part of a larger evaluation effort?
- d. What have been the most compelling findings?

**18. What are your future plans for <S-STEM> program>?**

Probes:

- a. Do you have plans to continue offering some or all activities after funding ends? If so, how do you plan on sustaining these program elements?

**19. What would you do if there were additional S-STEM funds available to support the program beyond the scholarships?**

Thank you so much for your time, we know that you are very busy. This has been an important conversation and will greatly help us to understand the impact of S-STEM on students and institutions.