

Guidelines for MRSEC Annual Reports and Continuation Requests
September 2026

The **Annual Report** contains specific information including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. *A summary description of the MRSEC; description of scientific and engineering accomplishments and plans; progress and plans in the area of education and human resources; progress and plans in outreach and knowledge transfer to industry and other sectors and groups; shared experimental facilities; MRSEC administration and management; and a database of indicators of activity and progress, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).*
- b. *Personnel and financial reports containing: a statement of funds estimated to remain unobligated as of the anniversary date; a current year budget based on actual funds spent and a continuation request budget for the ensuing year in accordance with NSF Form 1030; estimated budgets for the current and ensuing year by area of activity according to the Summary Table of Requested NSF Support; names of senior personnel by interdisciplinary research group; current information about other support of senior personnel and a statement of institutional and other support for the MRSEC.*
- c. *An updated long-range plan, including projected activities, long-range budget expectations, and priorities through the expiration of this Agreement.*

These guidelines spell out the format for Annual Report for the Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSECs). **Annual reports are due no later than May 15th of each reporting year.**

Prepare the report using the headings, instructions, and the **Excel Workbook** provided, in the order indicated in the following guide. **Send the completed Excel Workbook to mrsec@nsf.gov** Separately, the completed Excel Workbook should be also converted to PDF (make sure to choose “Fit Worksheet to a single page” when converting) and **uploaded to Research.gov along with the report. DO NOT MODIFY ANY PARTS OF THE EXCEL WORKBOOK.**

The narrative sections are to be written in third person. The report must be submitted through the annual report option of Research.gov (Note: annual report due dates in Research.gov are based on the initial award date and may not coincide with the continuation date of the award). Please submit the entire report as a single PDF file including the budget pages. If any of the PDF files exceed the file size limit set by Research.gov, they may be split into several files. Report ***only publications/patents that explicitly acknowledge the appropriate MRSEC support*** (DMR-2XXXXXX and possibly also DMR-1XXXXXX); these publications should be (a) listed in Section 12 of the annual report, and (b) counted in Appendix E. See below the recommended language for acknowledging MRSEC support in publications.

To increase public access to scientific publications resulting from research supported by the MRSEC award, PIs should upload publications that acknowledge MRSEC award(s) to the NSF Public Access Repository ([NSF-PAR](#)). The NSF-PAR provides mechanisms that enable NSF-funded investigators to meet annual reporting requirements, while also providing search mechanisms to enable the public to find and use products resulting from federally funded research.

Checklist for MRSEC Annual Reports

- The Annual Report, including the Final Report, is not cumulative; it typically covers a 12-month timeframe.
- Ensure that you are working from the most current Reporting Guidelines.
- **Adhere to stated page limitations in all sections of the report.**
- Use the appropriate heading for each section in the report narrative, so it is easily identified when reading the report.
- When submitting the report on Research.gov: insert the following text into all relevant Annual Project Report module sections: “See attached PDF of Annual Report”. Use “Nothing to report” in other sections such as “What percentage of the award's budget was spent in a foreign country” and some under “Changes/Problems.”
- Submit the entire report, including the narrative sections, highlights and budget pages as a single PDF file via the file upload function in the Accomplishments module on Research.gov. The Excel Workbook should also be converted to PDF and uploaded along with the report, as a separate PDF file.
- Send the completed Excel Workbook to mrsec@nsf.gov. Use the following file naming scheme for the Excel Workbook: ‘Short Year’ ‘Institution’ Appendices. For example, an Excel Workbook from Jupiter University, reporting data from FY2023 would be titled: 23 Jupiter Appendices.xlsx. **DO NOT MODIFY ANY PARTS OF THE WORKBOOK.**
- Send **all** Highlights in their original **PowerPoint format** to mrsec@nsf.gov. **Use the updated Highlight template PowerPoint slide provided.** One Highlight per PPT file, using the following filename: ‘University’ MRSEC ‘cooperative agreement number’ ‘IRG-#’ ‘author name’ ‘Highlight title.’ For example, a Highlight on patterned proteins by Mary Smith from the Epsilon MRSEC would read: Epsilon MRSEC 1720565 IRG-1 Smith Patterned Proteins. Please ensure that Highlights created on an Apple computer open properly on a Windows machine before transmitting them to NSF. Note: **PDF copies of the highlights must be included in the appropriate section of the Annual Report.**
- Post at least two of the above Highlights on the mrsec.org website before or concurrent with the submission of the annual report. This can be done directly or by sending the Highlights to webmaster@mrsec.org.

- Update your institutional MRSEC website as needed, but at least annually, to reflect progress and notable accomplishments included in the annual report. Make sure that your institutional MRSEC website is compliant with NSF brand policy.
- **Round numbers in the Appendices to nearest thousands \$.**
- Appendix D: Do not include sponsored projects (individual awards) of individual faculty members, even if they are related to the core mission of the MRSEC. Only include funding made directly to the Center or that is managed primarily by the Center.
- Numbers entered in Appendix G should be consistent with those in the budget pages.
- Numbers entered in Appendix H should be consistent with those in Appendices D and G.
- Place PDFs of all publications reported in Section 12 of the Annual Report under a secure web link, for program directors to download, and email the link to mrsec@nsf.gov. **Only published articles that explicitly acknowledge the MRSEC award may be included. Articles in preparation, submitted, under review or accepted should not be included.**

**MRSEC PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT GUIDELINES**

REPORTING PERIOD: MM/202X - MM/202Y

NARRATIVE SECTIONS:

1. Executive Summary (Limit 5 pages total, with page limits on subsections noted below)

This is a high-level report to NSF of primarily major accomplishments, activities, as well as future plans for the continuation years.

1a. Vision and Overview (1 page)

- State the vision of the MRSEC and how the MRSEC is organized into IRGs and Seeds.
- Provide a Director's overview of the Center's other activities, including shared facilities, education, industrial outreach, international collaborations, and MRSEC management.

1b. MRSEC Accomplishments for Current (Closing) Reporting Period (up to 3 pages)

- Provide a summary of the **past year's Key Accomplishments**. List accomplishments for each IRG under a separate heading.
- If applicable and under a separate heading, briefly describe progress made with supplemental funding.

1c. Changes During the Reporting Period (up to 1 page)

- Discuss the MRSEC's response to any site visits that occurred during this reporting period, and any external advisory committee recommendations.
- State any changes in priorities, revisions to long-range plans, or any other circumstances that are pertinent to the continuation of this award.

2. List of MRSEC Faculty Participants (*faculty rank or equivalent*) by academic departments;
Note: the total number of entries in categories (i) and (ii) below should add to the total number of Participants by Department entry reported in Appendix B. For MRSEC participants from industry or National Laboratories list closest or most appropriate academic department.

- (i) **Primary Participant (PP):** Receives MRSEC or other NSF support (not necessarily salary support). Please state full names.
- (ii) **Primary National Labs and/or International Participants (PNIP):** primary contributors that cannot be supported from NSF funds; they play an important role in the IRG.
- (iii) **Secondary Participant (SP):** not receiving MRSEC support and not playing a central role in the IRG.
- (iv) **User of shared facilities (USF).**

3. Strategic Plan (Limit: 1 page)

Describe activities used in this reporting period to advance the MRSEC's vision and mission. Also describe how the MRSEC plans to achieve its goals in future years, what process is used to monitor progress, and what mechanisms of assessment or evaluation metrics are used.

4. Research Accomplishments and Plans per the following breakdown:

4a. Using the template table below, list names of faculty and senior participants. A table is required for each IRG. For each faculty/senior participant, list the number of postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduates mentored by that person and whose research relates to the IRG. Break down the numbers of students/postdocs by the level of MRSEC support received, *i.e.*, how many receive full MRSEC support, partial support, and no support. Co-mentored students/postdocs should be counted only once. Unaffiliated postdocs should appear at the bottom of the table, with no faculty name listed. In the last 2 columns, enter the number of publications (co)-authored by the MRSEC participant during the current annual reporting period and cumulatively (since the award started). Add as many lines as needed to include all IRG participants. Examples are shown in the table below.

Faculty/Senior Participant Name	Number of Postdoctoral Associates			Number of Graduate Students			Number of Undergraduate Students (NOT REU)			Number of (co)-authored papers	
	Full MRSEC Support	Partial MRSEC Support	No MRSEC Support	Full MRSEC Support	Partial MRSEC Support	No MRSEC Support	Full MRSEC Support	Partial MRSEC Support	No MRSEC Support	This reporting period	Cumulative
Toni Morrison	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Harper Lee	1*	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	2
Virginia Woolf	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	2
--			1								

4b. A synthesis of scientific **accomplishments** and challenges **for this reporting period only**. **Limit: 3 pages per IRG; up to 2 pages for all Seed projects, and 1 Page for all research supplements, if any.** **Note:** this is not cumulative from the start of the award; you must only describe what has been accomplished in the current reporting year.

4c. Alignment of research with mission and goals of the Center. **Limit: 1 page per IRG; 1 page for all Seed projects or supplements.** Describe how the research outcomes discussed above help further the mission of the IRG, while making progress towards its stated research goals.

4d. Plans for the continuation year. **Limit: 1 page total for all IRGs, 1 page total for all Seed Projects.** Describe the research activities planned for the continuation year. Describe how the plan of research for the continuation year aligns with the IRG's current needs, and how it is envisioned to help the IRG team approach its goals. **OPTIONAL:** If there is a need for realignment of IRG goals, revision of plan of work, or restatement of vision/mission – describe.

* The postdoc supported by Prof. Lee is co-mentored with Prof. Woolf.

5. Shared Experimental/Computational Facilities (Limit: 4 pages)

For new Centers ONLY: Describe the management plan for shared instrumentation, maintenance plan, and cost recovery model. In addition, describe how user access has been set up for shared instrumentation, both for intramural users and users from outside the institution. Discuss advertising and outreach to the professional community, to increase awareness of the new Center's shared facilities. **This should be reported on in the first two years of the award.**

For all Centers: State acquisitions and installation of *new instrumentation* during **this reporting period only**. Describe what these new instruments are being used for (e.g., spectroscopy, low-T transport) and their permanent location (e.g., shared facility, MRSEC participant's lab), their accessibility to institutional users as well as extramural ones, and training options for new users. In addition, denote the current/projected number of users for each instrument. **If no new acquisitions and/or installations were made in this reporting period, state only None to report.**

Separately, all Centers are required to participate in the Materials Research Facilities Network (MRFN). Describe any activities or interactions that took place **only during this reporting period** with respect to the MRFN; state **None to report if none occurred**.

6. Education and Human Resources (Limit: 5 pages total), per the following breakdown:

6a. Describe education, outreach and human resource-development activities that took place during the **current reporting period**. If there have been any changes to the Mentoring Plan (for graduate students and postdocs) during the current reporting period, you may describe them here. **Limit: 1 page.**

6b. Provide a brief narrative of REU activities that took place in the **current reporting period**, including the student selection process. List names of student participants, titles of research projects, and names and rank (e.g., graduate student, faculty) of Center mentors. You may use table form for some of the information, if more convenient. **Limit: 1 page.**

6c. If relevant, provide a narrative of RET activities that took place in the **current reporting period**, including the teacher selection process, names and affiliations of participating teachers, titles of research projects and names and ranks of Center mentors. Describe any follow-up activities that may have taken place during the academic year. **Limit: 1 page.**

6d. Describe any assessment and/or evaluation that are being conducted to measure the impact of the education and outreach activities. Describe how the education, outreach and other human resource-development activities align with the vision of the Center, and how they help the Center accomplish its mission. Only list assessment/evaluation activities in the **current reporting period**. **Limit: 1 page.**

6e. Describe education, outreach and human resource-development activities, and changes (if any) to the Mentoring Plan, that are **planned for the continuation year**. **Limit: 1 page.**

7. Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP) (Limit: 2 pages)

DO NOT COPY AND PASTE THE ORIGINAL DMSP FROM THE PROPOSAL. Instead, describe the data-related activities and actions taken during the current reporting period to execute the DMSP. Specifically, describe how the results, including scientific findings, data underpinning these findings, and possibly also software and other digital products, have been disseminated to and shared with the communities of interest. List the data repositories that have been used for data preservation and dissemination. In addition, address any impact on information resources that form infrastructure. If relevant, discuss any changes from the original DMSP. A project's DMSP may evolve with the project, and PIs are encouraged to revisit the DMSP annually in order to assess its suitability and devise any needed updates.

8. Knowledge Transfer to Industry and Other Sectors (Limit: 2 pages total) per the following breakdown:

8a. Describe current collaborations and interactions with industry and national labs; include workshops and other activities as appropriate and describe their impact and outcomes. List only activities that took place during the **current reporting period**. Elaborate on any new or significant activities that took place during this period. **Limit: 1 page.**

8b. Describe activities and interactions with industry and national labs that are **planned for the coming year**. Elaborate on any new activities that are planned for this period, the rationale for these activities, and their anticipated impact and outcomes. **Limit: 1 page.**

9. International Activities during the current reporting period (NOT cumulative) (Limit: 1 page): Describe current and planned **Center-level** international activities such as collaborations, faculty and/or student exchanges, workshops, use of shared experimental/computational facilities, etc. What is meant by "Center-level" are activities that are enabled specifically by the MRSEC that directly contribute to the goals of the IRG(s) or the mission of the Center. **DO NOT** list individual international collaborations of MRSEC participants that are not directly related to the MRSEC.

10. Administration and Management (Limit: 2 pages)

Begin by stating any significant changes from previous years, such as change of PI/co-PI; changes in the reporting structure, both institutional and within the Center; turnover in external advisory board. **If no changes occurred**, state **No changes to report**.

Separately, include the Center's Organization chart, and list membership of MRSEC internal and external committees.

11. Graduated Trainees: List full names of Ph.D. students graduated with MRSEC support (full or partial) **over the past year**, including current placement, if known. Similarly, list full names of

MRSEC-supported (full or partial) postdocs who left **during the past year**, including their current placement, if known. **Please do not state protected sensitive personal information.**

- 12. Numbered list of MRSEC-supported publications and patents**, covering ONLY the current reporting period. List (and number) published papers separately by IRGs and Seeds. List papers only once, even if they report research results of more than one IRG. Use **bold face** to designate each author that is a MRSEC **primary participant** as defined in Sections 2, either 2.(i) (PP) or 2.(ii) (PNIP). Underline secondary participants as defined in Sections 2.(iii) (SP). **Annual reports, including the Final Report, are not cumulative. Include only papers published since submission of the previous annual report. DO NOT INCLUDE SUBMITTED, IN-PRESS, OR ACCEPTED ENTRIES¹.**

In addition, place PDFs of all publications reported in this Section under a secure web link, for program directors to download, and email the link to mrsec@nsf.gov.

PUBLICATIONS: Sort the publications according to the following categories:

IRG-1

- a. Primary MRSEC support that acknowledge the MRSEC award – defined as approximately 50% or more support allocated from MRSEC. **Emphasize publications with 100% MRSEC support.**
- b. Partial MRSEC support that acknowledge the MRSEC award – less than 50% of support from MRSEC

Repeat for additional IRGs – list publications as above

Seeds / Initiatives – list publications as above

PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MRSEC PARTICIPANTS: Suggested acknowledgement text for primary (partially) supported publications: “This research was primarily (partially) supported by NSF through [Name of Institution] Materials Research Science and Engineering Center [award number, e.g. DMR-2XXXXXX]/ Additional support received from . . . ”

Shared facilities

List here publications of projects that did not receive MRSEC support but were *directly impacted* by use of shared facilities. **List only publications which explicitly acknowledge the MRSEC award.**

PLEASE SHARE WITH USERS: Suggested acknowledgement text for research performed using MRSEC supported facilities (instrumentation or computation): “The authors acknowledge the

¹ Note: publications that do not explicitly acknowledge the appropriate MRSEC award ID cannot be included in the Annual Report.

use of facilities and instrumentation supported by NSF through the [Name of Institution] Materials Research Science and Engineering Center [award number, e.g. DMR-2XXXXXX]"

PATENTS: List patents according to the following categories:

- a. Patents granted during the current reporting period.
- b. Patent applications (excluding provisional applications) submitted during the current reporting period.
- c. Patents and patent applications licensed in the current reporting period.

13. Biographical information for each new investigator (faculty member or equivalent). Use ONLY the [NSF-approved format](#) for biographical sketches, as described in the NSF's [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#).

14. Honors and Awards - List and briefly describe **significant** honors and awards given to MRSEC participants during the current reporting period.

15. Highlights: Research and Education Highlights are a crisp one-page summary of a recent **significant** result with an interesting and informative image highlighting your NSF funded work. **Use the updated Highlight template PowerPoint slide provided.** Include a title, list of authors with affiliation(s), an appropriate color image (avoid graphs), and an acknowledgement of support with award number(s) for each highlight. We regularly use these highlights to illustrate the work that MRSEC supports. Highlights might be used in NSF documents and presentations or posted on NSF and MRSEC.org web pages. The text and graphics should capture the essence of the activity you wish to highlight. The graphics are particularly important and may include images or photographs. The text and graphics should be at the level of a press release, explaining briefly and in lay-language what has been accomplished and why it is significant. **Please include a more detailed description of the work and its relevance by responding to the prompts in the notes section of the PowerPoint slide. In particular, please explain specifically how the highlighted achievement is related to the IRG and how it helps achieve its goals.**

MRSEC Highlights will be made available to the public on the Division of Materials Research website. By sending us a Highlight you grant NSF the right to reproduce and disseminate your images for various possible uses. If you are planning to patent your work, it is your responsibility to consult with the appropriate office at your institution to ensure that sending us the requested material does not jeopardize your intellectual property rights.

Observe the following guidelines for your submitted Highlights:

- Provide no more than two science Highlights per IRG.
- Provide no more than two Seed-related Highlights from all Seed projects.
- Provide no more than two Education-related Highlights.
- Provide no more than two other Highlights on shared facilities and/or partnerships including industry, national lab, international or other.

All Highlights must be compliant with the amended Section 508 of the United States Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is accomplished by adding alternative text (“Alt text”) to all images or objects (e.g., tables) in your PowerPoint slides, thus providing a textual alternative to visual information.

To add Alt text: Right click the image or object, and then click **Edit Alt Text**. Enter a description of the image or object into the dialog box, and save. Use clear but concise language. For example, “a red Ferrari” tells the reader more about the image than “a car.”

Send all Highlights in PowerPoint format to mrsec@nsf.gov: one Highlight per file, using the following file naming scheme: ‘University’ MRSEC ‘cooperative agreement number’ ‘IRG#’ ‘contact last name’ ‘Highlight title.’ For example, a Highlight on patterned proteins from IRG-1 by Mary Smith from Epsilon University would be named: Epsilon MRSEC 0520565 IRG-1 Smith Patterned proteins.

Please post at least **two** of the above Highlights on the mrsec.org website before or concurrent to the submission of your annual report. This can be done directly or by sending the Highlights to webmaster@mrsec.org.

Note: The annual report will not be approved until Highlights are received at NSF.

FISCAL SECTIONS AND APPENDICES: Submit information as detailed below.

16. Statement of Unobligated Funds for the award (\$ figure, not a percentage of the total).

17. Budget

Closing Year Budget:

- A. Closing year budget entered into NSF Form 1030, reporting **actual funds spent in the current reporting period**.
- B. Budget Explanation Page based on entries in Form 1030 above.
Include the following information:
 - Section A – continuation of faculty receiving salary support
 - Section D – Equipment purchased (itemized list)
 - Section F – Foreign travel including destination country(s) and purpose (Int’l Conference, Workshops, Research outside US, education outside US, etc.)
 - Section G – explanation for subawards and other additional items as necessary
- C. No subaward or supplement budgets are necessary.
- D. One-page PDF of MRSEC Breakout Budget Excel spreadsheet for the closing year using **actual** amounts reported in Form 1030. The columns in the spreadsheet show how MRSEC funds are distributed according to:

1. Research (IRGs and Seeds), Section 4 of the report narrative (*Research Accomplishments and Plans*).
2. Education Activities and Human Resources, Section 5 of the report.
3. Outreach and Knowledge Transfer, Section 7 of the narrative.
4. Shared Equipment and Computational Facilities, Section 9 of the narrative
5. Administration, Section 10 of the narrative.
6. Automatic sum of Columns 1-5. The totals will equal those reported on Form 1030.

This data is also used in **Appendix G**.

Continuation Request (Next Year Budget):

- A. Total requested MRSEC budget on NSF Form 1030.
- B. Budget Explanation Page for requested MRSEC budget.
 - Section A – continuation of faculty receiving salary support.
 - Section D – Equipment to be purchased (itemized). If capital equipment (>\$10k) is planned to be purchased, after pre-approval, in the closing year, provide a brief description of the equipment, its location, estimated number of users, and justification for the purchase.
 - Section F – Foreign travel including destination country(s) and purpose (Int'l Conference, Workshops, Research outside US, education outside US, etc.)
 - Section G – explanation for subawards and other additional items as necessary.
- C. Subaward budgets on NSF Form 1030, as needed.
- D. One-page PDF of MRSEC Breakout Budget Excel spreadsheet for the requested year **increment**. The columns in the spreadsheet show how MRSEC funds are distributed according to:
 1. Research (IRGs and Seeds)
 2. Education Activities and Human Resources
 3. Outreach and Knowledge Transfer
 4. Shared Equipment and Computational Facilities
 5. Administration
 6. Automatic sum of Columns 1-5. The totals will equal those reported on Form 1030.

This data is also used in **Appendix G**.

Update the below table annually. It is understood that there are lags in invoicing, and this table is intended to simplify housekeeping from year to year. Previous years should **NOT** be modified in out years to account for this delay in invoicing. If there are expenditures that were incurred in this year, due to these timing constraints, but leverages prior year funds, you may describe this in the Budget Explanation narrative. Cells in blue are auto-populating.

		Invoiced and Planned Expenditures					
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	Date budget pulled						
Year 1	Year 1 Funding Received						
	Year 1 Funding Spent						
	Carryover		0				
Year 2	Year 2 Funding Received						
	Year 2 Funding Spent						
	Carryover			0			
Year 3	Year 3 Funding Received						
	Year 3 Funding Spent						
	Carryover				0		
Year 4	Year 4 Funding Received						
	Year 4 Funding Spent						
	Carryover					0	
Year 5	Year 5 Funding Received						
	Year 5 Funding Spent						
	Carryover						0
Year 6	Year 6 Funding Received						
	Year 6 Funding Spent						
	No-Cost Time Extension						0

- 18. APPENDICES** - Please enter the requested information into the **Excel Workbook** associated with this reporting template. **DO NOT MODIFY ANY PARTS OF THE WORKBOOK.** **The completed Workbook should be converted to PDF and uploaded along with the annual report.** Separately, send the completed Workbook in **Excel format** to mrsec@nsf.gov. Use the following file naming scheme for the Excel Workbook: 'Short Year' 'Institution' Appendices. For example, an Excel Workbook from Jupiter University, reporting data from FY2023 would be titled: 23 Jupiter Appendices.xlsx