NSF Definitions of Basic, Applied and Developmental Research

Basic research	**Applied research**	**Experimental development**
A researcher is studying the properties of human blood to determine what affects coagulation.	A researcher is conducting research on how a new chicken pox vaccine affects blood coagulation.	A researcher is conducting clinical trials to test a newly developed chicken pox vaccine for young children.
A researcher is studying the properties of molecules under various heat and cold conditions.	A researcher is investigating the properties of particular substances under various heat and cold conditions with the objective of finding longer-lasting components for highway pavement.	A researcher is working with state transportation officials to conduct tests of a newly developed highway pavement under various types of heat and cold conditions.
A researcher is investigating the effect of different types of manipulatives on the way first graders learn mathematical strategy by changing manipulatives and then measuring what students have learned through standardized instruments.	A researcher is studying the implementation of a specific math curriculum to determine what teachers needed to know to implement the curriculum successfully.	A researcher is developing and testing software and support tools, based on fieldwork, to improve mathematics cognition for student special education.