

OSRP Handbook - Section 6

Proposal Submission

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ASSURANCES, CERTIFICATION, AND COMPLIANCES

Most federal and state agencies require several legal assurances, representations, and certifications to accompany grant and contract proposals. Application packets usually contain these forms or reference the obligation to attach the forms to the proposal. Usually these forms require a signature of an institutional representative.

Some examples of the forms routinely submitted with proposals or contracts are those that assure that Southeastern maintains a drug-free workplace, is not a debtor institution, complies with equal opportunity legislation, and has a policy to process cases of research misconduct. Often representations and certifications that require additional information about Southeastern such as accounting procedures, travel policies, etc. are requested. With proposals to the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, a statement of Investigator Significant Financial Interests Disclosure must be provided.

If a project involves human participants, animal subjects, or hazardous or radioactive materials, additional university forms must be completed (See Section 5). It would be advantageous to have these approvals prior to submission of the proposal, and some agencies will not review proposals that do not have validated university approval. No grant or contract award can be accepted by the university without documentation of necessary compliances.

INTERNAL PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SIGN OFF

When the proposal is finalized, the principal investigator completes an External Funding Proposal Routing Form (available from the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs and on the OSRP web site) and

obtains signature(s) of Co PI(s). This routing form and a copy of the proposal (including at a minimum the budget and budget narrative, abstract or draft of the narrative, and any forms to be signed) are submitted to the department chair and the dean for each faculty/staff member committing time to the proposed project for review. By signing the routing form, the department chair and dean are certifying that the faculty/staff time commitment is consistent with faculty/staff assigned effort in the department and is within the maximum 100% time available for University duties should the proposal be funded. Also, these signatures indicate that the content of the proposal, the amount of external funding requested, and the source of any University funds contributed to the project are acceptable. If any other University budget units are contributing funds to the project, signatures from these budget unit heads must be obtained as well.

When both the department chair and the dean have signed the routing sheet, the packet is forwarded to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs for final budget review. Please include the program guidelines or Request for Proposals information.

At this time, if there are human participants, animal subjects, hazardous or radioactive materials involved, the PI should also submit certification forms to the Internal Review Board, Office of Safety/Hazardous Materials, or the Radiation Safety Committee as appropriate. These forms are available from ORS&P or on the OSRP web site.

REQUIRED REVIEW TIME

The Office of Sponsored Research and Programs must have at least 5-7 working days for review and approval of proposals. The budget will be examined for mathematical accuracy and verification of salaries. Typed names will be inserted for university signatures on cover pages and certification forms, and the narrative and budget narrative will be reviewed. The proposal is then forwarded to the Controller's Office and to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies for review and University approval.

When submission deadlines preclude this time frame, the PI should notify the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs while the proposal narrative and budget are under development. OSRP may request a draft narrative and budget for review prior to proposal completion. This will facilitate an expedited review of the final proposal.

Allow plenty of time for the review process as many factors can cause delays. Typical delays can result from the proposal lacking information, difficulty in securing institutional commitment, and difficulty in securing signatures (depends on schedules of those who must review the proposal).

AUTHORIZED UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL SIGNATURE

The Authorized University Official for all grant and contract proposal submissions is the Director of Sponsored Research and Programs. Faculty and staff are not authorized to sign for the University, as the

applicant or contractor is technically the University.

The Director of the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs also signs all compliance certification forms to indicate the University's compliance with federal regulations regarding lobbying, drug use policies, etc., and to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations.

The Director of Sponsored Research and Programs will not approve proposals for internal routing until the department chair and the dean have signed the External Funding Proposal Routing form and all budget account numbers for matching funds are indicated.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Following approval by the Controller and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, the proposal is returned to OSRP and the principal investigator will be notified to pick up the proposal. A cover letter of transmittal to accompany the proposal is written by the OSRP director to present the formal application to the sponsoring agency. Photocopying and mailing or delivery to the funding agency are the responsibilities of the principal investigator.

ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

A rapidly moving trend with many agencies is for the electronic submission of proposals and even electronic award administration. The National Science Foundation was first with this effort (see NSF's FastLane web site for details); however, many agencies will be initiating this in the near future. In fact, there is an effort to make proposal submission similar for all federal funding agencies through the use of Grants.Gov. Electronic submission and reporting is already in place for some proposals submitted to the Louisiana Board of Regents. Most agencies requesting electronic submission require the sponsored research office to transmit electronic proposals or authorize in some fashion the submission of the completed proposal. Please check with OSRP early in the process for instructions regarding electronic submission.

At first, electronic submission may take more time than the traditional submission method. For instance, NSF FastLane may not be as quick as the name implies. Several agency-specific procedures must be initialized and worked through. Notifying OSRP early will lessen difficulties that may be encountered with electronic submission. If applying for an NSF grant, you will need a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that is provided by OSRP.

The University review and approval process is the same for electronically prepared proposals as for traditionally prepared proposals. OSRP is the authorized University office for submission or transmission of proposals to a sponsoring agency. (Submission by an individual to an agency is prohibited).

PROPOSAL REVISION AND RESUBMISSION

Not all proposals submitted are accepted. In fact, many excellent proposals are turned down because of lack of funds or change in agency focus. Rejection can be disturbing; however, an effort to learn from the action should be made. For proposals not recommended, reviewers' comments and feedback from the program officer can be requested. OSRP staff and colleagues can assist in locating other funding sources or modifying the proposal idea or approach.

If an agency encourages resubmission, the success of a second try is high. Work with the agency program officer to refocus the proposal on reviewers' comments. Have a colleague and/or OSRP staff exam revisions to determine if the reviewers' suggestions have been included sufficiently and if unclear presentation on the first submission is now clear.

Remember, whether submitting a revised proposal to the same agency or a different agency, the proposal must receive University review and approval as with the original proposal.