

Florida Atlantic University

Sponsored Programs

Division of Research

Proposal Preparation and Processing

Revised August 2006, August 2008

DEVELOPING, PREPARING AND SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Assistance in preparing and processing research proposals is available from Sponsored Programs in the Division of Research. This includes assistance with budget preparation, completion of certifications and other forms, and questions regarding agency guidelines.

Contract negotiations with the federal and non-federal sponsors are the responsibility of OSR. Faculty and staff outside of Sponsored Programs are not permitted to obligate or sign for the University.

Who Can Submit a Proposal

1. Any individual who holds a faculty, research faculty, director or center director position, and who has signed the University's Patent and Copyright Agreement, may be a Principal Investigator and submit proposals to external sponsors.

Individuals not eligible to be the Principal Investigator are: OPS Faculty; Visiting Faculty; Research Associates; and Postdoctoral employees.

2. When an Investigator is not eligible to submit a proposal, another faculty member may serve as Principal Investigator.

3. Under certain circumstances, a waiver may be obtained to allow an ineligible investigator to be the Principal Investigator. This must have the additional approval of the Vice President for Research

4. New investigators must hold an appropriate university appointment at the time of application or expect to hold an appointment by the effective date of the award. Graduate students may submit proposals if a faculty member is listed as the Principal Investigator and the Department Chair and College Dean approves the submission.

Electronic Proposal Submission

Electronic submission, a trend started by the National Science Foundation's FastLane, is now a fact. FAU had been a beta site for eRA Commons and Grants.gov submissions, now Grants.gov has become the standard accepted method for submission to federal agencies. Notifying OSR early will lessen difficulties that may be encountered. FAU review and approval process is the same for electronically prepared proposal as for traditionally prepared proposals.

Tools

Many tools, useful when preparing a grant application, are available from Sponsored Programs website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr>. The Principal Investigator should download *Adobe Acrobat Reader*, which is available free from the Sponsored Programs website as well as from many government and other agencies. Reader enables you to download the forms needed in order to complete an application.

GENERAL STRATEGY FOR PROPOSAL PLANNING

The rigors of writing a detailed research proposal, followed by the highly competitive review and evaluation process that occurs at most sponsoring agencies, make it mandatory for applicants to consider their strategy carefully, well in advance of picking up pen and paper. Members of national review panels state repeatedly that it is no longer good enough to write a solid proposal - it has to be an "outstanding" proposal. Applicants must be prepared to sell their ideas with professional finesse.

The most important initial step in the development of a proposal, given the fundamental technical concept, is the identification of the funding agency or agencies for which the proposal should be prepared. OSR can assist investigators in this process by targeted web searches, and the listing of new funding opportunities on its website.

Generally, it is very important to contact agency staff directly to discuss the project and to inquire about the likelihood of funding. These initial contacts are strongly encouraged by most funding agencies. Reviewers' comments emphasize the advisability of a "sharp-shooting", rather than "shot-gunning" approach in the targeting of proposals to potential sponsors.

A criticism heard often from review panels is that some faculty propose using procedures for which they have little or no experience according to their curriculum vitae or publication list. With the collaboration of experienced colleagues within the University, or with the assistance of outside consultants, the success of such studies is more realistic and reviewers will approve them more readily.

Experienced research faculty on campus may also be helpful in providing an unofficial "peer" review for an application and should be drawn in to provide advice whenever their research expertise permits. Many established faculty assist agency staff as "field readers" and thus have experience as reviewers as well as researchers. Their reading of the draft proposal may well assist applicants to gain necessary perspective and help to test the clarity, completeness, and persuasive power of the draft copy.

Many agencies publish rosters of review committee members. Faculty are advised to check pertinent publications from the various agencies. The composition of a review committee may well lead a faculty applicant to amplify certain sections of his/her proposal. It is also appropriate to include with the proposal, in a letter, suggestions as to additional or alternate reviewers who might augment an agency's review expertise.

Applicants should also remember to draft the Abstract carefully, including key words to target it directly to the study section of their choice. Also, if the project is funded, the Abstract is often the one part of the proposal that is included in the agency database.

Faculty should plan to follow up on their proposals after they have been received by the agency. Reviewers sometimes indicate that it is possible to submit additional "pilot" data. This could include

further preliminary data, new publications, and even revisions in strategy due to research findings that were gathered after the proposal was originally drawn up. Such action underlines the applicant's seriousness regarding his/her proposal, and could possibly forestall the reviewers' negative critiques during agency review. Although agencies do not like to be inundated with trivial mailings, they will respect and accept pertinent research materials.

In summary, proposal writers should use campus faculty expertise as well as agency advice during the conceptual planning as well as during the proposal writing stage. OSR can assist the faculty members in establishing such contacts.

THE PROPOSAL PROCESS

Specific requirements regarding content and format differ markedly, and change frequently among sponsoring agencies, so much so it would be pointless to detail them all here. However, some general guidelines are appropriate and have been included in this section.

A research proposal is expected to include a title, an abstract, a detailed description of the proposed research (including goals and objectives), significance of the proposed research (including an overview and evaluation of related research), a detailed methodology section, a statement of facilities and special resources that will be used, the curricula vitae of key personnel, a specific line item budget and a budget justification. These are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs:

Title

Titles should be concise, clear and precise. Excessive length (of more than 81 letters/spaces) may cause parts of the title to be truncated during processing at the agency. In addition, libraries and news agencies often rely on the title to reference research, and precision will help to avoid misinterpretation of a study.

Abstract

The abstract describes the major objectives of the proposed research and the research strategy to meet these objectives. The abstract should be about 200 words. It serves a variety of purposes and should be prepared with great care. The Abstract is often used by Agency staff in assigning the proposal to the appropriate study section for review. Reviewers use the abstract to gain an initial perspective of the key concept of the study and its significance and again later as a reminder when the proposal comes up for discussion.

If a proposal is not in a reviewer's area of specialization, the abstract may be the only part the reviewer will read as he/she prepares for the panel discussion. After funding is secured, the abstract may be used for entry in national data banks and its key works are picked up for quotation indexes. It is advisable to write the abstract at the end, when all other sections of the proposal have been finalized. This does not imply that the abstract can be written hurriedly. A good abstract will strike a careful balance between simple and technical language and highlight key concepts for which the reviewers should look in the main body for the proposal.

Description of Project

The investigator is expected to present a description of the proposed project and to explain the general goal and its various specific objectives. At the same time, the need for the project must be justified and its significance should emerge clearly and convincingly. Studies in which the significance lies in pioneering a new approach to the field by use of sophisticated techniques of inquiry may be considered the most promising. Agencies expect to have objectives stated clearly and specifically, and experienced proposal writers often use brief statements in numerical ranking of priority. Investigators are reminded of the difference between the overall goal, which may be stated in general terms, and specific intermediate or enabling objectives that must be stated in concrete terms.

Funding priorities in most federal agencies favor emphasis on investigations that provide solutions rather than broader-based studies that seek to re-define and characterize the problems.

Related Studies/Review of the Field

The discussion of previous work in the field demonstrates the investigators' knowledge and evaluation of the state of the art in their specialization, the extent of their preparation for the proposed study and the novelty and individuality of their approach. For these reasons, this section has to be much more than an annotated bibliography. It is important to demonstrate clearly that the investigator is aware of other work in the area. Careful selection of sources must be made, discussing only those in detail that are significant to the proposed research. Established investigators, particularly, are expected to demonstrate their command of the field in this section

Methodology and Time Frame

In this section, the investigator describes the proposed research methodology, organizing the material logically according to progressive steps of inquiry. Investigators must make a careful decision about how much detail will be needed to assure clear understanding by the reviewers without going to excessive lengths. It is equally important to describe how potential problems will be dealt with. The overall length of time required to conduct the research project must be projected with care to allow for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Unrealistic projection may lead to criticism, along with omission of a key time-line. Investigators need to remember to allow up to nine months after the application submission date for processing, review, and evaluation of the proposal at a federal agency.

Evaluation Design/Statistical Analysis

Many projects require an evaluation of results, especially studies in education and social science fields. Evaluation may be planned both at critical points during the project period and/or after its conclusion. It may be designed to be carried out by participant staff or by outside consultants. The description of the evaluation design should be detailed and the applicant should make it clear how it is to be administered and how the resulting data will be analyzed. It is also important to indicate how the evaluation results will be used and/ or how they will be disseminated. In biological, behavioral, chemical and physical sciences, the proposer should state the test evaluation and statistical methods to be used.

Personnel

If possible, all professional and technical, as well as academic personnel who will participate in the research should be identified by name and by title/category of employment. The following categories are often needed:

Principal Investigator (Co-Investigator/Project Director/Co-Directors/Program Director).

Faculty Members (generally members of the faculty holding academic rank of Assistant Professor and above).

Postdoctoral Associate.

Research Assistants (graduate students engaged in research or research training under the proposed award).

Professional Assistants (computer programmers, design engineers, laboratory assistants, technicians, etc.)

Other (clerical, secretarial under certain circumstances, undergraduate students, etc.)

Curriculum Vitae (C.V. or Biosketch) are needed only for the major researchers. However, it is advisable to highlight specific research experience, related publications and other important biographical information with regard to the professional personnel. This information should be presented in the text of the proposal or as part of the budget explanation. Reviewers have indicated that it is helpful to have specific research capabilities of the major researchers stated in the text, although these qualifications may also be listed on the curriculum vitae. There may be a page limitation to the length of the C.V.

Facilities/Special Resources

Applicants should take care to describe facilities that will be used in the proposed research. The application may call for statistics about the size of the university and a profile of faculty/students or university-wide facilities such as the library, computer centers, specialized centers. If unique facilities exist with regard to the proposed research, it is important to emphasize this in the proposal.

Dissemination of Results

In order to assure wide impact of funds invested in research, demonstration or development projects, many agencies emphasize the need for well-planned dissemination of results. Most investigators hope to publish research findings in refereed national journals. If other strategies seem useful, they should be listed in the dissemination section of the proposal. Examples are conferences, training workshops, special newsletters, manuals, production of audio-visual material, or any other means of sharing research data with the scientific, technological community.

Investigators are responsible for making public acknowledgment of sponsors of funds that supported the research or project being described in papers, abstracts, presentations, and other publications.

Proposals to Foundations, Corporations, or Associations

1. Foundations

Faculty are encouraged to make use of the resources in OSR before approaching a Foundation, unless they have already established personal contact with one of its offices. Sponsored Programs staff may have background information on Foundations, their giving patterns, their assets and currently active staff. If a Foundation clearly has a designated research division, the faculty member is encouraged to contact the Program Officer directly.

Foundations often do not have their own application forms and their instructions to prospective applicants are sometimes vague. Faculty are advised to open the dialogue with a brief letter of inquiry clearly stating their project area. If a Foundation is interested, it may respond by instructing the faculty member to submit a more detailed, formal proposal. The initial proposal should be written in lay language and be no more than 4-5 pages length. The following issues should be addressed: significance of project; statement of problem; proposed solution and method of approach; expected outcome; relationship of the project to the Foundation's interest; length of time during which support is needed; amount needed; overview of budget; and proposed staff. Even if you are planning to send a letter of inquiry, it must be pre-approved by Sponsored Programs in the Division of Research.

2. Corporations

Since most corporate support is related to product development and testing, investigators will concentrate on technical specifications and the proposed budget, assuming that need for the project does not have to be demonstrated and corporate interest is assured. OSR has developed standardized contracts that may be used in obtaining funding and will customize and negotiate these contracts upon submission of a formal proposal.

3. Associations, Societies and Councils

Most voluntary organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, the American Philosophical Society, the Fulbright Senior Research Program or the Sigma Xi Society, have application forms that are downloadable, are on computer disks, or in paper versions. Most applications will be short and, depending on the agency, should not be as technical as a federal application. While federal projects are reviewed entirely by a panel of experts in the field, non-federal groups often use a heterogeneous group of civic leaders, professional experts and organizational staff for their reviews.

Budget Preparation

Although budgets are cost estimates applied to future research needs, they must be prepared with great care and provide a detailed breakdown of each proposed cost category. The budget should be based on the investigator's best estimate of what the project will require. Budgets should be prepared for the entire project period, i.e., for all years of the proposed research, and provide a breakdown of costs for each year of the research program. Allowance for inflation during future years should be made for all direct cost categories. If an agency requires matching funds or cost sharing, the investigator must determine how the required amount will be provided and in which cost categories it will be covered. Finally, the budgets should be expressed in **whole dollars**. Contact

your department's Budget Coordinator or Sponsored Programs if assistance is needed in preparing the budget for the proposal.

Direct Costs

This list provides guidance to faculty of possible project costs according to accepted federal cost categories. (Attachment A). Faculty are encouraged to group costs accordingly to facilitate the sponsor's review. State of Florida definitions may differ from Federal agencies in some cost categories. In general, the most restrictive definition should be used.

1. Salaries and Wages

The salaries of tenured and non-tenured faculty and staff directly associated with the University constitute appropriate direct costs in proportion to the time each expects to spend on the project. Other temporary personnel services paid on an hourly basis may also be charged.

Among the various budget components, the Salaries and Wages category is one of the most crucial. The sponsoring agency staff will want to know the title of each position, the name and employment level of the person filling the position and, possibly, even a job description if the position is to be advertised. The reviewers also request to know the salary base per annum, the type of appointment (9 or 12 months) and the **percent of effort to be spent on the project by each participant**. Other temporary personnel should be expressed in terms of hours and rate per hour.

Florida Atlantic University has two broad employment categories: **Salaried** appointments (generally those lasting the duration of the project) include full and support Faculty, Administrative, Managerial & Professional (AMP) and Support Personnel (SP); and Temporary positions (formerly called **OPS**) include certain faculty and support staff appointments **not exceeding 12 months and six months respectively in full time equivalence**, graduate assistants, post doctoral appointees, and student assistants.

Salaries and wages should accurately reflect the current compensation level of the employees. However, in view of the length of the proposal review process and the duration of the project, salary increases should be built into the budget. If an investigator fails to anticipate such needs, he/she will find a shortage of funds when the award comes through. This situation in turn would require either a budget revision within approved cost categories or a supplementary request to the funding agency, which may not be approved. Finally, investigators appointed on the academic year base are reminded that summer salaries should be projected at the rate of one ninth of their academic year salary for each month. Sponsor limitations must also be considered when budgeting for summer salary. For example, in no event should faculty budget more than 2/9's of their summer salary on a proposal to the National Science Foundation.

No faculty or staff member, regardless of his/her base of appointment may get reimbursed for more than 100% effort in any given time period without special justification and permission. Award funds may not be used to augment the total salary or rate of pay of FAU

faculty or staff. Award funds are replacement funds, releasing a percentage of the regular employee's time for work on the project. Salaries charged against an award must follow a scale that is consistent with the policy and regular practices of Florida Atlantic University. Faculty may obtain guidance on pay levels, job categories, or employment policy by calling Sponsored Programs.

2. **Fringe Benefits**

Fringe benefits are expressed as a composite percentage rate of salaries. As these percentages change from time to time, please check with OSR to ensure you have the most recent rates. Salaried faculty and staff are entitled to these benefits. Award budgets should request reimbursement for fringe benefits according to the percent of effort that the employee will spend on the project. The rate comprises the following components: Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Social Security Benefits (FICA), retirement and health insurance. The current rate is 30% of salaries for Faculty and AMP employees, and 37% for SP. (The most recent rates can be found on the OSR website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr/> and click on "Facts for Forms"). Fringe benefit rates should be stated in the proposed budget and budget justification.

Temporary employees are covered only by FICA, which should be requested on the budget. The current FICA rate is 7.65%. *No full time University employee can be carried as an Temporary employee for more than 12 months (12 months for faculty; six months for support staff).*

Student Employees. University students employed by a university department may be subject to FICA tax withholding. Internal Revenue Service regulations require that a student must be enrolled full time and work for the university twenty hours or less per week in order to be exempt from FICA. Contact OSR for details relating to undergraduate and graduate students.

3) **Consultants**

A consultant is an individual hired to give professional advice for a fee but not as an employee of the University. Charges for a consultant may include travel costs and professional fees. The fee is expressed as a daily rate. On the whole, the use of a paid consultant must be justified carefully. The budget explanation should state the time period of his/her service.

A faculty member may be used by another faculty member as a consultant if he or she is from a different college ("crossing college lines") and the sponsor has given written approval. Faculty member compensation is paid from the faculty Temporary category as overload.

Investigators are advised to explain in the narrative that the specific expertise either does not exist on campus or is not easily available.

4) **Equipment (OCO)**

According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-21 “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions,” permanent equipment is defined as “*an article of nonexpendable tangible personal property having a useful life of one year or more and an acquisition cost of \$1000 or more per unit.*” Items of permanent equipment must be listed in the budget with details of specific acquisition cost, a description, and a justification of need. This item may also include all necessary peripherals needed. In addition, investigators are reminded to allow for running costs (supplies) as well as maintenance contract costs in the appropriate budget category. For large items, it may be advisable to obtain a written quotation from a vendor to justify the requested item’s cost.

Federal agencies will normally not approve purchase of general purpose equipment. This is defined as “*equipment, the use of which is not limited only to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities.*” Examples of general purpose equipment are: office computers, printers, calculators, typewriters, desks, chairs, copy machines, air conditioners.

5) **Expendable Equipment and Supplies**

Even though expendable equipment and supplies are estimations, it is advisable to have on hand a breakdown of these items by general classification, as substantial amounts are usually challenged by agency reviewers. (For example, instead of “Chemicals, \$10,000” break it down to “Reagents, \$1,200; Isotopes, \$8,000” etc.)

6) **Travel**

In the budget justification section, the purpose, destination, and time span for domestic travel must be explained carefully, as well as the relationship of the trip to the progress of the project. Air travel will normally cover only economy class round trip. For State of Florida travel procedures, see the FAU Controller's Office Procedure Manual.

Foreign travel requests must specify the destination, and the Department of State's foreign per diem should be used. The Controller’s Office receives monthly updates of this rate. The rates are also available directly from the State Department’s website at <http://state.gov>. Faculty should consult the University travel office for air fares. Only American flag carriers may be used. Foreign travel may require prior authorization from the funding agency, if allowed at all.

7) **Subcontracts**

When subcontracts are planned, the total required dollar amount must include **the direct as well as the indirect costs of the subcontracting party**. The totals will appear as a direct cost in the FAU budget. All individual line items of the subcontract must be detailed on a separate budget page. The need for contracting part of the proposed research must be justified in the narrative. In addition, the subcontractor should indicate in writing the intent, capability, and willingness to provide services. The subcontractor should provide a proposed budget along with this letter of intent. Only an official authorized to obligate the subcontracting party should endorse the letter of intent. When an award is made, OSR will develop and execute the subcontract on behalf of the University. **Faculty are reminded that they may not, as individuals, enter into written agreements, such as subcontracts.**

8) **Training Costs**

This category may include fees, tuition, trainee travel cost, and student support. While the budget cost category reflects the total required cost, faculty should still provide individualized breakdown of costs for each trainee on a separate page to allow agency reviewers to make an independent assessment of the level, scope, and need for the training activity.

9) **Other Direct Costs**

Items in this category may include charges for long distance telephone calls, copying, reference books and materials, postage, publications, page costs, etc. related to the project.

The above costs should normally be treated as indirect costs and are usually not be allowed to be charged directly to federal sponsored agreements unless they are specifically budgeted, clearly justified in the budget narrative, and approved by the sponsor.

10) **FAU Cost Sharing/Institutional Contribution Form**

The University may be required to share the cost of sponsored programs where agencies are precluded from covering the full cost. The amount and type of cost sharing depends on the particular project and sponsor requirements. Cost sharing in excess of stated agency requirements should definitely be avoided. Agency reviewers and program personnel consistently indicate that the strength of the proposal idea and the cost effectiveness of the budget are the most important qualifications for success. To obtain the FAU request form for Cost Sharing/Matching funds, go to the SR website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr/> and click on "Electronic Forms."

Unnecessary voluntary cost sharing usually does not enhance the project and leads to a lowering of the negotiated indirect cost rate, which means that the University not only subsidizes the project itself, but is unable to recover all of its operational expenses. Faculty members are encouraged to discuss with OSR requirements for cost sharing in the early stages of proposal preparation.

Facilities and Administrative Costs (also known as Indirect Costs)

1. Federal Agencies

Indirect Costs are negotiated according to the principles of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21. Indirect cost rates, effective between July 1 and June 30 annually, are negotiated between Florida Atlantic University and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), acting on behalf of the federal government and its agencies.

As of March 30, 2005, the Dept. of Health and Human Services and FAU agreed that the current negotiated indirect cost rates would be 41.5% of Modified Total Direct Costs for on-site projects during the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 and 42.5% for the period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. The rate for off-site projects during both these time periods is 26%.

Indirect costs are applied to all salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials, supplies, services, travel and subgrants and subcontracts up to the first \$25,000 of each subgrant or subcontract. Indirect costs are not applied to equipment (\geq \$1,000), capital expenditures, charges for patient care, tuition remission, rental costs of off-site facilities, scholarships and fellowships as well as the portion of each subgrant and subcontract in excess of \$25,000. Investigators should contact the OSR website (<http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr> and go to “Facts for Forms”) for the latest rates.

2. State Agencies

A number of state agencies do not accept the DHHS negotiated rates for indirect costs but set their own policies. Faculty are not authorized to negotiate rates with any agency. OSR must negotiate or agree to the agency's indirect cost rates before the award can be accepted.

3. Corporations, Foundations and Other Sponsors

Federally negotiated rates should be used in proposals to non-federal agencies. Grants or contracts may be accepted at reduced indirect cost rates, if appropriate justification is provided by the faculty members and/or the non-federal agencies. Corporations usually accept the federally negotiated indirect rates, and Foundations, Associations, and other non-profits generally publish their rates in their guidelines.

Compliance

1. Human Subjects Review

All projects involving human subjects must be submitted for review to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Principal Investigators are urged to submit an IRB application prior to proposal submission, this will ensure that all necessary approvals are obtained in advance and will avoid delays. Without a signed, or at least, pending approval, the proposal will not be submitted for agency review.

The IRB generally meets once a month to review Human Subjects applications. This schedule varies over the summer months. Investigators are encouraged to contact OSR to obtain more information regarding Board review procedures, deadlines and schedules. Please note that changes recommended by the Board may require rewriting sections of your research plan and, therefore, you are encouraged to allow 4-6 weeks for Board review. All necessary application materials and documentation are available from Sponsored Programs. For more information and for the Review Committee's meeting dates, go to the OSR website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr/> and click on “Review Committees” on the left-hand listing.

2. Animal Care and Use

Florida Atlantic University has given assurance that it will comply with the Public Health Service on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. This assurance is applicable to all research, research training, experimentation, and biological testing and related activities, involving live, vertebrate animals supported by the Public Health Service, or other sponsors and conducted at FAU, or at another institution as a consequence of the subgranting or subcontracting of a sponsored activity by FAU.

In accordance with this policy, all projects involving the use of animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to proposal submission. When a proposal is submitted to OSR for processing, a completed Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee application, or approval from the IACUC, must be included.

The IACUC meets once a month to review applications and all investigators are encouraged to contact tSponsored Programs to obtain all necessary application materials and documentation. For more information and for the Review Committee's meeting dates, go to the OSR website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr> and click on "Review Committees" on the left-hand listing.

3. **Environmental Health and Safety**

Research involving the use of radioactive materials may not be initiated without prior review by the Radiation Safety Officer and the approval of the Research Safety Committee. The website is now located under EH&S at <http://uavp.fau.edu/ehs/> which also has radiation safety, x-ray and laser safety, and diving and boating safety. Research involving recombinant DNA may be not initiated without the prior approval of the Research Safety Committee.

Authorizations and Approvals

Before a research proposal can be submitted by Florida Atlantic University for consideration by a funding agency, the proposal must have received the support of the appropriate University officials-- Department Chair, Dean or Director, Vice President (if necessary), and Sponsored Programs. To obtain these signatures the principal investigator should attach a ***Pre-Award Routing Sheet*** to the complete proposal. This form can be downloaded from Sponsored Programs website at <http://wise.fau.edu/research/osr/> and click on "Electronic Forms" on the left-hand listing.

When routing a proposal that involves participation by more than one college, signatures from respective officials in the collaborating department/college must be added at the level of Investigator, Chairperson, Dean, and Vice President

Revised budgets, no-cost extension requests to external agencies, letters requesting withdrawal of a pending application, or other changes on an awarded grant may also require the endorsement of the above officials.

Institutional Review and Signature

Certain administrators in OSR have been authorized by the President of the University to enter into research, education, and training agreements with external funding agencies on behalf of Florida Atlantic University. The original, complete copies of proposals should be submitted to OSR, accompanied by the ***Pre-Award Routing Sheet***. Sponsored Programs staff will review the proposal for fiscal accuracy, compliance with FAU policies, funding agency guidelines, and completeness of all required sections. Staff also reviews the ***Pre-Award Routing Sheet*** to see that all necessary endorsements have been obtained and required information provided.

The approval process is an essential step, since those signatures document support of the proposed research and agreement with proposed terms and conditions by all parties on campus that will be involved with the project.

Other Documents Requiring University Signatures.

In addition to new contract or grant applications, other documents needing institutional endorsement are:

- X Any written request to a sponsor must be countersigned by the Director (or his designees) of Sponsored Programs (the authorized university official).
Example of such documents are: letters to agencies requesting no-cost extensions, budget transfers, changes in starting date, change of principal investigator, change of percent effort committed to key personnel, scope of work changes, transfer of grant to a new institution or withdrawing a proposal when funding has been provided by an alternate source (multiple submissions).
- X Continuations and supplements for existing grants need to be signed by an authorized institutional official on the actual agency form usually provided and on the ***Pre-Award Routing Sheet***. Competitive renewals follow the same processing as new applications.
- X Preliminary proposals contain a developed work statement and a budget broken down into general cost groupings. Preliminary proposals require the same type of sign-off as any other grant because when budget cost statements have been developed, it is helpful to assure that there are endorsements at all appropriate levels.
- X Proposals to non-federal, corporate, or foundation sources are treated in the same fashion as the ones directed to the federal agencies.
- X Several federal agencies, and some foundations, require an official institutional signature to document acceptance of the award by the University.

Institutional Deadlines

Faculty are urged to submit proposals to OSR well in advance of deadlines to avoid delays.

All proposal material must be received by OSR a **full five** (5) working days before established agency deadlines. All applicants are reminded that the agency deadline must be clearly indicated on the ***Pre-Award Routing Sheet*** and that a copy of the proposal or application guidelines should accompany the proposal.

When exceptional circumstances cause a delay in proposal submission beyond this deadline, The Sponsored Programs staff will continue to do everything possible to review and expedite all appropriately prepared materials. Faculty cooperation in observing this deadline will enable OSR to complete the proposal review process, which will help insure that sponsors receive all the information that they need in proper form.

Certifications

There are a number of Certifications that may have to be included with proposals submitted to U.S. government agencies. These vary by agency. Please contact OSR to make sure your proposal is accompanied by the correct, signed certifications.

Contract and Subcontracts

1. Contracts

Contracts are defined as "negotiated procurement," while grants are a form of "assistance." In the case of federal government agencies, the issuance of a formal contract must be preceded by the advertisement in the *Commerce Business Daily* of a Request for Proposal (RFP), a Request for Application (RFA), or a Request for Quotation (RFQ). The Coordinators in Sponsored Programs screen the *Commerce Business Daily* on a continuing basis and distribute announcements to interested faculty.

The major components of an RFP are:

- a) statement of required work
- b) desired performance schedule
- c) available government property
- d) applicable contract provisions (clauses)
- e) evaluation criteria

Faculty are advised to pay careful attention to the contract specifications throughout the planning and writing stages. It is equally important to verify the type of contract (fixed price, cost reimbursable, cost plus fixed fee, cost sharing, incremental funding) before deciding whether the conditions are favorable enough to make the competition worthwhile. If the suggested budgetary terms based on the independent government cost estimate appear restrictive but faculty feel competitive in the area, they should not hesitate to submit a larger budget, as it reflects a realistic estimate of quality service according to agency specifications. Contract officers at the agency will reassess the reasonable budget level expectancy during the review stages, before the competitive range is determined.

In preparing the standard governmental contract, faculty will present their documentation in two distinct parts: the technical proposal and the business proposal.

The technical proposal contains three components: the standard title page, or cover sheet, the major work description (scope of work) and the curricula vitae and other relevant appendices.

The business proposal should contain the summary data sheet and the contract pricing proposal (budget), followed by the representations and certifications. While the format of the contract pricing proposal page is straightforward, faculty should break down cost elements such as materials, supplies, special equipment, and travel. In addition, it may be necessary to allocate the budget by task. Failure to justify or document all costs could result in delays, as contract staff have to verify cost elements with Sponsored Programs staff during the review period.

Contract clauses are usually not an issue at the application stage. OSR will review all clauses and take exception if needed. After negotiation and acceptance of the proposal by the agency, the contracting officer will develop the legally binding contract material, including budget work statement. OSR will review the contract clauses proposed by the agency and verify their acceptability.

Standard Representations, Certifications and Acknowledgments are usually submitted at the application stage, and in no case can a federal contract be negotiated without the agency having received these assurances. Most of the information concerns the university as an institution and this information can be provided by OSR. Other data must be given by the applicant, for example the percentage of foreign content in the project, or whether proprietary data are involved. Agencies have developed slightly different formats for the Representations and Certifications pages, but the questions are mostly the same.

2. **Subcontracts**

After receipt of a prime award, the Principal Investigator should contact OSR for preparation of the subcontract. The subcontract is prepared by OSR with assistance of the Principal Investigator. The agreement is signed by the authorized official at the subcontracting institution, and by the Director of Sponsored Programs. Legal documents of this nature may not be executed between the Principal Investigators and their counterparts who will perform the work.

In order to prepare a subcontract, the following information should have been provided at time the Principal Investigator submitted his/her proposal:

- a) the work statement
- b) complete name and address of the subcontractor
- c) proposed budget
- d) proposed period of performance
- e) proposed method of payment
- f) proposed methodology for evaluating both quality and quantity of performance
- g) explanation why proposed subcontractor was selected
- h) name and address of authorized official of subcontracting party
- I) schedule of expected technical reporting by the subcontractor

Attachment A

SUGGESTED CHECKLIST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

1. Does the project fall within the agency's scope?
2. Have agency regulations and guidelines been followed?
3. Have objectives been clearly stated?
4. Is the significance/need for the project well argued, based on a current assessment of the problem?
5. Is the budget request reasonable in view of the complexity and scope of the project?
6. Has the evaluation mechanism of the agency been taken into consideration?
7. Is the proposal well organized and does it flow logically from one section to the next?
8. Is the information clearly laid out, so that the reviewers can immediately identify the most relevant sections?
9. Does the proposal establish the investigator's scholarly competence, without hyperbole or understatement?
10. Is the material presented in the required format?
11. Has enough time been allowed for administrative review?
12. Is the budget correct and well justified? Does it correlate to the project narrative?
13. Are there compliance issues that require approval?

Attachment B

CHECKLIST FOR DIRECT COSTS ITEMS

This checklist provides guidance to listing project costs according to accepted federal cost categories. Faculty are encouraged to group costs accordingly to facilitate review. State of Florida definitions of cost categories may differ from sponsoring agencies.

Salaries and Wages

Academic Personnel
Technicians
Research Assistants
Students
Temporaries

Domestic
Foreign

Fringe Benefits

On all Salaries and Wages, including temporary labor

Subcontracts

Training Costs

Tuition
Fees
Trainee travel
Student Support (Paid as Temporaries and not as a stipend)

Consultants

Consultant Fee
Travel for Consultant
Airfare
Mileage
Lodging
Per Diem

Other Direct Costs

Telephone (long distance only)
Equipment maintenance/contracts
Computer Services
Publications

Equipment (OCO)

Scientific
General purpose

Supplies

Chemicals, Supplies
Glassware
Animals
Animal Maintenance and Supplies
Printing, Duplication, Copying
Books, Reprints, Scientific Journals
Photo Duplication, Xerox
Specialized Software

Travel