



POLICY TITLE: Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines for Sponsored Projects

POLICY PURPOSE: To describe relevant procedures applying to faculty and staff wishing to submit proposals for external grant funding. These procedures arise because of institutional responsibilities for sponsored projects.

BACKGROUND:

APPLIES TO: All Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators at FHSU

DEFINITIONS: Proposal Review (all proposals, when received seven working days prior to submission deadline): Office of Research staff will review proposals prepared by individual PIs, or departmental units, prior to submission to the funding agency. Review includes: check proposals for compliance with federal, state, university, and agency guidelines; review budgets for accuracy; ensure commitment documentation is obtained for required matching funds, services or support, including subcontract and subaward commitments (letters and appropriate F&A agreements); implement the approval process, provide the institutional signature; handle electronic proposal submissions and tracking.

Proposal Preparation (when received 15 working days prior to the sponsor's deadline): In addition to the above activities, the Office of Research staff will, if requested, analyze the solicitation, complete the representations and certifications, and help coordinate the proposal; help prepare the budget, whether simple or complex; assist with securing commitment documentation for required matching funds, services or support; confirm the subcontract commitments (letters and appropriate F&A agreements); facilitate the review of any contract requirements; prepare the agency application forms; assemble the proposal and review the text for required documentation; transmit the proposal package to the agency electronically and track to ensure delivery; and provide assistance with on-line registration and electronic proposal submissions. The Office of Research submits all federal proposals.

CONTENTS: To ensure adequate time for review and approval of proposals, the Office of Research must receive the following items at least seven (7) working days prior to the sponsor's deadline:

- A copy of or link to the grant request for proposals (RFP) or other equivalent solicitation

- A draft proposal narrative
- Final version of the budget
- Final version of the budget narrative/justification
- Supporting documentation for any matching fund commitments
- Supporting documents for any subcontracts (letter of commitment, statement of work, etc.)
- If issuing a subaward to another institution:
 - Final version of subaward budget
 - Final version of subaward budget narrative/justification
 - Subawardee's statement of work
 - Contact information for Office of Research Coordinator's counterpart at subawardee's institution
- If FHSU is receiving a subaward from another institution:
 - Final version of FHSU's budget
 - Final version of FHSU's budget narrative/justification
 - Draft proposal narrative
 - Contact information for Office of Research Coordinator's counterpart at awarding institution

-FHSU's internal grant approval form

If the investigator wishes to have the Office of Research directly assist with any aspect of proposal preparation, the Office of Research must be notified of the intent to submit a proposal at least three (3) working weeks (15 working days) prior to the sponsor's deadline. During these three weeks, the investigator will need to be available to work with the Office of Research to ensure that all aspects of the proposal are properly executed.

All proposals must be reviewed and approved by appropriate university administrators prior to submission to the funder. The Principal Investigator must be a full-time employee of FHSU. If an adjunct instructor wants to pursue a grant, there must be a full-time employee attached to the grant as a Co-Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator is responsible for completing the Office of Research Internal Grant Approval Form, which documents approval from other units that may be impacted by the sponsored activity, or from those entities that provide oversight (animal research, human research, hazardous materials, etc.) For academic units, the approval process will typically include the relevant department chair(s), college dean(s), the Coordinator of the Office of Research, the Graduate School Dean, the Grants Accountant, and the Provost or his/her designee. Proposals from non-academic units will need to obtain approvals from their Director, Vice President, the Coordinator of the Office of Research, the Graduate School Dean, and the Grants Accountant. The Office of Research is responsible for initiating and monitoring the approval process.

Proposals that do not comply with the policies referenced above, or are not submitted through Office of Research by the specified deadlines, may not be processed, approved or submitted, or if submitted may be withdrawn after review, and awards made for proposals that do not comply with these procedures may be declined.

As more and more funding agencies and even individual agency programs move toward electronic proposal submission, some of these agencies are not requesting verification of institutional approval. While this may seem like an effective means of "fast tracking" a proposal, these submissions cause a number of institutional concerns. Among them is that this form of submission undermines the University's ability to assure that appropriate compliance reviews have taken place and that budgetary information requested by the sponsor is correct. Moreover, if the funding agency unilaterally sets terms and conditions that are inconsistent with University policy, there may be a delay in accepting any subsequent award while acceptable terms are negotiated or the award may be declined if negotiations are unsuccessful.

The Office of Research does not review the technical aspects of the proposal, relying instead on the wisdom and judgment of those in the discipline to assure high standards and compatibility with the programmatic intentions of the sponsor. The staff provides feedback in two ways:

First, the Office of Research notes issues that must be resolved before the proposal can be submitted, such as when proposals do not comply with federal, state, university, or sponsoring agency requirements, or with research compliance issues. The Office of Research works directly with the principal investigator (PI) to resolve these issues prior to the submission of the proposal.

Second, the Office of Research may be familiar with specific agency operational guidelines (written or unwritten) and make suggestions that may benefit the proposal in the agency review process. This feedback is provided only as a service to the PI; therefore, it will not impede or delay the submission of the proposal

**POLICY
STATEMENT:**

All proposals for sponsored project funding submitted by FHSU faculty and staff (with the exception of some individual fellowship applications) must be submitted through the Office of Research to ensure that appropriate compliance reviews have taken place, that budgetary information requested by the sponsor is correct, and that any contractual terms or other conditions specified unilaterally by the sponsor that may be inconsistent with University policy have been identified. This policy summarizes important deadlines and policies relevant to some or all investigators.

**EXCLUSIONS OR
SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES:**

**RELATED
DOCUMENTS:**

Policies:

Forms:

Other:

KEYWORDS: Approval, Funding Agency, Compliance, Principal Investigator, Contract Requirements, External Funding, Office of Research

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Office of Research

RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL: Provost

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Approved by President Mason 3/2/2026
