

Chapter 5 Proposal Submission

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A funded proposal is a legal contract executed between the University and the sponsor. As such, individual employees are not permitted to submit proposals. All Federal, State or other governmental proposals must be submitted through and approved by OGRS. Corporate and private foundation proposals for sponsored research or training may be submitted through OCFR, but still must be approved by OGRS as well.

5.1 Institutional Review and Authorizations

Since the University is the legal recipient of sponsored project funds, applications must be routed through certain University offices for review and approval prior to being submitted to the sponsor. Authorizations are obtained on the Intent to Apply for External Funding Approval Form (Appendix A-1). This process serves to assure the sponsor that:

- the department and school/college support the proposed project
- all regulated activities have received necessary review; and
- the University is prepared to accept funds under the terms specified.

It is required that OGRS review all sponsored project proposals prior to submission to the funding agency. **A complete copy of the proposal, including a detailed budget, must be submitted to OGRS at least five (5) working days prior to the deadline.** OGRS reviews the proposal to assure that it complies with federal regulations and University policies and procedures and that the proposal adheres to the requirements of the funding agency as they appear in the guidelines. The five days required by OGRS provides sufficient time to ensure that all University approvals are in order and changes to the proposal can be made if needed. It is the responsibility of both the PI and OGRS to ensure that all proposals are complete and accurate.

Proposals must be accompanied by the OGRS Intent to Apply for External Funding Approval Form, available on the OGRS website in the Proposal Development section. The form specifies the requirements for a number of items, such as use of human subjects and/or animals in the project; cost sharing (allocation of University funds), and use of Information Technology.

The Approval Form captures general information regarding the proposal, such as the type of project, PI's name and department, title of project, sponsoring agency, period of project, and amount requested. The PI needs to submit this form to OGRS with the appropriate signatures from the Chair and Dean, already obtained at the time when the proposal is being submitted for review.

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The Approval Form also requires an abstract of the proposed project written in non-technical language. If cost sharing is involved with the project, page three (3) of the Approval Form must be completed. Account numbers for each item of cost sharing should be indicated, and either the Dean or Director approving the cost sharing needs to sign the form.

The Director of OGRS is the Authorized Institutional Official to sign on behalf of Seton Hall University for most proposals. The Director will sign the proposal once it has been reviewed by OGRS, and will submit an electronic signature in the case of electronic applications.

Please note that the deans of respective schools/colleges of Co-Principal Investigators need to sign the Intent to Apply for External Funding Approval Form, only in the case that the Co-PI is requesting release time, committing cost sharing, or in some other way, affects the school/college budget.

5.2 Establishing Institutes and Centers

The University has specific requirements for the official establishment of Institutes and Centers. If a proposal involves the creation of an Institute or Center, please contact the Office of Grants and Research Services as early in the development process as possible.

Establishment of a Center or institute will require internal documentation separate from the external proposal. Approval of the Provost and possibly the President or Board of Regents may be required, so it can be a very lengthy process.

5.3 Submission to the Sponsor

Sponsors indicate the format and other proposal requirements in the application kit. Proposal submission formats, number of copies required for submission, and deadlines are clearly stated and strictly enforced by sponsors. While OGRS does check for proper formatting of applications, the PI is primarily responsible for ensuring that the application package meets the sponsor's requirements. Sponsors are becoming increasingly less tolerant of formatting errors and will often return a proposal without review if it contains any errors.

5.3.1 Sponsor Deadlines

Deadline dates and times are strictly enforced by the sponsor. Sponsors require that the proposal either be postmarked or received by the deadline date. If the proposal does not meet the deadline requirements, it will be returned to the PI. PIs are encouraged to adhere to the deadlines set by sponsors or face rejection of their proposals without review. In the case of electronic submission, sponsors will set a time and date by which all proposals must be received. PIs are encouraged to work with OGRS staff to make sure that their proposals are ready to be electronically signed off and submitted to the sponsor.

OGRS will arrange for overnight delivery of the required number of copies of proposals to sponsors. This service is available upon request, and should be arranged by the PIs with OGRS staff when they submit their proposals for the five-day review period. In the case of electronic submission, OGRS is the office designated by the federal government, and by private sponsors, to submit proposals on behalf of the University. The proposal is submitted electronically by

OGRS to the sponsoring agency, and the electronic signature of the Director is recorded by the agency.

5.3.2 Paper and Electronic Formats

Today, nearly all submissions are electronic. They may be sent by email, uploaded through the sponsor's website, or on the case of most Federal proposals, through a grants.gov submission package. In the event the sponsor requires an original paper copy (or copies) and paper attachments to be submitted via a postal deadline, OGRS will assist the PI by making the required number of copies for submission and sending them via express mail or overnight courier. For this service, the original copy of the final proposal should be submitted to OGRS by 12:00 noon the day before the deadline.

OGRS will assist PIs with the electronic submission process. It is recommended to set up an appointment with OGRS staff well before the deadline to review the sponsor requirements to meet an electronic deadline. Proposals received by the sponsor after the sponsor's deadline will be automatically rejected.

5.3.3 Multiple Submissions

Identical proposals may be submitted to more than one sponsor at a time, provided each sponsor is advised that this has occurred. Each sponsor should be given the name of the other recipients of the proposal and the amount of funds requested. In instances where all sponsors are given the same total project budget, it should be specified as to how much of the total budget is being requested of each individual sponsor, and for what purpose those funds will be used. It should be noted, however, that careful attention must be paid to the restrictions some sponsors have on the submission of identical proposals to other sponsors, including some (e.g., NIH) that prohibit multiple submissions.

5.3.4 Guidelines for Electronic Submission

PIs and departmental staff assisting them are responsible for ensuring the proper preparation and routing of proposals in the case of electronic submissions. Upon learning of a deadline requiring electronic submission, PIs must contact OGRS to alert its staff about the upcoming electronic submission. Proposals requiring electronic submission must follow the same processing rules as paper proposals, i.e., they are required to be routed through the appropriate department/unit chair and dean's office, and approved by OGRS prior to submission to the sponsoring agency.

OGRS staff can assist with scanning and/or uploading files for PIs. If paper copies of any documents or other electronic media are required to be sent to the sponsoring agency, they must be submitted to OGRS with appropriate signatures, approvals, and attachments, where applicable. Administrative pages containing University/OGRS information and budget forms should be completed first, and, if possible, routed to OGRS for preview. For example, once budget forms are completed in NSF Fast Lane, PIs should "Allow SRO Access" to their proposals.

If an electronic proposal submission involves a multi-institutional consortium or has sub-awards to other institutions, it is the responsibility of the PI to provide the following documentation to OGRS:

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- proposal cover sheet or document that provides signatures of the PI and authorized representative of the external organization;
- and budget justifications from the sub-awardee organization.

Failure to follow these instructions could result in a proposal not reaching the sponsor by their deadline, and could jeopardize the potential for an award.

OGRS is responsible for keeping up with changes and new developments in electronic research administration. OGRS will assist faculty and departmental staff with proposal instructions and other administrative processes relating to the grant and/or contract submission. OGRS will continue to review proposals and budgets and will prepare institutional certifications and assurances before proposals are submitted. In the majority of situations, OGRS will electronically “submit” proposals to sponsoring agencies, rather than PIs. OGRS will mail paper copies of all documents required by sponsoring agencies.

5.3.5 Federal Restrictions on Number of Submissions

Government agencies and private foundations that conduct competitive programs of support of education and research are increasingly restricting the number of applications they will accept from a single institution. If Seton Hall is to participate in these programs, it is essential that the University has policies and procedures to promptly inform relevant faculty members of the opportunity for funding, alert them to the limitation on the number applications imposed by the sponsor, and solicit pre-proposals for internal review by the University Research Council, which will advise the University as to which of the pre-proposals should be advanced to the next level of competition. This internal selection process must be initiated early and concluded in sufficient time for the PI to complete and submit a full proposal to meet the funding agency's deadline.

In order to ensure that the proposals entered in the competition are the best that SHU can present, OGRS will take the following steps:

- Announcements of funding programs will highlight restrictions about the permissible number of applicants and be distributed by OGRS to relevant faculty members and administrators throughout the University.
- In cases where the permissible number of applicants is limited, the announcement will call for brief pre-proposals and specify a date by which the pre-proposals must be delivered electronically to OGRS.
- If the number of pre-proposals received exceeds the number of applications the sponsor will accept, OGRS will forward them to the University Research Council for review. The UR will then advise OGRS, based on merit and conformance with University policies and the sponsor's guidelines, which of the pre-proposals should be expanded to full proposals and advanced to the next level of the competition.
- OGRS will inform those submitting pre-proposals if there is to be an internal competition, and those PIs chosen to proceed with the development of full proposals will be informed in sufficient time to complete their work and meet the deadline for submission established by the program sponsor.

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Note: When appropriate, OGRS may convene the various potential Principal Investigators to consider the possibility of agreement on a single collaborative program rather than individual competing programs.

5.4 Service Agreements

Faculty members should use the approved Service Agreement Form when they are providing a service, such as a consulting service, on behalf of the University to an external agency. Service agreements are commonly used for research agreements with private companies. The fee for this service is collected by the University and placed into a grant account according to the grants accounting principles described in Chapter 6. All university policies and procedures for grants, as described in Chapter 4 apply to service agreements. A completed Intent to Apply for External Funding Form is required, with all approvals. All service agreements require full legal and business affairs review according to the “Green Folder” process. This process can require several weeks or more to complete.

For the Service Agreement Form (Appendix A), faculty members should provide a scope of work for Exhibit A and a schedule of payments for Exhibit B. They should also provide a budget on how they propose to spend the funds obtained from work performed on the service agreement. The Service Agreement Form should be signed by an authorized representative of the external sponsor and by Seton Hall's Chief Financial Officer. Use of this form requires legal and business affairs review according to the University's “Green Folder” policy for contracts.

If a service agreement is needed, contact OGRS as early as possible, as these can take considerable time to complete.