**Best Practices for Proposal Submissions**

* As soon as you are aware of a funding opportunity, let Ryan and Tonya know as soon as possible. It provides them a snapshot of what is coming down the “proposal submission” pipeline even if it if never materializes, aka does not come to fruition. When they are aware of an expected volume, it minimizes the “shock value” with the unknown and allows them to better manage other proposals already in the queue with varying deadlines and needs.
* OSP is also asking for you to submit a request for OSP assistance in addition to letting Ryan and Tonya know. The link is <https://ospproposal.gmu.edu/Default.aspx>. Again, even if the proposal does not proceed, it allows OSP to plan and assign their workload and also provides a window for Ryan and Tonya to follow up with the “unknown quiet” to determine next steps. It also provides a comprehensive record of activity for the Vice President of Research. If you need assistance submitting a request for proposal assistance, they can assist you or you can also contact Regis Saxton at OSP.
* Be sure to get a copy of the indirect rate policy should the potential sponsor request a reduced or no overhead. If they are not aware of this, OSP will charge the full indirect rate. Keep in mind that the university will not waive indirect reductions or altogether just because sponsor “asks or suggests” you to. OSP maintains an F&A Exceptions list of Sponsors who limit F&A rates. The link is <https://osp.gmu.edu/fa-database/>. If you would like to reduce the indirect cost rate being requested, please let Ryan and Tonya know as soon as possible. They have to work with the Dean and COO for approval. They also must follow the [F&A Waiver policy](http://osp.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/FA-Waiver-Process-012418-HA.pdf) on F&A Waivers. F&A waivers are obtained on a case-by-case basis from the Associate Vice President of Research Operations and must be approved by the Vice President of Research.
* If the sponsor requires a match, let Ryan and Tonya know as soon as possible. This must be approved by the Dean and COO ahead of any budget configuration. Additionally, this cannot be left to any last-minute preparations. The link is <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/cost-sharing/>.
* If you request support for summer salary in your budget, let Ryan and Tonya know as soon as possible. This must be approved by the Dean and COO ahead of any budget configuration.
* All contractual language must be reviewed by OSP’s contracts and legal department. This includes MOUs, NDAs, and other standard sponsored requested agreements. If a sponsor requests that you provide an example, OSP does have a standard template and can also assist you with finalizing it. If you have questions pre-award, please contact OSP. When an award is issued, OSP’s Contracts Division reviews all award terms and conditions to determine whether Mason can accept the award to the terms need to be negotiated.
* The Vice President of Research’s office is working on university-based template language for many items often required in a proposal submission, such as facilities, equipment and other resources, intuitional profile, organizational capability, etc. Although Ryan and Tonya do have some of these items that are more oriented toward the school, they will be utilizing their efforts to enhance and update the unit’s. More to come on this as they make progress.
* Due to the large number of proposals submitted less than 4-days prior to the Sponsor deadline, OSP may not be able to submit proposals not submitted timely. Additionally, proposals not submitted in compliance with the 4-day deadline may receive limited to no review by OSP. Please note that this applies to all federal agency opportunities, including NSF and NIH, as well as other complex proposals that 1) require subcontracts, 2) require cost share or match, 3) are multi/transdisciplinary, and/or 4) have large multimillion-dollar budgets. These are such documents that must be submitted to OSP in advance of the 4-day compliance policy to ensure an on-time submission.
* Another important note is that for limited submissions, once you are notified by Vice president of Research’s Office that you may submit, you must still submit a Request to Proposal Assistance to OSP indicating you plan to submit the proposal. These changes are critical to ensure that OSP can perform enough review of the high number of proposals the university is submitting on a monthly (averaging 100+ per month) and annual (approximately 1200) basis.
* Tonya and Ryan have been working with OSP to develop a way to handle specialized funding opportunities from potential sponsors through a new Letter of Intent process. Given that a large portion of the funding profile the school secures from foundations, nonprofits, and state/local government, there is often no formal request for proposals process that accommodates an award. Typically, these unique cases arrive out of conversations from meetings, conferences, workshops, etc. When this happens, the potential sponsor just requests a statement of work and budget with a very short turnaround time. Should this happen to you, please touch base with Ryan and Tonya immediately. This, of course, should not become the norm or common practice for anyone; however, they do want to support all opportunities as best as they can. Should this happen, please make yourself aware that you will still be required to work backwards through OSP if awarded and be subject to the same policy and procedure with respect to all contractual language, requests for indirect waivers or reductions, required cost share or match, and budget configurations. This is called backing into an award. I did this so that we have a process flow in place that does not penalize our compliance rate with the 4-day internal deadline policy for proposal submissions.