

Cornell University

Proposal Review Guidelines

Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) including CALS Office of Sponsored Research and CVM Research Office¹

A. Introduction

OSP provides a full review of the administrative content of a proposal submitted 5 full business days in advance of the sponsor deadline while allowing additional time for the research content to be finalized and submitted to OSP.

Administrative content (RASS proposal record, completed application forms, budget, CVs etc.) must be submitted to OSP at least 5 full business days in advance of the sponsor deadline if a full review is desired. The research narrative and other research content may be submitted either in draft form in advance, or in final form up to one full business day in advance of the deadline, depending on the level of review desired.

OSP recommends that a substantially complete draft of the research content be submitted in advance with the administrative content for a thorough review of all required proposal components to be completed prior to submission to the sponsor. However, the Principal Investigator (PI) may choose not to submit a draft at this time, with the understanding that these sections will not be reviewed prior to submission. OSP will make every reasonable effort to submit a complete and final application to the sponsor in all cases. ***Proposals submitted in full or in part less than 2 full business days before the sponsor deadline are at a greater risk of missed deadlines, submission failure, sponsor rejection or errors that could impact award negotiation.***

Departments/Units may require additional time to prepare budgets, assemble application materials and review proposals prior to OSP submission but should not impose stricter internal requirements for the final research content than those outlined below.

B. Administrative Content Includes (depending on sponsor/proposal requirements):

- RASS proposal record completed
- Application forms completed
- CV(s)/Biosketch(es)
- Current and Pending/Other Support
- Budget & Budget Justification
- Cost share commitments (these should not be included in the research content)
- Appendices/Supplemental Documents – (Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan, Resource Plan, Data Management Plan, Vertebrate Animals plan, Human Subjects plan etc.)
- Subaward documents (letter of commitment, scope of work, budget)
- Letters of support

C. Research Content Includes (precise section label may vary by sponsor):

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Narrative/Research Strategy/Project Description
- Specific Aims
- References cited

¹ For the purpose of these guidelines, OSP includes the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) and College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) Research Office and the Grant and Contract Officers (GCO) in each.

D. Timing of submission and review

The type of review and feedback provided depends on when the components of the proposal are received by OSP. Three review scenarios are outlined below.

Proposals are reviewed in order of receipt. It is strongly recommended that the PI or their Research Administrator/Unit provide OSP with advance notice of upcoming proposal submissions. This helps the GCO to plan ahead and anticipate submission so they can respond to the greatest degree possible in the case of last minute submissions. Advance notice also allows the GCO to review the RFP and become familiar with the required proposal components so they are prepared to provide PIs with an effective review and Units with guidance on proposal requirements. This is especially important in the case of complex proposals (eg.: center grants, program project grants, proposals with multiple subawards or foreign components, proposals responding to RFPs that include problematic terms and conditions, complicated online submission systems etc.), where it is important for PIs or their research administrator to work with GCOs well in advance of the sponsor deadline. If you have questions, please contact your [GCO](#).

Scenario 1. Full Review with or without draft research content (when received by OSP at least 5 full business days in advance of deadline; see p.4 for definition of full review)

- Complete and final version of administrative content
- Indication of when final research content will be provided
- OSP will make best efforts to review and provide feedback within 2 business days
- OSP will not submit until advised by PI or their administrative representative that package is ready for submission

Scenario 2. Limited review with or without draft research content (when received by OSP 3-4 full business days in advance – see p.4 for definition of limited review)

- Complete and final version of administrative content
- Indication of when final research content will be provided
- OSP will provide limited review within 2 business days
- OSP will not submit until advised by PI or their administrative representative that package is ready for submission

Scenario 3. No Review (when final package is received by OSP 2 or fewer business days in advance – see p.4 for definition of no review)

- Complete and final version of proposal package (administrative and research content)
- OSP review limited to ensure Cornell's submission requirements (see below) are met
- Proposal is submitted as is (unless issues with Cornell requirements); no further follow up with PI or their administrative representative.
- Proposal may be withdrawn or award may not be accepted if significant issues with Cornell requirements, eligibility, budget and/or cost-share commitments are discovered post-submission

E. OSP Review

Following proposal review, the GCO will provide comments that will be grouped according to whether or not the comment must be addressed prior to submission. For example:

1. **Cornell Submission Requirements:** Proposals will not be submitted until they meet Cornell submission requirements
 - RASS record complete and approved by PI, Co-PI(s), fellowship mentor(s), and department chair(s)
 - Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) disclosure for all key personnel on file with Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA)

- Sub-recipient Letter(s) of Commitment (if applicable)
2. **To Be Resolved:** The GCO will work with the PI/delegate and department or college to determine how the issue(s) flagged must be resolved. Proposals will be submitted based on the decision of the department, unit, or PI as applicable, and subsequent PI authorization.
 - Budget (F&A rate, fringe benefit rate, unallowable costs, errors)
 - Cost share requirements and authorization of commitments
 - PI eligibility
 - Elements that would prevent submission or system acceptance, such as missing documents, incorrect institutional ID #s (DUNS #), page limits exceeded, file names and types etc.
 3. **Recommendation:** It is at the PI's sole discretion as to whether or not to act upon the recommendation. Proposals will be submitted based on the PI's decision and authorization.
 - Inclusion of supplementary/optional documents
 - Responsiveness to selection criteria
 - Deviations from sponsor guidelines
 - Appropriate budget justification
 - Sponsor instructions that do not prevent submission (e.g. PMCID #, order of publications in CV, letters of support, full sub-recipient documentation, quotes, inclusion of base salary etc.)

OSP will make every effort to provide concise feedback on proposals. Reviews will:

- be provided in bulleted or numbered form
- reference the applicable section or page number of the proposal
- provide relevant information within the text of the email as well as a link to find the information (e.g. DUNS number, Animal Welfare Assurance Number, etc.)
- indicate the comment type (Cornell Submission Requirement, To be Resolved or Recommendation).

OSP continually strives to provide exemplary service to researchers. Feedback on OSP's review process, or any other aspect of our services, is encouraged and should be sent to osp_help@cornell.edu.

GCOs have in depth knowledge and expertise with specific sponsors and can work with researchers and departmental representatives or units to guide them through the proposal process. Please consult OSP at any time with questions or feedback directly or using the following contact information:

OSP Staff Directory	https://researchservices.cornell.edu/contacts?f%5B0%5D=office%3A2361
Find my GCO	https://researchservices.cornell.edu/gco
CALS OSR	https://cals.cornell.edu/about/leadership/sad/grants-contracts-mous
CVM Research Office	http://www.vet.cornell.edu/Research/ContactUs.cfm

See next page for information on Full Review, Limited Review, No Review



Proposal Review Guidelines

Matters Encompassed in Review <small>Legend: <input type="radio"/> = OSP will Review</small>	FULL REVIEW If provided to OSP \geq 5 full business days* before proposal deadline:	LIMITED REVIEW If provided to OSP $<$ 5 and $>$ 2 full business days* before proposal deadline:	NO REVIEW If provided to OSP \leq 2 full business days* before proposal deadline: (Review for Institutional Risk Only)
A. Sponsor Analysis/Review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
B. Internal Notification and Consultation with Other Administrative Offices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
C. Sponsor's Guidelines*			
1. Presence and nature of terms and conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. Limitations on number of applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. Submission method and deadline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. Certifications and assurances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
D. Research Administration Support Services (RASS) entry			
1. RASS proposal record complete	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Attestations and approvals are present and correct	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Data consistent with proposal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
E. PI Eligibility			
1. Approvals for non-eligible PIs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Institutional, Federal and State Compliances			
1. Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Human Participants	<input type="radio"/>		
3. Animals	<input type="radio"/>		
4. Genetically Modified Organisms	<input type="radio"/>		
5. Radiation	<input type="radio"/>		
6. Biological Agents and Toxins	<input type="radio"/>		
7. Hazardous Materials	<input type="radio"/>		
8. Foreign Activities	<input type="radio"/>		
9. Board of Trustees Approval	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Renovation/Facilities	<input type="radio"/>		
11. Stem Cells	<input type="radio"/>		
12. Export Controls	<input type="radio"/>		
13. Background Intellectual Property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
G. Proposal			
1. Application package/form is correct	<input type="radio"/>		
2. Cover/Face Page	<input type="radio"/>		
3. Abstract or Project Summary	<input type="radio"/>		
4. Narrative/Research Plan/Scope of Work	<input type="radio"/>		
5. Bibliography/References	<input type="radio"/>		
6. Curriculum Vitae/Biosketch	<input type="radio"/>		
7. Budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8. Budget Narrative/Justification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9. Inclusion of appropriate F&A and fringe benefits rates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Resources & Facilities	<input type="radio"/>		
11. Other Support/Current and Pending Support	<input type="radio"/>		
12. Appendices/Supplemental Documents	<input type="radio"/>		
13. Subcontract Plan/MBE/WBE	<input type="radio"/>		
H. Subaward Proposal			
1. Letter of Commitment/Commitment form	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Scope of Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. Subaward Budget	<input type="radio"/>		
4. Negotiated Rate Agreement	<input type="radio"/>		
5. Subrecipient/Contractor determination	<input type="radio"/>		
6. Subaward Attestation (PI or RA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Proposal Review Guidelines

Matters Encompassed in Review	FULL REVIEW If provided to OSP ≥ 5 full business days* before proposal deadline:	LIMITED REVIEW If provided to OSP < 5 and > 2 full business days* before proposal deadline:	NO REVIEW If provided to OSP ≤ 2 full business days* before proposal deadline: <u>(Review for Institutional Risk Only)</u>
I. Data Security Plan (if applicable)	●		
J. Intellectual Property Management Plan (if applicable)	●		
K. Technology Control Plan (if applicable)	●		
L. Related Agreements Review (if applicable)	●		

Legend:
● = OSP will Review

*Adherence to Sponsor Guidelines includes; among other things, length, margins, line spacing, font size, file name and type, required info provided (e.g. Broader Impacts Statement); eligibility criteria; etc.

Risk Assessment

1. Risk of proposal rejection due to non-compliance w/ sponsor guidelines	Low	Medium	High
2. Risk of proposal rejection due to system failure	Low	Medium	High
3. Risk of department/unit incurring financial burden due to budget errors or omissions	Low	High	High
4. Risk of withdrawal of proposal by OSP after submission and/or rejection of the award	Low	Medium	High

* A full business day is an official Cornell work day between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm