

Pre-Proposals for Sponsored Projects

Approved: 30Apr26

Administering Unit: Graduate School and Research

I. Purpose

The purpose is to establish guidelines for the submission of pre-proposals to authorize commitments on behalf of the University. Sponsors may require a pre-proposal at the first stage of the proposal review process to conduct preliminary screening of potential applicants for a sponsored project. This guidance ensures that the University does not submit more than the allowed number of pre-proposals for limited submission funding opportunities and does not unknowingly commit resources. This guidance also enhances data collection on research productivity.

II. Definitions

Pre-Proposal: A preliminary document submitted to a funding agency or review committee to outline a proposed sponsored project, and with the intent to result in an invitation to submit a full proposal. Pre-proposals can take many forms including a shortened version of the proposal, a concept paper, a project summary, or a white paper.

Letter of Intent: A document declaring intentions to submit a proposal to a given sponsor. A letter of intent does not require a detailed budget or scope of work.

III. Routing for Internal Approval

The pre-proposal must be routed for internal approval before being submitted to a sponsor if any of the following circumstances apply:

- Limited submission: the number of pre-proposals and/or full proposals either from the University or from a College/School/Center is limited. In these instances, the PI must request and receive approval to submit;
- An authorized signatory is required, or the pre-proposal is submitted through an electronic system that requires submission by an Authorized Signing Official (e.g., Research.gov or Grants.gov);
- The pre-proposal commits the University to cost sharing of any kind;
- The pre-proposal commits University resources in any manner;
- The sponsor requests project budget information of any kind as part of the pre-proposal, except when the pre-proposal includes only a total proposed amount that matches the maximum award amount cited in the call for proposals, or when the sponsor requires the amount requested from all applicants to be listed as a specific, predetermined amount.

Pre-proposals are prepared and routed for internal approval via the University's electronic research administration system.

Letters of intent do not require routing for internal approval.

If the sponsor approves the pre-proposal for submission of the full application, the full application should also be prepared and routed for internal approval via the University's electronic research administration system.