Sponsored Project Proposal Preparation (all but clinical trials)

Purpose: The purpose of this operating procedure is to clarify and define the roles of the Principal Investigator (PI), Department Administrator (DA), and the Sponsored Research Administrative Services (SRAS) Grant Proposal Specialist (GPS) with regard to preparing proposal packages to be submitted for extramural funding applications. The PI and DA work with the GPS to develop and finalize extramural proposals. The Office of Sponsored Projects Administration (OSPA) has the final authority for approving all proposals being submitted for extramural funding and interpreting all sponsor guidelines and regulations.   (Please note that a number of the references are National Institutes of Health (NIH) specific, as that agency is the primary funding entity of sponsored projects in the College of Medicine. The PI and GPS should discuss in advance how other sponsors' terminology for proposal sections will correspond.)

Introduction: Grants and contracts for sponsored projects represent a contractual obligation between the sponsor and the University for the performance of a specific activity through which the sponsor is entitled to receive some consideration or benefit. The contractual obligation is normally documented by a proposal and award combination, contract, or a written memorandum of agreement. The University assumes full legal responsibility for complying with all requirements imposed by the sponsor upon acceptance of grants and contracts for sponsored projects, including a requirement for a report of expenditures or a provision for an audit. In turn, the College of Medicine must ensure its faculty members are in compliance with all University and sponsor requirements.

Per University Administrative Regulation 7:3, Section V, the final version of the proposal package must be provided ready to submit to OSPA no later than three business days prior to a sponsor's proposal submission deadline. The GPS will work with the PI to review sponsor guidelines and assist in compiling the proposal package. A separate SOP applies to the development of budgets that are often a required part of the proposal package. The first two sections of this Proposal Preparation SOP regarding Planning and Preparation are similar to the Budget Development SOP sections with the same titles. Oftentimes, planning and initial preparation for budget development and proposal preparation involve the same steps as a starting point. Thus, these initial steps are included in both the Budget Development and Proposal Preparation SOPs.

Procedure: To compile/prepare compliant sponsored research proposals with accurate budgets.

Planning

1. The GPS will communicate regularly with his or her assigned departments' PIs and DAs to

ask about upcoming proposal plans and provide reminders of associated deadlines, for both the eIAF routing and completion of the proposal package.

2. *The PI and DA must alert the SRAS GPS of proposal plans, including letters of intent and pre-proposal submissions, and include information on the Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA)/Program Announcements (PA)/Request for Proposals (RFP)/Solicitation information and associated deadlines, if any.*

3. As soon as the GPS becomes aware of a planned proposal submission, he/she will alert the Research Administrator (RA) in OSPA of the plans and share the FOA/PA/RFP guidelines and deadline, if any.

Preparation

1. The GPS will review the FOA/PA/RFP, requirements, and guidelines as provided by the sponsoring agency and provide support and feedback to the PI. The PI and the GPS must review agency guidelines as a first step in the proposal preparation process. The RA in OSPA will also be reviewing the guidelines and other available materials, and the GPS should consult the RA before communicating with the PI regarding certain items, such as :
   I. Eligibility
   II. Any special restrictions
   III. Specific items that need to be included in the proposal
   IV. F&A rate limitations, budget restrictions or other limitations (including cost share).

   a. The GPS will notify the PI of the availability of services through the Proposal Development Office (PDO) for the PI to determine if he/she would like to secure assistance regarding resource library items or specific editing assistance/guidance. (http://www.research.uky.edu/pdo/).

   b. The GPS will set up a preparation timeframe with the PI. For example, larger, more complicated submissions, such as an NIH Program Project or Center grant, would require lead time of at least 8-12 weeks. Standard NIH R01s or R21s with modular budgets could be handled in shorter timeframe. As part of the timeline discussion, the GPS should confirm with the PI who will be completing the proposal package. This is often a cooperative arrangement shared between the PI and the GPS.

2. The GPS will maintain a pending proposal list, available for other SRAS staff access.

Compile Proposal

1. This section assumes that a budget and budget justification have been developed as part of the electronic Internal Approval Form (eIAF) process, using the Budget Development SOP.

2. If the sponsor's online submission system allows, the PI may delegate appropriate access to the GPS for review and/or entry of administrative and financial items within the sponsor's system. If direct access isn't possible and/or the submission system requires manual entry of items, then the PI must provide screenshots, PDFs, or other viewing options of the administrative and financial information sections of the proposal for GPS review.

3. If applicable, the GPS will download the proposal package. Depending on the sponsor, this may be done from a specific website, directly from an FOA, Grants.gov, or other website. The GPS will provide entry of standardized UKRF (University of Kentucky Research Foundation) information on cover page(s), using the OSPA Useful Proposal Information page as a guide, along with other institutional resources as applicable. NIH has now made the ASSIST (Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking) online grant submission platform available for most grant and cooperative agreement mechanisms. In ASSIST, information can be directly uploaded to the online grant application.

4. For NIH SF 424 or ASSIST proposals, the GPS will enter Project Site/Performance Site Location Information.

5. The GPS will complete the budget form section, using the agreed upon final budget and budget justification.

6. The GPS will review the budget justification and ensure amounts agree with the budget spreadsheet and the budget details in the proposal; that the format is appropriate; that Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) items are appropriately justified; and that the justification is attached or uploaded to the proposal package.

7. For NIH SF 424 or ASSIST proposals, the PI may complete Senior/Key Personnel Information forms and/or the GPS will complete them, with PI input as needed. The PI and other investigators must provide biosketches with sponsor required information. The GPS will review for compliance with sponsor requirements; will ensure biosketches are formatted per sponsor guidelines; and will attach or upload them to the proposal package, using appropriate file-naming conventions. If any items do not conform to sponsor regulations, the GPS will work with the PI to obtain compliant attachments.

8. For NIH SF 424 or ASSIST proposals, with input from the PI, the GPS may complete the necessary items on the Research and Related Other Project Information page--use of human subjects, animals, propriety information, environmental impact, historical place designation, international collaborators. The PI will prepare attachments for the Project Summary, Project Narrative, Bibliography, Facilities, Equipment, and Other Attachments as required. These can be provided by the PI to the GPS in Word format and the GPS will convert to PDF and attach or upload; these can be provided by the PI to the GPS as PDFs and the GPS will attach or upload to the package; or the PI can attach or upload the PDFs of the files. The GPS will ensure all attachments are named using the appropriate file-naming conventions to avoid submission errors with electronic submissions. Should items fall outside of what sponsor regulations allow, the GPS will work with the PI to obtain compliant attachments.

9. The PI will prepare other personnel or staffing description-related sections. Certain sponsors use this terminology for their personnel justification section. The GPS will provide formatting assistance.

10. For NIH SF 424 or ASSIST proposals, the PI may complete the PHS 398 Cover Page Supplement or the GPS, with input from the PI, will complete this page. For NIH SF 424 or ASSIST proposals, the PI will prepare the PHS 398 Research Plan attachments as necessary and provide them to the GPS. These can be provided by the PI to the GPS in Word format and the GPS will convert to

PDF and attach or upload; these can be provided by the PI to the GPS as PDFs and the GPS will attach or upload to the package; or the PI can attach or upload the PDFs of the files. The GPS will ensure the attachments are named using the appropriate file-naming conventions to avoid submission errors with electronic submissions. Should items fall outside of what sponsor regulations allow, the GPS will work with the PI to obtain compliant attachments.

11. The GPS will ask the PI to review the final version of the proposal and provide his/her approval. The GPS should alert the DA as well at the proposal is complete and provide them with the opportunity to review it as well. The remaining steps will be followed once the PI provides final approval.

Proposal Submission and Award Receipt

1. For hard copy proposal submissions, the GPS will work with the PI to review and finalize the proposal so that hard copies can be provided to OSPA for submission. The PI or DA must prepare the Original Application and any required copies (as specified in the RFP/FOA); provide a CD copy of the proposal, if required; certify use of virus software (for Commonwealth of KY Applications); and provide these to OSPA.

2. If an electronic proposal submission by the Authorized Institutional Official (which, for UK, is OSPA's Director) is required, the GPS will submit the proposal to the RA in OSPA for submission to the sponsor. If an electronic proposal submission is required directly by the PI, the GPS will advise the PI of the need to provide a final copy of the proposal to the RA for the institution's files.

3. The GPS will work with the RA to ensure successful submission to the sponsor and will assist the RA in addressing any errors generated in the sponsor's electronic submission system. The GPS will contact the PI if any of the errors require his or her input to correct. The GPS and RA will remain in contact throughout the submission process and will inform the PI and DA of the successful submission as applicable (i.e., not all sponsors provide an electronic confirmation.) For PI-submitted proposals, the PI will not submit the proposal to the sponsor until the GPS has provided review and comment and the OSPA RA has provided final review and approval to submit.

4. The PI will alert the GPS of the need to submit supplemental information to NIH or other sponsors, as requested. The PI will draft this information and forward to the GPS for review. The GPS will ensure compliance with sponsor guidelines and work with the PI to finalize the information. With the PI's concurrence, the GPS will provide the information to the OSPA RA for institutional submission and, if needed, will inform the PI of the successful submission to the sponsor.

5. When an award is received, OSPA will advise the PI to review the terms and conditions of the award in relation to the proposed Scope of Work.

   a. If the budget is reduced (or increased) by 25% or more, OSPA will notify PI/GPS/DA that a revised eIAF is required and the impact of the reduction (or increase) must be explained in

terms of the Scope of Work. The GPS will prepare a new/revised budget. Upon PI consultation, the GPS will initiate a new eIAF.

b. If the budget is reduced (or increased) by less than 25%, OSPA will notify PI/GPS/DA to prepare new/revised budget. Upon PI consultation, and with DA involvement, the GPS will submit a revised budget to OSPA. A new eIAF is not required.

c. If the reduction necessitates a reduction in the Scope of Work, the PI will prepare a revised Scope of Work for submission to the sponsor. The PI will provide the revised Scope of Work to the RA for submission to the sponsor.

d. Any change in key personnel or addition of investigators since the original proposal submission may require sponsor permission and would require a new eIAF. The GPS will coordinate with the PI and the DA on the initiation of a new eIAF.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for:
- Notifying GPS of plans for proposals.
- Familiarizing himself or herself with the FOA/PA/RFP and/or sponsor guidelines.
- Providing research-related project information details for the proposal.
- Preparing and providing research-related attachments for the proposal.
- Providing biosketches.
- Preparing special other personnel or staffing description-related sections.
- Approving the final proposal.
- Providing hard copy/copies of the proposal as required for submission to the sponsor.
- Providing a scan or hard copy of any electronic submission items as submitted by the PI directly to the sponsor.
- Preparing supplemental information for submission following the original proposal submission.
- Reviewing Scope of Work if a project is funded and consulting with the GPS if the budget has changed to generate necessary revisions.

Department Administrator (DA) is responsible (see Budget Development SOP for more information on these responsibilities):
- Approving final budget.
- Approving the enrichment split for the eIAF, per guidance on options from the GPS.
- Reviewing/approving revised budget, if funding is cut when award is made.

Grant Proposal Specialist (GPS) is responsible for:
- Communicating reminders to PIs/DAs regarding plans for submission of proposals.
- Reviewing FOA/PA/RFP and sponsor guidelines.
- Advising the PI on involvement of the PDO.
- Downloading and assembling the proposal package (or entering information and

uploading attachments into the sponsor's online proposal submission system).

- Completing Senior/Key Personnel forms in the proposal.
- Reviewing biosketches for inclusion of sponsor-required information and correct formatting.
- Formatting of other personnel or staffing description-related sections.
- Completing budget form section.
- Coordinating proposal submission with RA in OSPA, whether paper or electronic.
- Informing PI and DA of successful submission of proposal (if not provided by OSPA).
- Formatting supplemental information for submission.
- Preparing, with PI and DA consultation, revised budgets as needed for funded projects and initiating a new eIAF, if required.

Abbreviations

ASSIST--Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking

CGO—College Grants Officer (other UK Colleges' counterpart to College of Medicine Grants Proposal Specialists)

CAS—Cost Accounting Standards

DA—Department Administrator

eIAF—electronic Internal Approval Form

F&A—Facilities and Administration rate (indirect cost rate UK negotiates periodically with the federal government that is applicable to most grants)

GPS—Grants Proposal Specialist (located in Sponsored Research Administrative Services)

NIH—National Institutes of Health

OSPA—Office of Sponsored Projects Administration (located in the Vice President for Research Office)

PI—Principal Investigator

PDO—Proposal Development Office

SRAS—Sponsored Research Administrative Services

UKRF—University of Kentucky Research Foundation