College of Nursing and Health Professions
Office of Research, Discovery, and Innovation

Preparing and Submitting an Application for a Research Grant or Contract: A Guideline for Investigators

(Robert Palisano, October 1, 2018)

Preparing and submitting an application for a research grant or contract is a collaborative effort among the investigators, Office of Research, Discovery, and Innovation, and the University Office of Research (pre-award administration). The services provided by Grant Administrators are designed to assist investigators with all administrative tasks including submission by the University Office of Research.

The grant application process is time consuming, complicated, and stressful. Time (or lack of time) is a formidable challenge. As the number of investigators, institutions, and performance sites increase, so does the time needed for administrative tasks such as budgets, subcontract agreements, biosketches, and letters of support. When a proposal falls behind schedule, concerns are magnified and communication is strained.

The following practices are integral to effective and efficient collaboration between investigators, the Office of Research, Discovery, and Innovation, and the University Office of Research:

- Begin early and allow extra time
- Use time efficiently
- Plan ahead and be cognizant of deadlines
- Delineate individual roles and responsibilities
- Effectively communicate and coordinate

This guideline describes the administrative processes and practices for preparation and submission of an application for a research grant or contract. The guideline is divided into five sections:

I. Intent to Submit Grant Proposal form
II. Meet with the Grant Administrator
III. Prepare the Grant Application
IV. Approval and Submission by the University Office of Research
V. Sponsor Request for Additional Information

I. Complete Intent to Submit Grant Proposal Form

The Intent to Submit Grant Proposal Form is a fillable pdf document on the CNHP web-site: http://drexel.edu/cnhp/research/resources/. The form provides information needed to initiate the grant application process. The completed form is e-mailed to: onhpr@drexel.edu. Upon receipt a meeting with be scheduled with a Grant Administrator.

The decision to submit a grant proposal

Carefully read the sponsor's announcement to determine whether the call fits with the expertise of you and your colleagues, eligibility, and the deadline for submission. Some organizations and foundations require a letter of intent. Communication with a program officer is recommended to verify your proposal is a good fit with the sponsor's mission and/or the request for proposal and to address your questions about the application process.

Start Early and Plan Ahead

Meeting as soon as possible with a grant administrator is critical to timely completion of administrative tasks. Grant Administrators are continuously assisting investigators in various stages of grant preparation and post-award management. They work forward in time and need to anticipate periods of high demand. Starting early and planning ahead are essential to avoid problems, manage setbacks, and resolve issues that may occur. Insufficient advance notice of intent to apply for a grant or contract adversely affects administrative support to other investigators.

Lead Time to Prepare and Submit for a Grant or Contract

- Large federal grants with established submission deadlines (e.g. R01): Submit the Intent to Submit a Research Proposal form **at least 8 weeks** before the submission deadline
- Grants that include subcontract agreements: Submit the Intent to Submit a Research Proposal form **at least 6-8 weeks** before the submission deadline.
- Other grants and contracts: Submit the Intent to Submit a Research Proposal form **at least 4 weeks** before the submission deadline

II. Meet with a Grant Administrator

The purpose of meeting with the Grant Administrator is to:

- Review the funding opportunity announcement to ensure all requirements are identified
- Identify all investigators and key personnel
- Identify organizations where a subcontract agreement is needed.
- Request resources for writing the proposal (e.g. editorial assistance, statistical support, grant mentor)
- Identify the resources needed to conduct the research. *Selected Resources for Grant Writers* is available on the *CNHP SharePoint site –Research.*
- Determine the person(s) responsible for each administrative task

- Determine the due date for each administrative task
- Ask questions and identify information needs including communication with a program officer or sponsor. Concerns are best discussed at the initial meeting rather than after a problem arises or a deadline is missed.

Proposal Submission Checklist

The *Proposal Submission Checklist* guides the grant application process. The checklist includes all institutional and sponsor requirements. The person(s) responsible for each task and the date for completion are identified.

III. Prepare the Grant Application

Preparing an application for a research grant or contract is most efficient when **investigator(s) prioritize** completion of a **draft of the budget** and provide the Grant Administrator **contact information to initiate subcontract arrangements.** Preparation of the budget, subcontract agreements, biosketches, and letters of support are iterative processes involving many people. Sufficient lead time enables the Grant Administrator to work with investigators and administrators from the institutions where subcontract arrangements are required.

Obtain Approval of Percent Effort from Department Chair

Investigators and key personnel employed by Drexel University have the responsibility for obtaining approval of percent effort (and in-kind percent effort when applicable) from their Department Chair.

Provide Information for Budget to Grant Administrator

- The names and percent effort for each investigator and key personnel employed by Drexel University
- Stipend amount for PhD student (as applicable)
- Consultant costs
- Percent effort and salary requested for personnel who will be hired if the grant is awarded
- Non-personnel expenses.

Remember to follow the sponsor's instructions for the **Budget Justification**.

<u>PhD student(s)</u>

Whenever possible, a PhD student or post-doctoral fellow in the CNHP is included as a research assistant or another appropriate role and a stipend is requested. The student does not need to be named. The University Office of Research encourages a percentage of tuition be included in the budget request.

Indirect costs (overhead)
The Grant Administrator will calculate the indirect cost using Drexel University's federally negotiated rate agreement or the sponsor's mandate allowable indirect cost rate.

Drexel University's indirect cost rate for 2017-18 approved by the Federal government is 56.5% for research conducted on campus and 26.5% for research conducted off campus.

If the sponsor does not allow indirect costs then an *indirect cost waiver* must be requested and approved by the Associate Dean for Research.

Contractual Arrangements
The Grant Administrator works with the investigator and business administrator of each organization/institution where there will be a subcontract arrangement. Each organization/institution calculates the subcontract budget and applies their policies and procedures for approval.

The Grant Administrator reviews each Contractual Arrangement and communicates with the subcontract institute/organization to resolve issues.

Hiring Personnel who are Non-Drexel Employees
The process for hiring personnel is governed by federal, state and local law, as well as Drexel Policy. Personnel are hired as either a temporary employee or an independent contractor. The decision is made on a case by case basis. Working with the Grants Administrator, contact Research Accounting Services Tax Office to determine whether the position in your budget is for a temporary employee or independent contractor.

Budget Requests for Software and Instrumentation
Arun Ramakrishnan, Director of Research labs and research engineer is available for consultation regarding computer hardware, software, and lab instrumentation. A first step is to determine whether the computer software and instrumentation for the proposed research is available in the CNHP. Arun can assist with identifying what items to purchase and the costs for preparing the budget.

Biosketches
Provide the Grant Administrator the sponsor's requirements for biosketches (if different from the NIH biosketch). An example of the NIH biosketch is included in the *CNHP SharePoint site – Research.*

All personnel who are required to submit a biosketch are contacted and provided instructions, a template, and a sample biosketch. The Office of Research, Innovation, and Discovery reviews each biosketch to ensure they are formatted correctly.

Letters of Support
A member of the Office Office of Research, Innovation, and Discovery assists with letters of support required for co-investigators, key personnel, and consultants. Each person is provided the title of the grant application and prompted to indicate why they are qualified and their roles and responsibilities in the study. Consultants are reminded to include the agreed upon rate. Letters of support are reviewed to make sure essential information is provided.

Human Subjects
Institutional review board (IRB) approval is usually not required before a study has been approved for funding. If required, the IRB application will be discussed during the meeting with the Grant Administrator.

IRB applications and renewals are submitted through COEUS (software system for Research Management supported by the Office of Research).

COEUS eIRB access form:
https://drexel.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2bJ65RSpZPmzNtz

Request access to on-line training in COEUS lite:
https://drexel.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7Op1GbEiYtz1nEh

The *COEUS Lite eIRB User Manual* is available in the *CNHP SharePoint site –Research* and http://drexel.edu/research/compliance/human-research-protection/institutional-review-board/How%20To%20Submit/

Contact Adam Fuhrer (agf33@drexel.edu or 215-762-3419) if you have questions.

V. Approval and Submission by the University Office of Research

The Office of Research, discovery, and Innovation works with the University Office of Research to coordinate pre-award administration including internal approvals. **All research grant applications are submitted by the University Office of Research.**
The dates for completion of the steps listed on the *Proposal Submission Checklist* are determined by working back from the sponsor's and University Office of Research deadlines.

Completed applications must be sent to the University Office of Research for approval 3 business days before the sponsor deadline. This includes the narrative (e.g. aims, significance, approach). If the deadline is not met, the application is considered late by the University Office of Research. Should this occur, the University Office of Research reserves the right to submit without review, not to resubmit if an error occurs, and decline an award that is non-compliant.

The University Office of Research submission deadline underscores the importance of starting early, planning ahead, and effective communication and coordination.

VI. Sponsor Request for Additional Information

Some sponsors request additional information for grant applications that are being considered for funding. The PI, Office of Research or both may be contacted. The sponsor may request active and pending support information for all individuals designated in an application as key personnel, a revised budget, IRB approval or evidence of submission, investigator and/or institution certifications.

The NIH *Request for Just-In-Time Information* is a standard notice and request for information from all principal investigators with grant applications receiving an impact score that is competitive for funding. The information requested is needed prior to the NIH making an award.