Sponsored Research at the Elliott School

Sponsored research funding to Elliott School faculty has dramatically increased over the past several years. The Elliott School’s Research Team serves to support and enhance this trend. We are proud of our faculty’s entrepreneurial spirit and encourage you to think of us as partners in the process of identifying funding, developing competitive proposals, and promoting your work.

The Research Team includes Hope Harrison, Associate Dean of Research, Tova Norlen, Director of Research, Kaylie Brassfield, Assistant to the Associate Dean for Research, and Sonja Christmas, Assistant Director of Grants Management.

Please include us early in the process of identifying funders and planning a proposal. Once you know that you are applying for a grant, contact someone in our team directly or to email us at esiaresearch@gwu.edu with the name of the grant, the deadline, and a link to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or the sponsor’s invitation to apply.

All sponsored research proposals must be approved by the Elliott School Research Team and GW’s Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) before they are submitted to the sponsor.

Please follow the guidelines below to facilitate this process.
Proposal Submission Guidelines

STEP 1
Notify the ESIA Research Team of your intention to apply. Our team will verify your eligibility, provide a suggested timeline for internal deadlines, identify complexities that may arise, and ensure that your proposal moves quickly through the review and approval process. If you are affiliated with an institute, contact the operations manager of your institute, who will assist you in developing a budget and preparing proposal documents. If you are not affiliated with an institute, our team will assist you directly.

We require 10 business days - 5 for the Elliott School and 5 for OVPR - to review and approve your proposal (excluding the date of submission to the sponsor). While minor changes can be made to the project narrative during the first five days, a complete proposal must be submitted before a proposal can receive approval. Please plan accordingly!

STEP 2
Prepare required documents. These include, at minimum:

1. Signed Conflict of Interest form
2. The sponsor’s funding announcement and proposal instructions (PDF)
3. Budget (PDF and Excel)
4. Budget narrative (PDF)
5. Proposal narrative or scope of work (Word)
6. All final documents that will be submitted to the sponsor (in a single PDF file)

You may also need:
- The sponsor’s indirect cost policy, if different from GW’s negotiated rate.
- Multi-School Routing Form, if you are working with faculty from other schools at GW.
- Cost Sharing Request Form, if GW is contributing cost share or matching funds.
- Subrecipient Commitment Form and subrecipient documentation (letters of intent, budget, budget narrative, scope of work, and any other documents required by the sponsor), if there will be subrecipients.
- Any other supporting documents requested by the sponsor.

Budget and budget narrative. All proposals must include a budget and budget narrative that justifies the costs. Your operations manager will assist you with this. If you are not affiliated with an institute, you can work directly with Sonja Christmas. Review the sponsor’s guidelines
to determine if there is a maximum amount you can request and what activities are allowable on the grant. The line items and timeline of the performance period should reflect, as accurately as possible, what resources you will need to feasibly complete the work you propose to do.

Note: Some sponsors require you to use a specific budget template. Consequently, your proposal may require two budgets - one that meets GW’s internal requirements and one that meets the sponsor’s requirements.

Proposal narrative or Scope of Work. Carefully review the sponsor’s guidelines; sponsors often have specific requirements for the narrative’s formatting and content. The research team is available to provide feedback on your methodological and theoretical content as you develop your narrative.

Supporting documentation required by GW and by the sponsor. Supporting documentation varies from proposal to proposal. These may include documents for subrecipients, letters of commitment from collaborators, CVs, etc. The research team can often provide institutional information and examples to help you develop these documents.

STEP 3
Submit your proposal for internal approval a minimum of 10 business days prior to the sponsor’s deadline. Please keep us informed if you believe you cannot meet this timeline. Proposal documents are uploaded electronically using Cayuse 424. Your staff can create a proposal for you in Cayuse and upload necessary documentation.

Please refer to OVPR’s Cayuse User Guide for instructions.

STEP 4
The Elliott School will review your entire proposal for alignment with the sponsor’s guidelines and GW’s internal requirements. Additionally, our team will conduct an extensive review of the proposal narrative for clarity, persuasiveness, and research design. Please allow yourself time to incorporate our feedback.

STEP 5
Once Elliott School review is complete, we will instruct the PI to go to the “Routing and Approval” page in Cayuse and check the box next to his/her name in order to begin the internal routing process. The Dean’s Office will route the proposal to OVPR at least five business days before the deadline. OVPR may request further edits to the proposal. You are required to be available during this time to answer questions and implement suggested revisions.

STEP 6
Once OVPR approves the proposal, the proposal is ready for submission. No changes can be made to the proposal once it receives OVPR approval. OVPR will ask you to confirm that
you are ready to submit. In some cases, the university is required to submit the proposal; we will coordinate with OVPR to determine who will submit the proposal.

**STEP 7**

*Notify the research team when you learn the outcome of the sponsor’s review.* Please let us know if your proposal is funded or rejected. Contact us immediately if the sponsor requests revisions to your proposal or budget. **Any changes in the proposal or budget must be approved by OVPR.**
**Guidance on Specific Issues**

**Budgeting for Administrative Support**

The general administrative costs of doing sponsored research at the university are included in the budget as Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs. These may also be referred to as indirect or overhead costs. However, it is appropriate to include administrative salaries or wages as direct costs in the budget if:

(i) Administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
(ii) Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
(iii) Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the Federal awarding agency; and
(iv) The costs are not also recoverable as indirect costs.

Refer to GW’s policy on [Direct Charging of Administrative Costs Associated with Sponsored Projects](#) for additional information.

**Conflicts of Interest**

According to the [Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Commitment for Faculty and Investigators](#):

“Faculty and investigator activities shall be conducted in a manner that avoids inappropriate conflicts of interest and commitment. Conflicts of interest may occur when there is a divergence between a Faculty Member's private interests and professional service to the University.”

Refer to the full policy to identify potential conflicts of interest in your proposal. See Director of Research Tova Norlen with any questions.

**Cost Share**

Cost share refers to direct and indirect project costs not paid by the sponsor. It can be real dollars or “in kind,” such as a person’s time. For more information about cost-share, please refer to the [Sponsored Projects Handbook](#). Some sponsors consider cost-share essential for making proposals more competitive and will ask for it explicitly.

While cost share may come from a Program, Institute, Department, School, or the University, cost share requests at the Elliott School have traditionally asked for equal contributions from the Dean, the Provost, and the Vice President for Research. However, this three-part arrangement is no longer guaranteed and a new policy is being formulated.
• IMPORTANT: The cost sharing support for proposals is at the discretion of the school and university; it is not guaranteed.

• At the Elliott School, monetary cost share is rarely provided for federal proposals and those under $350K; likewise, cost share requests for proposals over $350K are not guaranteed.

• It is critical you contact the research team as soon as you begin to consider requesting cost share for your proposal. Since cost share is currently considered on a case-by-case basis, a decision could take 7-10 days.

Course Release

If you need to be relieved of some of your teaching duties in order to conduct the work you are proposing, you may include a course release in your proposal budget. The GW rate for one 3-credit course release is 1/6th of your annual base salary. Please notify the research team with the name of the course and the semester from which you are planning a release.

For tenure-track faculty, if your proposal involves arrangements that would affect your teaching responsibilities, it is your responsibility to speak with the Associate Dean for Research and your Program Director about this adjustment to your teaching load so that arrangements can be done to replace you.

Contract faculty must receive permission for course releases from the Associate Dean of Research before they can be included in a proposal. Prior permission is required because the decision to grant course releases for contract faculty is largely determined by stipulations within the faculty member's contract.

Draft Submissions and Letters of Interest (LoI)

For letters of intent, concept papers, and preliminary submissions, PIs should check with the research team to confirm whether routing is required. If detailed budget information or an authorized signature is requested by the sponsor, the proposal must be routed through Cayuse and receive Elliott School and OVPR approval. Draft submissions that do not contain budget information must still be sent to the Elliott School research team for approval.

Effort Certification

Faculty and staff who receive salary support from sponsored research are required by law to certify their effort. GW’s effort reporting periods are January-June and July-December, and the PI and program staff must confirm time and effort expended on his/her award(s) twice a year. Prior to proposal submission, PIs should be sure to reach agreement with those included in the proposal regarding prospective effort.
Refer to GW’s [Effort Certification Policy](#) for additional information or contact our assistant director for grants management with questions.

**Export Controls**

Export control laws restrict certain types of information, technologies, and commodities from being transmitted overseas to individuals, including U.S. citizens, or made available to foreign nationals on U.S. soil. It is the responsibility of faculty and administrators to be aware of and comply with these laws and the University’s written instructions and procedures.

Refer to GW’s [Export Control Policy](#) or contact the research team for additional information.

**Hiring Students**

**Graduate Students**

Most GW graduate students are hired as temporary wage employees, Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) or Graduate Research Fellows (GRF.) Refer to [the latest guidance from OVPR](#) for more information about GRAs and current compensation rates.

A student should be hired as a **temporary wage employee** if they will work less than 20 hours per week, less than a full semester, or are hired only for the summer.

A student should be hired as a **GRA** if they will conduct research activities that produce generalizable knowledge. GRAs must be full-time students, be appointed for at least one semester, and must work at least 20 hours per week, but no more than 28 hours per week. GRAs are non-benefited positions. GRAs cannot be a regular part-time or full-time employee or wage employee of the university at the same time. When allowed by a sponsor, PIs are encouraged to allocate tuition for the student as a direct cost to the project. When tuition is not provided by a sponsored research project, the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships (GSAF) will award a tuition fellowship equal to 67% of a student’s tuition under certain conditions.

A student should be hired as a **GRF** if they are engaged primarily in research training activities to further their individual education. PIs are encouraged to charge compensation to the grant when allowed by the sponsor, typically including a living stipend and tuition support. GRFs are not eligible to receive the 2/3 tuition award that is available to some GRAs.

Students not described above may fit into other [Assistant and Fellow categories](#) designated by the university.
Undergraduate Students
GW undergraduate students should be hired under the Student Research Aide classification (account 51229) as temporary wage employees. For details concerning undergraduate hiring see GW Student Employment Manual.

Indirect Costs
GW’s federally negotiated indirect cost recovery rate for on-campus activity is 59.5% for projects starting after June 30, 2016. This rate applies to sponsors that do not have a published policy limiting their indirect cost recovery expenses to a lower rate. If your sponsor’s policies restrict indirect costs, GW will honor your sponsor’s maximum allowable F&A rate.

Indirect costs are excluded on stipends, tuition, and equipment. Indirect costs can only be charged on the first $25,000 for subrecipients. GW’s newest federally negotiated rate information for fringe benefits and indirect costs may be found at the Office of the Comptroller.

IMPORTANT: A portion of the indirect costs on your proposal is returned to you through the Research Enhancement Incentive Award (REIA) program. REIA returns 8% of total indirect cost recoveries to the PI and 4% to their institute or center. The amount of REIA is determined based on expenditures during the preceding fiscal year.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Much of the research conducted by Elliott School faculty involves human subjects. Activities that meet the definition of human subject research must submit either an Exempt from IRB Review Request form or Human Research Study Synopsis form. If you are not sure whether your project involves human subjects, please complete the Human Subjects Determination Worksheet. If you have questions about your project or the forms, please email ohrirb@gwu.edu.

Multi-School Collaboration
When a proposal involves collaboration with faculty from another GW school, the budget must reflect collaboration. Our team will work with PIs to allocate budget items among the schools.

A signed GW Multi-School Routing Form must accompany the proposal at the time it is submitted to OVPR by the 5-day deadline. The PI need only sign the form; OVPR will coordinate the necessary signatures from the collaborating faculty member(s) and administrative personnel.
Post-Award Management

Once a proposal is funded, OVPR will work directly with the sponsor to negotiate and sign the award agreement. OVPR’s post-award team will set up the award accounts and oversee your spending and reporting throughout the life cycle of the grant. Please contact Sonja Christmas or Candy Butler (abutler@gwu.edu) for any questions related to post-award management.

Salary Support, Supplemental Compensation, and Wage Employee Support

If your proposal includes salary support, supplemental compensation payments, or wage employee support, review the terms and restrictions on these types of support with Ms. Christmas before you submit your proposal. Stipends may not be used as compensation for work.

Travel

Be aware of sponsor guidelines, restrictions, and travel to restricted areas. GW reimburses actual expenses, not on a per diem basis. The Fly America Act guidelines apply to funding from all U.S. Government sponsors.

Any international travel by students to high-risk countries must be cleared by the GW Office of International Programs at the time of the proposal.

Links to Additional Information

Sponsored Projects Handbook:
https://research.gwu.edu/sites/research.gwu.edu/files/downloads/SPHandbook_32913.pdf

Institutional Information for Sponsored Projects:
https://research.gwu.edu/institutional-information-sponsored-projects-proposals