Proposal Submission Guidelines

Elliott School faculty have led a rapid increase in sponsored research over the past few years and the Dean’s Office has increased its administrative capacity to support and enhance this entrepreneurial energy. Please think of us as partners in your efforts to attract research sponsorship, develop proposals and promote your work.

In order to best serve your needs, please engage us early in the process of identifying funders and/or in planning proposal content. Courtney Peterson, Program Manager for Sponsored Research is the best first point of contact in this regard.

In our effort to better support your work, the Dean’s Office has developed the following guidelines to facilitate the development and submission of grant proposals.

Grant proposals can be developed and approved by following the steps listed below. Sponsored research proposals, including most draft and preliminary proposals, must be approved by the Elliott School and GW’s Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) before they are submitted to the sponsor.

STEP 1
Notify Courtney Peterson as soon as possible when you are planning a proposal. She will help verify your eligibility, provide a suggested timeline, identify complexities that may arise and plan our work to ensure that your proposal moves quickly through the review and approval process. She will put you in contact with the person who will develop your budget, either Sonja Christmas, Assistant Director of Grants Management, or the operations manager at a relevant institute.

We require **10 business days** (5 for the Elliott School and 5 for GW) to review and approve a proposal, excluding the date of submission to the sponsor. Please plan accordingly.

If needed, we can compress the review somewhat. However, when working on shortened timelines we are unable to guarantee a full review.

STEP 2
Closely read the sponsor’s request for proposal. Let us know if there are any questions.
STEP 3

*Develop a budget and budget justification.* If you are affiliated with a research institute, you will work with the operations manager in that institute to develop the budget and justification. If you are not affiliated with an institute, you will work directly with Ms. Christmas.

Your proposal may require two budgets: one that meets OVPR’s requirements and one that meets the sponsor’s requirements.

STEP 4

*Write the narrative and prepare all other documents required by the sponsor and by GW.* This includes gathering all documentation from subrecipients, if any. If you are affiliated with a research institute, the operations manager can assist with supporting documentation. If you are not affiliated with an institute, Ms. Christmas and Ms. Peterson can assist. If you have questions about what to prepare, please contact your operations manager or Ms. Peterson.

Documentation for subrecipients, consultants, international partners or faculty at another GW school, must also be submitted by the 10 day deadline as part of the internal review. Be sure they prepare the required documentation and send it to you before the 10 day review period begins.

STEP 5

*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. Proposals are no longer routed in hard copy. They are now submitted electronically using Cayuse 424. We will create a proposal for you in Cayuse and upload all necessary documentation, including:

1. GW’s [Conflict of Interest form](#), signed
2. FINAL documentation required by the sponsor
3. Body of the narrative (in editable MS Word format)
4. FINAL GW internal budget (in PDF and Excel)
5. FINAL sponsor budget (in PDF and Excel)
6. FINAL budget justification
7. Copy of the sponsor’s:
   - Request for proposal or invitation to submit
   - Submission guidelines
   - Indirect cost policy
8. If faculty from other GW schools: GW’s [Multi-School Routing Form](#) (signed) and other documentation requested by the sponsor.
9. If cost share: [Cost Sharing Request Form](#) (approved)
10. If subawards: letters of intent, subaward budget, budget justification, scope of work, GW’s [Subrecipient Commitment Form](#) (*must be signed by an Authorized Official*), other documentation requested by the sponsor.
Please refer to OVPR’s Cayuse User Guide for instructions.

Once the full proposal has been uploaded to Cayuse, we will instruct the Principal Investigator (PI) to go to the Cayuse “Routing and Approval” page and check the box next to his/her name. This initiates the internal routing process and generates an e-mail alert to the Dean’s Office.

STEP 6
The Elliott School will review your entire proposal for alignment with the sponsor’s guidelines. In addition, Associate Dean for Research, Hope M. Harrison will conduct an extensive review of the proposal narrative. From the perspective of a reviewer, she will provide comments/edits related to clarity, persuasiveness and research design. It may require additional time to incorporate her feedback. As the PI, you are free to accept or reject the feedback as you like- no explanation needed.

Please be available to respond to edits at any point during review.

STEP 7
Once revisions are complete, the Dean’s Office will route the proposal to OVPR at least **five business days** before the deadline. OVPR may request edits to the proposal, and will sign documentation where needed. The PI may make minor changes to the narrative during OVPR review, but any changes must be completed **two full business days** prior to the sponsor’s deadline.

STEP 8
Once OVPR approves the proposal, it is ready for submission! The PI may submit the proposal to the sponsor. In some cases, the university is required to submit the proposal; please coordinate with OVPR if this applies to you. OVPR will ask you to verify the final, uploaded documents before submission. **No changes can be made to the proposal once it receives OVPR approval.**

STEP 9
When you learn the outcome of the sponsor’s review, notify Courtney Peterson and Associate Dean Harrison. If an award is made we would be pleased to feature it on the Elliott School website and through other communication vehicles.
Guidance on Specific Issues

Budgeting for Administrative Support

It is university policy to follow the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) requirements with respect to charging administrative costs directly to federally-funded sponsored projects and to follow sponsor guidelines in direct charging of administrative costs on non-federal sponsored projects. OMB regulations indicate that administrative costs normally should be treated as F&A Costs and generally should not be charged directly to awards funded by the federal government.

However, direct charging of administrative salaries or wages on federal awards is appropriate 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 and discuss potential conflicts with Associate Dean Harrison.

Cost Share

IMPORTANT: Cost sharing support for proposals is at the discretion of the school and university; it is not guaranteed.

Associate Dean Harrison should be your first point of contact for cost share requests.

Cost share refers to any direct and indirect project costs not paid by the sponsor. It can be real dollars or “in kind,” such as a person’s time. While cost share may come from a Program, Institute, Department, School, or the University, the typical cost share request at the Elliott School asks for equal contributions from the Dean, the Provost, and the Vice President for Research.
At the Elliott School, monetary cost share is rarely provided for proposals under $350K; likewise, cost share requests for proposals over $350K are not guaranteed.

GW is moving toward not permitting cost share on any federal proposals.

Please contact Associate Dean Harrison as soon as you begin to consider requesting cost share for your proposal. It is critical to begin this discussion as early as possible.

Cost sharing requests submitted to OVPR and the Provost for $100,000 or less will be acted upon in two or three days. Those for greater amounts can take a week to 10 days for processing.

Please refer to the Sponsored Projects Handbook for additional information.

**Course Release**

To conduct the work you are proposing, you may want a course release.

Funding for the release needs to be included in your proposal budget. The GW rate for one 3-credit course release is 1/6th of your annual base salary.

For tenure-track faculty, if your proposal involves course release, sabbatical, leave without pay, or other arrangements that would affect your teaching responsibilities, it is your responsibility to come to agreement with the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs & Special Initiatives, Jennifer Brinkerhoff, (and your Department Chair or Program Director, as appropriate) about this adjustment to your teaching load **at the time your proposal is funded**.

Contract faculty need to receive permission for course releases from Associate Dean Brinkerhoff 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 members’ contract.

**Draft Submissions and Letters of Interest (LoI)**

For LoIs, draft and preliminary submissions, PIs should check with Ms. Peterson to confirm whether routing is required. Typically, if detailed budget information or an authorized signature is requested by the sponsor, the proposal must be fully routed through Cayuse and receive Elliott School and OVPR approval. Ms. Peterson will let you know whether you should go to your institute’s operations manager or Ms. Christmas to develop a comprehensive draft budget.

Draft submissions that do not contain budget information, must be submitted to the Dean’s Office for approval, but typically do not need to be fully routed.

**Effort Certification**

Faculty and staff who receive salary support from sponsored research are required by law to certify their effort. In accordance with federal guidance 2 CFR §200.430, effort reporting
provides a method for GW to confirm to sponsoring agencies that direct labor charges allocated to sponsored projects are reasonable and reflect the actual work performed.

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 everyone whose activity is included in the proposal regarding their prospective effort.

Refer to GW’s Effort Certification Policy for additional information or contact Sonja Christmas with questions.

Export Controls

Export control laws restrict certain types of information, technologies, and commodities that can be 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 for additional information.

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 all sponsors that do not have a published policy limiting their indirect cost recovery expenses to a lower rate. If your sponsor restricts indirect costs as a matter of policy, GW will honor your sponsor’s maximum allowable F&A rate.

GW’s 26% off-campus indirect rate is used when more than 50% of the project will occur in non-GW facilities. OVPR makes this assessment and determination.

Indirect costs are excluded on certain expenses, such as stipends, tuition, equipment, and each subcontract in excess of $25,000. 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. REIA carries over from year to year and is intended to help defray the costs associated with research.
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Much of the research conducted by Elliott School faculty involves human subjects. Researchers have the ethical and professional obligation to protect the rights and safety of those subjects.

Research (defined as “systematic investigation designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge”) involving human subjects may require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

If you are not certain whether your project involves human subjects, complete the Human Subjects Determination Worksheet. Activities that do not meet the definition of human subject research require no further action. Activities that do meet the definition of human subject research require submission of either an Exempt from IRB Review Request form or Human Research Study Synopsis form.

If you have questions about your project or the forms, please email ohrirb@gwu.edu.

Please plan accordingly. If your project is subject to IRB approval and an award is issued, some sponsors will not release the funds until IRB approval is granted.

Hiring Students

Graduate Students
Most GW graduate students are hired as a temporary wage employee, Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) or Graduate Research Fellow (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 or less than a full semester. This is the appropriate category for students only hired for the summer.

A student should be hired as a GRA if they will conduct research activities designed to produce generalizable knowledge. GRAs must be full-time students, be appointed for at least one semester, and must work 20 hours per week. GRAs are non-benefited. GRAs meeting certain qualifications may be eligible for a 2/3 tuition award on grants that charge the full negotiated indirect rate; PIs are encouraged to charge the remaining 1/3 of tuition to the grant when allowed by the sponsor. Note that GRAs cannot be a regular part-time or full-time employee of the university at the same time.

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

Students that fall outside the descriptions 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.

Multi-School Collaboration

When a proposal involves collaboration with faculty from another GW school, the collaboration must be reflected in the budget. As such, Sonja Christmas will work with PIs to allocate each budget item 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.

Salary Support, Supplemental Compensation, and Wage Employee Support

If your proposal includes salary support, supplemental compensation payments, or wage employee support (wage account employees are limited to 700 hours/year), be sure that you have reviewed the terms and restrictions on these types of support with Ms. Christmas before you submit your proposal. Note that stipends may not be used as compensation for work.

Travel

Be aware of sponsor guidelines and restrictions and travel to restricted areas. GW reimburses on an actual expense basis, not per diem. 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

GW policies:
http://my.gwu.edu/mod/upolicy/index.cfm?thisTab=2

Policies and Administrative Information concerning Sponsored Research at GW:
https://research.gwu.edu/sites/research.gwu.edu/files/downloads/SPHandbook_32913.pdf