

Internal Deadline Policy for Proposal Submission (Update effective 10/1/20)

The George Mason University (Mason) proposal submission policy requires that all proposals must be received by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) by 5 p.m. **(4) four** full business days, excluding the day of submission, in advance of the sponsor's deadline. Non-compliance with the university 4-day deadline could result in the proposal not being submitted. Further, all subcontract materials are due to **OSP 10 business days before the internal 4-day deadline** given the additional needs of subcontracts.

Why do we have this policy?

The goal of the policy is to ensure that proposals submitted for funding by George Mason University are complete, compliant, and presented in the best manner possible to external sponsors. Complexity of proposal requirements has increased steadily over time, and OSP staff must have adequate time for their professional due diligence as they work to ensure that the proposal sections, required forms and attachments are included, and that elements of the proposal and budget align correctly. In addition, electronic submission systems are vulnerable at times to technical issues. Building in adequate time for the compilation and submission of the materials helps to ensure that proposal deadlines are not missed due to technical problems.

OSP uses this time to review the materials and identify if changes or corrections are needed before proposal submission. This 4-day deadline provides time for the Principal Investigator (PI), the local research administrator and OSP to work together to review the materials, and to identify and correct any problems or omissions that may be discovered during this critical review step.

What is the best way to get started and to work with OSP?

Prior to submitting a proposal, PI's must submit a [Request for Proposal Assignment](#) using the web form located on OSP's home page. PIs and/or local research administrators are urged to contact OSP using the web form as far in advance of the sponsor's deadline as possible, with a minimum of 21 business days. It is important to identify any subcontractors on the Request for Proposal Assignment form since additional time is needed to collect all required subcontractor information **ten days in advance** of the university's internal deadline. Engaging local and OSP staff as early as possible will enable maximum assistance during the proposal preparation process. At times, funding opportunities are announced with very limited lead time before the submission deadline, and in those cases, it may not be possible to submit the Request for Proposal Assignment 21 days prior. In those cases, it is important to submit the Request for Proposal Assignment as soon as possible and to share the details of the opportunity with OSP and their local research administrator.

What about large and complex proposals?

OSP should be informed at least two months in advance of large and complex proposals (multidisciplinary, multi-million-dollar, center, or multiple subcontract submissions). This will ensure that OSP, Research Development Services, and the academic unit are able to provide maximum assistance to help investigators prepare the proposal and meet Mason's proposal deadline. In most cases, a kick-off meeting with the PI, local research administrator, OSP and Research Development Services (if applicable) should take place to establish a timeline for submission. Proposals with an annual budget of more than \$1.5 million per year require an additional approval by the Senior Vice President, Administration and Finance.

What needs to be submitted to meet the University's proposal deadline?

For purposes of this policy, the proposal is defined as complete when all required proposal components, as specified by the sponsor, are in *ready to submit* format. **A complete proposal must have the following elements.**

- ❖ Proposal summary or abstract
- ❖ Technical narrative/Statement of Work
 - Technical narrative submitted with the Proposal at the four-business-day deadline should be a complete draft. The PI will be able to make final edits during the review period; however, changes should not impact the budget or institutional commitments. The final technical narrative is due no later than 2-business days prior to the sponsor deadline.
- ❖ Final budget
 - Final Budget is defined as a budget with costs compliant with Mason and Academic Unit specific policies and Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200. Calculations must include appropriate salary escalation factors, current fringe rates, graduate student health insurance, current tuition rates, correct indirect rate applied with relevant direct costs excluded. Cost share and other relevant institutional approvals, where applicable, must be secured prior to submission.
- ❖ Final budget justification
 - While not all Sponsor's require budget justifications, submission of the budget justification enables OSP to determine whether the budget submitted is accurate and in compliance with federal regulations and sponsor requirements and provides a strong internal control for the funds.
- ❖ Subcontract documents for each proposed subcontractor
 - Subcontract documents include Mason's Subrecipient Commitment Form, a letter from an authorized official, budget, budget justification, statement of work, and any other specific forms/documents required by the prime sponsor. Due to the length of time it often takes to obtain subcontract documents, OSP requests that subcontracts be identified on the Request for Assignment or within one week of the assistance request, so OSP may contact the proposed subcontractor for required information and materials. All subcontract materials are due to OSP 10 business days before the internal 4-day deadline.
- ❖ Completed COI disclosures for all named faculty (tenure track, term, research, affiliate) and postdoctoral research fellows. Project specific disclosures may be required and if so, is also required prior to submission for review.
- ❖ Cost share budget approvals, if applicable.
- ❖ Additional documents as required by the sponsor (including Current and Pending, Biosketch, Cost Share budget, letters of commitment, etc.).

What happens if I miss the 4-day deadline?

If all proposal materials are not received by the 4-day deadline, the proposal will not be submitted unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as when a short turnaround proposal opportunity is approved by the Dean or Dean designee and the Vice President for Research, Innovation and Economic Impact or designee.

If a PI is able to submit the majority of the proposal materials prior to the deadline, but some items outside of their control are unavailable, the PI should communicate with the OSP Grants Administrator working on the proposal regarding the circumstances as soon as possible. These cases will be evaluated

based on the individual circumstances by the Dean or Dean designee and the Vice President for Research, Innovation and Economic Impact or designee on a case-by-case basis.

What about Letters of Intent or Preliminary Proposals?

Letters of Intent (LOI) that do not require a detailed budget and/or firm commitment may be submitted directly without OSP approval. The criteria for LOIs and other pre-proposals not requiring institutional approval can be found on the [OSP website](#).

Should I notify my home academic or administrative unit?

Those interested in submitting proposals for external funding should check with their home academic or administrative units to find out if there are additional internal deadlines prior to the OSP 4-day internal deadline policy. These different timeframes may be in place based on local proposal development support and pre-established timeframes for review and submission for their units. These situations will be documented in advance and clearly communicated to faculty and staff.