Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP)

**15.01.01.L1.02 Preparation, Approval, and Submission of
                  Proposals for Sponsored Agreements**

First Approved: **February 24, 2014**
Revised: **April 8, 2020**
Next Scheduled Review: **April 8, 2025**

Procedure Statement and Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this SAP is to identify the roles, responsibilities, and steps for the preparation, approval, and submission of proposals for sponsored agreements.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1.   GENERAL

        In applying for and accepting sponsored agreements, Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is obligated to fulfill the purpose and requirements of each sponsored agreement through its oversight of TAMIU personnel, resources, and facilities. In order to assure that the work can be performed as described, review and approval of the proposal by the Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD) and TAMIU officials at various levels is necessary to assess feasibility, costs and benefits, as well as identify institutional risks.

        All TAMIU proposals to perform research, instruction, and other activities for external sponsors via sponsored agreements shall adhere to Texas A&M University System (System) policies and regulations, TAMIU rules and procedures, sponsor terms and conditions, and other applicable federal and state regulations. See TAMIU Rule 15.01.01.L1, *Administration of Sponsored Agreements – Research and Other* for a list of relevant state and federal requirements and System policies and regulations.

2.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INTERNAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

According to System Regulation 15.01.01, *Sponsored Agreements – Research and Other*, the TAMIU president or a designee has primary responsibility to initiate sponsored agreements with potential sponsors as well as to ensure the content, scope, quality, facilities, funding, and conduct of sponsored agreements. The TAMIU Institutional Official (IO) designated by the TAMIU president is the provost and vice president for academic affairs (provost). As the designated IO, the provost will assign responsibility for each project or program to a PI/PD to ensure satisfactory progress in the conduct of the work and compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

2.1   The provost has designated the overall responsibility for the initiation, preparation, review, and submission of all externally-funded sponsored agreement applications to the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) except as provided in Section 2.2.

2.2   In the case of applications submitted to a private source that are not research-related, a development officer in the Office of Institutional Advancement is authorized to prepare, review, and submit the applications and the vice president for institutional advancement provides oversight for submission and administration of project compliance based on TAMIU rules and procedures and sponsor guidelines.

2.3   Each proposal submitted through ORSP must be reviewed and approved by the following:

(a) PI/PD;
(b) department/division chair or unit director;
(c) dean or appropriate vice president;
(d) fiscal officer (for applications involving cost-sharing funds); and
(e) provost.

2.4   The PI/PD is ultimately responsible for the following:

2.4.1   Presenting the project ideas;
2.4.2   Conducting the scope of work;
2.4.3   Adhering to and ensuring the quality of the technical, scientific, and scholarly content;
2.4.4   Coordinating with appropriate compliance committees;
2.4.5   Governing access and retention of data;
2.4.6   Complying with applicable TAMIU rules and procedures; System policies and regulations; state and federal regulations; and sponsor requirements including required communications with compliance committees for matters such as conflict of interest, export controls, responsible conduct of research, environmental health and safety including biohazardous research, research data stewardship and management, and all research involving animals and human subjects; and
2.4.7   Submitting all proposal components to ORSP at least five business days prior to the deadline in order for review, processing, approvals, and final formatting to take place with sufficient time for the TAMIU to meet the application deadline.

2.5   The department/division chair or unit director is responsible for the following:

      2.5.1   Ensuring the soundness of the project in relation to departmental/divisional goals, objectives, and resources;

      2.5.2   Ensuring compatibility of the project with the PI/PD's other commitments and current workload;

      2.5.3   Ensuring availability of space and facilities;

      2.5.4   Authorizing and carrying out departmental/divisional cost-sharing commitments which are limited to space, personnel commitments of time and effort involving salaries and benefits, and the use of departmental funds; and

      2.5.5   Ensuring that the project, if awarded, will be carried out within the department/division or unit in accordance with TAMIU rules and procedures; System policies and regulations; state and federal regulations; and sponsor requirements.

2.6   The dean of the college or appropriate vice president is responsible for the following:

      2.6.1   Determining the appropriateness of the proposed project within college programs, resources, and priorities;

      2.6.2   Determining that committed resources will be available;

      2.6.3   Determining that compliance requirements can be met; and

      2.6.4   Authorizing cost-sharing commitments beyond the departmental level.

2.7   The ORSP staff is responsible for the following:

      2.7.1   Ensuring that the proposal has been prepared and formatted according to the applicable TAMIU rules and procedures and the sponsor;

      2.7.2   Ensuring that the budget is in accordance with acceptable cost principles and guidelines (in conjunction with the Office of Grants and Contracts);

      2.7.3   Ensuring that matters involving conflict of interest, export controls, responsible conduct of research, environmental health and safety including biohazardous research, research data stewardship and management, all research involving animals and human subjects, and other compliance issues have been identified and the appropriate committees are informed;

      2.7.4   Providing assistance to deans or appropriate vice presidents with issues that may arise regarding multi-disciplinary or multi-institutional collaborations;

      2.7.5   Reviewing the proposal for institutional risks in regard to strategic, financial, reputational, compliance, and personnel risks of the work being proposed and making recommendations to TAMIU administration for mitigation of identified risks;

      2.7.6   Reviewing the proposal for scope and institutional commitments such as building and spatial needs and cost-sharing;

      2.7.7   Ensuring that TAMIU's facilities and administrative (F&A) cost recovery is at the rate negotiated with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or that the benefits to TAMIU exceed any request for waiver of F&A cost or cost-sharing provision; and

      2.7.8   Ensuring all documentation is in place for the justification for accepting a lesser F&A cost rate or cost-sharing provision.

3. STEPS FOR APPLYING FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING VIA SPONSORED AGREEMENTS

    3.1 The PI/PD consults with the department/division chair or unit director and the dean of the college or appropriate vice president. This consultation will facilitate the process of applying for funding and conducting the proposed project upon award.

    3.2 The PI/PD meets with a research administrator in ORSP. To ensure PI/PDs receive comprehensive proposal support services, it is recommended that the meeting take place at least three weeks prior to the sponsor's deadline.

    3.3 As soon as possible after the initial meeting, the PI/PD must provide ORSP with a one-to-two-page white paper of the project idea and a draft of the budget. Meetings will be scheduled to develop the budget details and the project narrative, if needed.

    3.4 During this process, ORSP research administrators will:

        3.4.1 Provide guidance for interpreting the program guidelines;
        3.4.2 Provide boilerplate information for TAMIU, faculty, and student descriptions and area demographics;
        3.4.3 Provide guidance in developing the proposal budget considering the following:

            (a) If cost-sharing is included, a description of the type of cost-sharing and the account number(s) for any cash donations to the project as well as documentation for commitments from third-party sources must be provided to ORSP personnel; and
            (b) The current TAMIU F&A cost rate that has been negotiated with the DHHS must be used for all sponsored agreements except: (i) where the F&A cost reimbursable by an agency on a particular project is fixed by statute or regulation or (ii) where other circumstances dictate the necessity for accepting a lesser F&A cost rate.

        3.4.4 Send the completed budget to the Office of Grants and Contracts for a secondary review and approval;
        3.4.5 Provide any institutional fiscal documents required;
        3.4.6 Provide support for building collaborations with external partners at other universities as well as local schools, businesses, etc.;
        3.4.7 Provide support in obtaining letters of commitment and collaboration;
        3.4.8 Ensure that all compliance issues are identified and are being properly addressed;

3.4.9 Utilize Maestro for electronic review and approval of proposal documents such as the final budget, cost-sharing documentation, F&A cost waiver requests, and proposal draft. The electronic internal review and approval process is required by System policy prior to the external submission of proposals for sponsored agreements and generally takes at least five business days. The specific steps for this process are as follows:

(a) ORSP submits the proposal for internal routing once the routing documents are uploaded in Maestro and ready for review.
(b) The routing will begin with the PI/PD, except when the PI/PD has reviewed all submission documents. In that case, the routing will be set to begin with department/division chair or unit director, then to the dean of the college or appropriate vice president next, then to the fiscal officer for proposals that include cost-sharing, and finally to the provost.
(c) When more than one college is involved in a proposal, the proposal will be routed to the department/division chair or unit director and dean of each college.
(d) If at any time in this process the department/division chair or unit director, dean of the college or appropriate vice president or fiscal officer or provost have objections, the routing will stop until the objection is addressed.

3.4.10 Complete the external submission process once all final proposal components and approvals are in place. The PI/PD must submit all final proposal documents to ORSP at least 36 hours before the submission deadline to ensure an on-time, successful submission of the proposal.
3.4.11 Submit proposals to external sponsors according to program guidelines;
3.4.12 Log proposals into the ORSP database for reporting; and
3.4.13 File an electronic copy of each submitted proposal on the ORSP network drive and send a copy sent to each PI/PD.

4. EXCEPTION TO THE TAMIU REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

In cases where the routing of the proposal is not complete prior to the submission deadline, the provost, upon review and risk assessment, may approve the submission of the proposal with routing to be completed shortly thereafter. Any amendments or changes to the proposal will be made as soon as reasonably feasible and upon consideration of the reputational risks of making such changes.

Related Statutes, Policies, Regulations, or Rules

OMB Uniform Guidance – CRF, Title 2 Grants and Agreements, Subtitle A – Office of Management and Budget Guidance for Grants and Agreements and Subtitle B – Federal Agency Regulations for Grants and Agreements

System Regulation 15.01.01, *Sponsored Agreements – Research and Other*

TAMIU Rule 15.01.01.L1, *Administration of Sponsored Agreements – Research and Other*

Definitions

Boilerplate: Any text that is or can be reused in new contexts or applications without being greatly changed from the original.

Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A), also known as Indirect Costs (IDC): Real costs that provide reimbursement for actual institutional expenses that support sponsored agreements but cannot be directly charged to a grant or contract. The costs result from shared services such as libraries; physical plant operation and maintenance; utility costs; general, departmental, divisional, and sponsored projects; administrative expenses; and depreciation or use allowance for buildings and equipment.

Maestro: An enterprise-wide system that supports researchers and research administration across the System. Through Maestro, researchers can route proposals for internal review and approval and manage their accounts once awarded. Authorized users can add research keywords to their personal profile, search for colleagues with a specific area of interest, and search for funding opportunities. Authorized users can log in with their TAMIU UIN and Single Sign-On password at maestro.tamus.edu.

Proposal: An application submitted to a funding agency requesting funding for a specified period of time to carry out a specific project. In this document, "proposal" and "application" are used interchangeably.

Principal Investigator or Project Director (PI/PD): The person who takes direct responsibility for completion of a funded project, directing the research or program, and reporting directly to the funding agency.

Contact Office

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