



# Washington University in St. Louis

## JAMES MCKELVEY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Office for Research Development & Administration (ORDA)

Pre-Award Services and Support

Effective Date: 12/1/2022

### Overview: Structure and Mission

ORDA provides central pre-award support to the EECE, ESE, MEMS, and BME departments as well as research-related support to the school overall. ORDA delivers effective and efficient research services that allow faculty to concentrate on their respective academic and research endeavors. ORDA provides high quality, coordinated research development and administration services to McKelvey Engineering. Please see “Services Agreement” section below.

*We support proposal development by building collaborative partnerships with principal investigators (PIs) through a culture of expert service, teamwork, and continuous improvement.*

Due to the tremendous growth and complexity of McKelvey research activities over the last several years, we have increased ORDA staff. The next step is to address proposal workloads, which includes factors such as detailed budgets, multiple collaborators, and other complexities. The expanding demand for pre-award support has led us to adopting standard operating procedures around proposal processing lead-time. We reviewed several peer institutions’ policies to develop this timeline.<sup>1</sup>

### Proposal Processing Timeline

To take full advantage of the services RAs offer (list below), a PI should follow the 15-5-1 timeline.

Processing Timeline	Minimum Lead Time ahead of Sponsor Deadline (15-5-1)
1. Initial proposal <b>notification</b> / budget request	<b>15 business days</b>
2. <b>Final budget</b> , justification, and draft SOW	<b>5 business days</b>
3. <b>Final non-technical documents</b> for submission, excluding SOW	<b>1 business day</b>
4. <b>Final SOW</b> /project description/research strategy	<b>Deadline day</b>

SOW = Scope/statement of work

In cases where proposals are due outside normal business hours (8:30AM-5:00PM), 5PM CST on deadline day should be considered the official submission deadline. If a PI is unable to meet the processing timeline, every effort will be made by ORDA to submit a PI’s proposal to the sponsor by the stated deadline. However, ORDA may not be able to perform all services generally offered in the shortened timeframe. While faculty often work late into the night to meet various deadlines, it is not appropriate for staff to do so.

**Proposals processed within the expected timeline will take precedence over those that are outside the expected timeline and will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.** Generally, the earlier the notification, the better for proposal workload planning and for working with collaborating institutions. Many peer institutions require a set lead-time for proposals.

### Example 15-5-1 Timeline

NOTIFICATION	FINAL BUDGET	FINAL DOCUMENTS <sup>2</sup>	FINAL SOW
15 business days Friday, 10/7/2022	5 business days Friday, 10/21/2022	1 business day Thursday, 10/27/2022	Sponsor Deadline <b>Friday, 10/28/22</b>

<sup>1</sup> Peer institutions consulted include Vanderbilt, Northwestern, Penn State, University of Wisconsin, Purdue, Rice, and Johns Hopkins.

<sup>2</sup> Non-technical documents such as biosketches, collaborator spreadsheets, current and pending support, etc.



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### Late Notifications

If proposal notification is less than 15 business days in advance of the proposal deadline, PIs will need to obtain an email with exception approval from the Vice Dean for Research, citing compelling reasons for the late notification. If the PI obtains approval by the VDR, the proposal will be processed and submitted to the best of ORDA staff's abilities.

### Missed Deadlines

If any of the above deadlines for the Final Budget, Documents and SOW are not met, ORDA cannot guarantee the proposal will be processed in time for submission. ORDA will process the proposal to the best of its abilities but proposals that adhere to the deadlines will be given priority.

### Complex Research Proposals and Special Circumstances

A minimum of 15 business days advance notification is required. Ideally, six weeks advance notice will be communicated to ORDA. Earlier notification is requested for a proposal that involves any of the following circumstances:

- **Four** or more senior personnel, each with their own budgets;
- **Three** or more outgoing subawards where McKelvey is the lead;
- Detailed budget spreadsheet often seen from DARPA and DOE;
- Center-scale or institute led by McKelvey, usually in partnership with the Research Development Office (RDO);
- Training program in which McKelvey will serve as lead/coordinate all mentors;
- Foreign entity sponsors;
- U.S. federal government contract — not a grant or cooperative agreement;
- SBIR/STTR program; and,
- Small business subcontracting plan, an intellectual property management plan, a laboratory safety plan, information security plan (CUI), or any other plan or document that must be developed or coordinated with central-level offices.

**Pre-Proposals with Agency Deadlines:** In order to establish a better partnership with the PI, we request that the PI inform the pre-award contact of pre-proposals. If a PI is submitting a concept paper, white paper, or pre-proposal without a budget, ORDA requests notification. It allows the team to get a head start on items such as reviewing the solicitation, creating a checklist, creating a test budget, etc. This early effort will contribute to a smoother submission of the full proposal. This does not include white papers sent directly to agency program managers.

### Processing Details

Principal Investigators' proposal responsibilities to take full advantage of ORDA services:

1. **Initial proposal notification / budget request:** A completed proposal initiation form is required 15 business days prior to the sponsor deadline. The form serves as notification of the intent to submit and communicates key information needed to start an RMS document. *Earlier submission is highly encouraged.* Items addressed at this stage include:
  - a. **Completed proposal initiation form.** <https://sites.wustl.edu/engineeringresearchtoolkit/initiate-a-proposal/>
  - b. **Collaborator, subaward identification.**
  - c. **Cost sharing.** If the proposal requires cost sharing, the PI must work with the RA on a draft budget using academic salary, 1<sup>st</sup> year GRAs, and any discretionary funding to cover cost sharing requirements. If additional resources are requested, the PI must contact the Department Chair and Dean to initiate discussions.
  - d. **System Access.** New PIs will need to obtain or transfer access to electronic systems. Collaborating institutions may need a Unique Entity Identifier (sam.gov), or be input into RMS.
  - e. **JROC Review.** The Joint Research Office for Contracts may review solicitations if there are FAR, DFAR, or other clauses and/or terms from industry or private sponsors.
  - f. **Completed FCOI, FDS for all senior personnel.**



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2. **Final budget, justification, and draft SOW:** The following elements must be submitted to ORDA at least 5 business days in advance of the submission deadline. Meeting this criterion ensures that the proposal is ready for RMS approvals prior to submission:
  - a. Final Budget, including any cost share commitments – RAs will assist in developing the budget and documenting the cost share commitments; *Includes all outgoing subawards.*
  - b. Final Budget Justification – RAs will assist with drafts as needed; *Includes all outgoing subawards.*
  - c. Draft Scope/Statement of Work (Project Description, Research Strategy, etc.)
3. **Final Documents for Submission:** All non-technical proposal documents for submission must be received at least 1 business day in advance of the submission deadline. This includes, but is not limited to, biosketches, collaborator spreadsheets, any required supplementary documents. Everything but the technical documents (e.g., project description, project summary, references, data management plan, etc.) are ready for upload into the submission portal.
4. **FINAL SOW/Project Description/Research Strategy:** On deadline day, it is the responsibility of the PI to send final materials to ORDA in enough time to allow for review, upload, and successful submission prior to the deadline. **Any document received fewer than 4 hours in advance of the deadline is at the PI's risk.** The proposal may not receive a full review by ORDA and *could be at risk for missing submission* (i.e., for a 5PM deadline, final documents should be received by 1PM).

## Services Agreement

ORDA Research Administrators (RAs) provide the following services in support of PIs:

- Contact PIs in advance for upcoming calendar of submissions
- Review sponsor guidelines, identify key requirements
- Assist with budget preparation, including cost sharing and budget justification review
- Prepare required sponsor administrative forms
- Provide PIs and collaborators timelines and templates during proposal development.<sup>3</sup>
- Contact and collaborate with partner institutions to secure all necessary subcontract documentation for proposals and for handoff to the Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS) and the department
- Review the final proposal package in sponsor system, upload final documents and forms
- Obtain institutional approval for the proposal through the Research Management System (RMS) for submission
- Ensure accurate and timely proposal and subcontract submission
- Maintain and submit Current & Pending/Other Support documents and biographical sketches
- Coordinate and submit JIT information (e.g., revised budgets)
- Populate subaward in the SUBS system before handoff to department at award stage
- In collaboration with the DA, enter the RMS budgets for annual reports/RPPRs and route submission requests to OSRS
- Create RMS PD records for Sponsored Research Agreements (SRAs) and service agreements
- Prepare budgets for new/additional funds, such as JIT revisions or supplements

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<sup>3</sup> For example, ORDA sent an email on Oct. 14 requesting administrative documents (with templates) by Nov. 6 for a Dec. 4 sponsor deadline. Several weeks are needed to review and allow time for any corrections when serving multiple PIs at different schools and locations. This example had 22 participating PIs.