**University of Iowa**
**Quick Guide to the External Funding Process**

The UI's Division of Sponsored Programs oversees the submission of proposals for external funding and processes resulting awards. External funding comes in many different forms, including grants, fellowships, and contracts, and through a variety of sources, such as government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and corporations. While proposals are submitted by an individual or team, awards are generally made to *the institution*, which agrees to oversee the project in accordance with government regulations and to administer the funding in accordance with sponsor guidelines. The following information is intended as a quick guide to the process from start to finish.

**Funding Sources**

The Division of Sponsored Programs offers a number services and resources for exploring potential funders for any given project:

- **Funding Databases**
  A collection of commercial databases available to the UI community, searchable by keyword and other criteria for matching potential funding sources to a given project.

- **Funding Publications**
  Electronic versions of various federal, private, and UI-produced publications that provide information about the various types of funding opportunities.

- **UI Grant Bulletin**
  A direct link to UI's own weekly bulletin of upcoming funding opportunities and news of interest to our research community.

- **Institutional Nomination: UI WINS**
  Information on the UI system for selecting candidates for high-profile programs that limit the number of applications from a given institution, linking to descriptions of such programs.

- **Internal Funding**
  Information on the range of internal funding opportunities available to UI faculty, staff, and students.

**Project Director Status: Who Can Apply**

University of Iowa policy permits regular faculty members, qualified professional & scientific staff members, postdoctoral fellows, and, in some cases, graduate students to apply for research grants and other types of external support, serving as *Project Director* or *Principal Investigator* on a project supported by external funds. Retired faculty members are eligible with the permission of the departmental executive officer, collegiate dean, and Vice President for Research. Those not employed by the UI or with an adjunct or visiting faculty position are

generally ineligible to serve as PD/PI, requiring special approval from the Vice President for Research. The full policy is outlined within two sources:

1. The UI *Operations Manual*, Part III, Division III, Chapter 17.17(4), Employment on Grants and Contracts Administered by the University, Sections (d) and (f).

2. The UI *Research Administration Handbook*, Chapter 3, Project Director: Eligibility Requirements

**Proposal Preparation and Who Can Help**

Each sponsor sets its own application requirements, including the required content, format specifications, budget allowances, and submission procedures and dates. It is critical to review and follow all program guidelines, ensuring a complete application in accordance with sponsor requirements. Failure to follow program guidelines is the most common cause for rejection without review, but, with care, can be avoided. It is ultimately the Project Director's responsibility to ensure the proposal packet is fully completed and adheres to sponsor guidelines.

Assistance

- Department-specific administrators may be available to assist with administrative components of the application.

- The Division of Sponsored Programs staff can help you interpret sponsor guidelines and address specific questions.

- The DSP website details the Application Process, including

    o Budget Preparation Information, defining the most common cost categories, including information on the UI's facilities and administrative (F&A) costs rate.

    o Frequently Needed Information, listing the institutional numbers, dates, and assurances often required within an application.

    o Proposal Preparation and Submission, with guidelines on the general process for seeking external support.

**Sponsored Project Approval: The Routing Process**

Grant Applications

Each sponsored project grant application requires a DSP Proposal Routing Form to accompany the application through departmental, collegiate, and central institutional channels (i.e., the Division of Sponsored Programs) for review and approval, authorizing the application before it's

submitted to an external funding source. The routing procedure is most commonly completed electronically, obtaining electronic approvals through the UI Workflow system, but can also be completed on paper, obtaining inked signatures on the printed routing form. The same form is used in both cases; the Project Director or authorized designee initiates the form online, through the University of Iowa Information System (UIRIS), then elects to either (a) submit the form through Workflow for electronic approvals; or (b) print the form for inked signatures.

Note: Those within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences should be aware of an additional, CLAS-specific requirement in relation to fellowship applications, completing a special CLAS Request for Stipend Supplement/Fringe Benefits Support form in addition to the DSP Proposal Routing Form.

### Internal Deadlines

The sponsored project application must be fully completed and routed to reach the Division of Sponsored Programs – the final step in the routing process – **at least five working days in advance of the sponsor's submission deadline**, allowing sufficient time for review, possible revisions, and submission to the funding source**.** The DSP makes no exceptions to this internal routing deadline. The Project Director and departmental administrator should monitor any routing-in-progress to ensure compliance with the internal deadline. It is ultimately the Project Director's responsibility to ensure the proposal packet is properly routed for review and authorization prior to submission.

## Contracts/Other Agreements

Similar to the grant application requirements, contracts and other sponsored project agreements must be routed through departmental and collegiate channels for review and approval, and through the Division of Sponsored Programs for review and, if need be, negotiation before the UI can accept the terms and conditions. While most agreements use the same DSP Proposal Routing Form associated with grant applications, as discussed above, Material Transfer Agreements and other *non-monetary* agreements use an abbreviated MTA & Non-Monetary Agreements Routing Form instead.

### Internal Deadlines

While there is no established deadline for routing contracts or other types of agreements, the process should be completed as soon as the agreement is available, avoiding any delay. Agreements, by nature, can require a great deal of time to negotiate and finalize, so it is critical to initiate the process as soon as possible.

## Assistance

- Department-specific administrators may be available to assist with the UI Proposal Routing Form and process.

- The [Division of Sponsored Programs staff](#) can help with questions and technical issues concerning the UI Proposal Routing Form and process.

- [UI Routing Policy, Procedure](#), outlining the internal UI routing policies and procedures.

  - [eRouting at UI](#)

  - [Late Routing Policy](#), applicable to those failing to meet the internal routing deadline.

- The University *Operations Manual* outlines the [Policy and Procedures on Gifts, Grants, and Contracts](#).

**Submission Procedures/Services**

Each sponsor establishes its own application process, be it electronic and/or paper, so it is critical to review and follow the sponsor-specific guidelines. Some systems require the PI to complete the submission once obtaining institutional approval, while others require the sponsored programs office to complete the submission following review, signifying the institution's approval.

***Do not*** submit a grant application or a contract to an external organization before it has been routed through UI channels as described above, even if it's technically possible to do so. Every application and each contract must be routed prior to submission, allowing review and approval through the department, college, and Division of Sponsored Programs. Once the application/contract has been authorized, the Project Director or DSP official will complete the submission according to the requirements within the sponsor guidelines and the instructions provided on the [DSP Proposal Routing Form](#).

DSP Submission Services

- [Cross-Campus Courier Service](#): A daily courier between the College of Medicine Dean's Office and the Division of Sponsored Programs' Gilmore Hall location, facilitating the transfer of information across campus.

- [Copying Service and UPS Shipping](#): Services offered free of charge through the Division of Sponsored Programs when the applicant has allowed sufficient time by routing applications to reach DSP at least five business days in advance of the submission deadline.

**To Help the Process Go Smoothly**

- Work with your department early in the submission process and plan to complete your application at least 7 days in advance of the sponsor's submission deadline.

- Follow the sponsor guidelines exactly, observing all content guidelines, font/margin specifications, and section limits.

- Make sure budgets are correctly calculated and meeting sponsor guidelines for allowable costs and limits, and are an adequate and accurate reflection of the proposed-project needs.

- Confirm the final application packet is fully completed and includes all required forms and signatures.

- Leave enough time for the routing process and possible concerns and corrections along the way, allowing the Division of Sponsored Programs at least five business days to review, finalize, and, if applicable, submit your application.

**Additional Guidance**

- Department-specific administrators may be available to assist with the DSP Proposal Routing Form and process.

- The Division of Sponsored Programs staff can help with questions and technical issues concerning the UI Proposal Routing Form and process.

- The Division of Sponsored Programs website offers a range of information on sponsored project application, award, and post-award administration.

- The Researcher Information Handbook, currently under development within the Office of the Vice President for Research, will detail the broader policies, procedures, and responsibilities for those serving as Project Director.

- The Research Administration Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to administering sponsored projects.