

Policy 3 - Proposal Preparation

General Information

Since a properly prepared proposal has a better chance of obtaining funding than one that is not prepared properly, the principal investigator should allocate sufficient time for planning, coordinating, and preparing a proposal. Accordingly, the potential principal investigator should take advantage of the experience of colleagues and members of the faculty and staff who have knowledge that can be useful in program or project design and proposal preparation. As a proposal is being formulated, a potential principal investigator should consult with Grants and Contracts Accounting, the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs, and any other such offices as may be appropriate for a specific proposed project (e.g., Office of Human Resources, Purchasing Office).

Basic Proposal Preparation

Proposals should be prepared according to the requirements or specifications of the potential sponsor and within the format stipulated in the sponsor's program guidelines. In the absence of specific format or content specifications, the principal investigator should seek assistance from the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs.

The preparer should be aware that, if a proposal is funded, the disbursement of funds is subject to regulations established by Missouri State University, and by the State of Missouri as well as those established by the funding source. Grants and Contracts Accounting can offer assistance in budget preparation and may be contacted while the proposal is still in draft form. It is very important that a proposed budget be constructed to fully and accurately reflect the level of support needed to successfully complete a proposed project.

Some budgetary matters are particularly critical to proposal preparation and the potential principal investigator must be aware of these matters and must integrate them into the proposal preparation process from the beginning. Two very critical factors are:

Cost Sharing and Matching

The specific conditions for cost sharing and matching required by a sponsoring agency must be carefully identified and evaluated. All cost sharing and matching requirements must be discussed with the appropriate Director, Department Head and/or Dean in the early stages of proposal preparation. A written commitment of the amount and source of funds to be used to provide the cost sharing or match must be obtained from the Director, Department Head and/or Dean before the proposal is submitted to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs.

Facilities and Administrative Costs

Facilities and administrative (F & A) costs (used to be referred to as indirect costs) represent a substantial outlay on the part of the University and the State. Recovery of F & A costs is essential. The rate of facilities and administrative costs charged is determined by formal negotiations with the Federal government. Established F & A cost rates must be included in every proposal unless an alternative rate or exemption has been clearly established through existing policy or practice, endorsed by the appropriate Director, Department Head and/or Dean and approved by the Provost and/or Vice President for Research and Economic Development.