

Pre-Proposals for Sponsored Projects

Policy Owner: Office of the Vice Provost for Research	Effective Date: October 24, 2016
Policy Contact: Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration & Development	Last Updated: March 12, 2018

REASON FOR POLICY

In some instances, sponsors ask for a pre-proposal to triage potential applicants for a sponsored project. This procedure establishes the guidelines for submission of pre-proposals in order to authorize commitments on behalf of the University, ensures that Tufts does not submit more than the allowed number of pre-proposals for limited submission funding opportunities, and enhances data collection on research productivity.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

A pre-proposal establishes communication between the sponsor and the applicant to determine whether a full proposal should be submitted and, in some instances, to obtain advice that will improve the proposal's chance of success. Pre-proposals can take many forms, including a shortened version of the proposal, a letter of intent (LOI), or a white paper, the specifics of which are either outlined in the funding opportunity announcement or otherwise communicated by the sponsor. Occasionally a pre-proposal may result in an award without the need to subsequently submit a full proposal. Other times, an invitation to submit a full proposal follows a pre-proposal.

The pre-proposal must be routed for **internal approval** before being submitted to a sponsor if **any of the below circumstances** apply:

- **Limited submission:** the number of pre-proposals and/or full-proposals either from Tufts University or from a School / Center is limited (see [Limited Submission](#) competition process for more information);
- An **authorized signatory** is required or the pre-proposal is submitted through an electronic system that requires submission by a Pre-Award Signing Official (e.g. Fastlane, Grants.gov, etc.);
- The pre-proposal commits the University to **cost sharing** of any kind; and/or
- The sponsor requests project **budget information** of any kind as part of the pre-proposal **except** when the preproposal includes only a total proposed amount that matches the maximum award amount cited in the call for proposals.

Pre-proposals requiring internal approval are prepared or routed for internal approval in the Proposal Development module of the Research Administration System (RAS). OVPR requires the approval of the Dean or Designate of the respective School only for pre-proposals when the following are present: cost share, reduced indirect cost rate, course release, space renovations, major operating expenses, and/or capital equipment purchases. However, Schools / Centers may have additional approval requirements. If applicable, a PI eligibility waiver must be requested as part of the pre-proposal approval process (see [PI Eligibility for Sponsored Projects](#)). The 5-day rule for institutional review process applies to pre-proposals that require internal approvals.

If the sponsor approves the pre-proposal for submission of the full application, the full application should be prepared and routed for internal approval in the Proposal Development module in RAS.

DEFINITIONS

Pre-Award Signing Official: staff member of the OVPR Pre-Award office that is authorized to sign proposals for sponsored projects.

Pre-proposal: preliminary proposal submitted to the sponsor in advance of the full application for funding.

Research Administration System (RAS): Tufts electronic tool for preparing and routing proposals for sponsored programs.

RELATED LINKS AND INFORMATION

- [Limited Submission Proposals](#)
- [PI Eligibility for Sponsored Projects](#)
- [The 5-day rule for institutional review process](#)