

University of Massachusetts Lowell Proposal Submission Internal Deadlines
Office of Research Administration
 – Effective 01/29/2024

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML) to require the timely submission of complete proposal packages to the Office of Research Administration (ORA). The timeline established within this policy document allows for a thorough and complete review prior to submission to the sponsoring agency, as well as allowing for ORA to adequately resource plan in order to provide exceptional service to UML faculty.

Who Should Know This Policy

- Principal Investigators (PIs)
- Deans/Associate Deans for Research/Department Chairs
- College/Departmental Administrative Research Support Staff
- Office of Research Administration
- Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation

Introduction

This policy defines the expected timeline for submitting proposals for sponsored projects to ORA in advance of the sponsor deadlines, and the associated level of review conducted by the Grants and Contracts Administrators (GCAs) based on the timing of proposal submission to ORA. This policy will apply to all proposals for external funding, regardless of funding source or submission method (ORA or PI submission). Only authorized UML personnel (ORA staff) are allowed to represent and certify to the content of proposals submitted.

ORA Internal Deadlines

Due to ORA	12 Business Days	5 Business Days	2 Business Days (9am)
Required Proposal Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of intent to submit a proposal via routing in RES • Complete information regarding sponsor solicitation • UML internal budget (draft) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed internal UML documents (Internal Budget, Cost Share Form, Indirect Costs Waiver Form, Limited Submission Approval) • Completed sponsor administrative documents (Senior Personnel Documents, Facilities, Equipment, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final technical components (Summary/Abstract, Narrative/Description, References)

		<p>Human Subjects, Animals, and other documents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor required budget template, if applicable, and budget justification • Complete subrecipient package(s) (Subrecipient Commitment Form(s), Budget/Budget Justification(s), and other documents) 	
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Notice of intent to submit a proposal is required minimally 12 business days prior to the sponsor deadline. (If UML will be a subrecipient in the proposal, the sponsor deadline is the date the lead institution requires UML's proposal package.) The notice of intent includes the information regarding the solicitation (e.g., a hyperlink, sponsor RFP identifier, or copies of e-mails for more informal submissions) and the draft budget uploaded and saved in RES.

Complete administrative components of a proposal, including a final detailed budget, budget justification, sponsor budget template, biosketches, current and pending support, and other required internal forms (i.e., cost share form, request for PI status, NASA certification) must be received by ORA at least 5 business days prior to the sponsor's deadline.

Final technical components of the proposal must be received by ORA at least 2 business days prior to the sponsor's deadline. This allows additional time for the PI to refine the technical component and thereby improves the proposal's chances for success.

Proposals with administrative components submitted to ORA on or before the 5 business day deadline will be considered *on time*. Once the final administrative proposal components are submitted to ORA, in accordance with this policy, ORA will initiate a full review. No further revisions on administrative components, including changes to the final proposal budget, should occur unless requested by ORA.

Proposals that do not meet the deadlines established in this policy may undergo an "as-time-permits" review and could run the risk of not being submitted (e.g. due to electronic portal validations or sponsor rejection due to administrative oversight, etc.). Additionally, timely submission of proposals allows ORA time to avoid or mitigate conflicts with policies and procedures that may restrict UML's ability to accept an award.

If the sponsor specifies a deadline day that falls on a holiday or weekend, ORA will assume a deadline day of the prior business day unless the sponsor clearly indicates they will accept proposals the following business day.

Minimum Requirements for Review

This policy is designed to streamline ORA's process to review administrative documents while the PI finalizes the technical components of a proposal. Submission of the minimum administrative components allows ORA to conduct a meaningful review of the application. The remaining technical documents that constitute a complete application are required for ORA to approve and submit applications or provide institutional endorsement for email submissions.

Components Required for Administrative Review

Received by ORA 5 Business Days in Advance of Sponsor Deadline:

- Required UML internal forms with all required signatures
- Final budget with budget justification
- All subaward documents (if applicable)
- Sponsor-required documents (senior personnel documents, facilities, equipment, human subjects, animals, etc.)
- Draft technical documents (narrative, abstract, bibliography, aims, milestones)

Submitted to ORA a minimum of 2 Business Days in Advance of Sponsor Deadline:

- All final technical components (i.e., final narrative, abstract, bibliography, specific aims, milestones, etc.)

Service Level Commitment

ORA is committed to supporting UML investigators by assuring timely review and submission of complete and compliant proposals. To provide the greatest possible service to faculty, ensure protection of the university from financial or other risks, and resource plan (assignment and sequencing for all proposal submissions), ORA has defined the following minimum service level commitment for proposal review based on the timeframe of proposal submission to ORA in advance of the sponsor's deadline.

Solicitation Details and Draft Budget Received Twelve (12) Business Days in Advance

The time required for adequate proposal review can be impacted by proposal submission volume, sponsor solicitation criteria and requirements, submission method and required terms and conditions or representations and certifications. With at least twelve business days' notice, ORA GCA's can review requirements for submission and monitor any changes that may occur in the deadlines or submission procedures. Further, ORA will note and alert the PI and departmental administrative support of any unusual, new, or atypical submission requirements to allow ample time to ensure these requirements are fully addressed.

Review Solicitation

- Eligibility requirements (PI & institutional)
- Sponsor financial requirements (salary caps, cost share, indirect rates)
- Subrecipient considerations & eligibility

- Terms and conditions (IP, export control, conflict of interest (COI) specifications, data assertions, certifications and assurances)

Review Draft Budget

- The correct version of the ORA internal template has been used (ensuring accurate rates & calculations)
- Allowable vs. unallowable costs compliance per Uniform Guidance and specific solicitation
- Salaries match the value provided in HR Direct and are categorized correctly based on appointment type
- Sponsor salary cap restrictions has been followed (if applicable)
- Sponsor- and University-specific effort requirements have been followed (if applicable)
- Ensure correct stipend has been used and RA fees have been included for Graduate Research Assistants
- Capital equipment meets the definition in the Uniform Guidance and quotes have been provided (if available)
- Human subject payments are on an indirect cost bearing line
- Subcontractors vs. vendors vs. consultants have been categorized correctly
- Consultant letter outlining rates, hours, and contribution to project has been provided
- Indirect Costs
 - Correct indirect cost rate has been used (on-campus, DOD contract, other sponsored activities, etc.)
 - Sponsor indirect cost rate limits have been followed
 - Indirect rate waiver is approved and provided for use of a lower rate if the sponsor allows UML full overhead rate
- Cost Share
 - Mandatory cost share requirements have been met with appropriate and allowable costs and follow sponsor and University policy
 - Internal cost share approval form has been fully approved
 - Cost share letters of commitment have been reviewed and signed by VCRI leadership (if required by sponsor)
 - Voluntary cost share has not been included unless written approval from Chair/Dean/VCRI leadership has been obtained

Review Draft Budget Justification

- Sponsor-required budget justification templates have been used (if applicable)
- Level of detailed required by sponsor is included
- Effort listed in justification matches the budget
- Correct indirect cost rates and fringe rates have been listed
- No unapproved and/or unallowable cost share has been listed in the justification

Proposals Received Five (5) Business Days in Advance (Technical Components Received Two (2) Business Days in Advance)

For final proposals submitted to ORA five business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline, with the final technical components ready for submission received two days in advance, ORA offers a comprehensive review in addition to the review at twelve days which includes:

- Comparing the proposal to the sponsor's guidelines, including:
 - Font type and size
 - Margins
 - Page limits for sections and proposal
 - Completeness for inclusion of all required sections and forms
 - Reviewing for anything that might cause the proposal to be returned without review
- Verifying sponsor required budget template matches internal budget
- Reviewing subrecipient Packages
 - Subrecipient Commitment Form is completed and signed
 - Subrecipient's federally negotiated rate has been used and matches their rate agreement.
 - If subrecipient does not have a federally negotiated rate agreement, ensure the sub is using the appropriate federal de minimis rate for federal grants, cooperative agreements, and federal contracts
 - If subrecipient is a for profit entity and participating in a grant or cooperative agreement, ensure that a for-profit fee is unallowable
 - Statement of work
- Verifying institutional information (e.g., UEI, contact information, etc.)
- Checking and clearing errors generated by Grants.gov and/or sponsor's proposal submission system

Proposals Received Less than Five (5) Business Days in Advance

To appropriately prioritize those proposals that are submitted to ORA within the defined 5 day timeframe, proposals with the administrative components received less than 5 business days in advance of the sponsor deadline will receive a scaled review which will include, at minimum, the following:

- Comparing the proposal to the sponsors' guidelines, specifically for any items that may prevent successful submission
- Verifying salaries, appropriate indirect and fringe rates
- Verifying mandatory cost share/in-kind (if applicable)
- Verifying institutional information (i.e., UEI, contact information, bank information, etc.)

Proposals Received Less than Two (2) Business Days in Advance

Due to time constraints, proposals received less than two-business days in advance of the sponsor deadline are at risk of not being reviewed and/or submitted by ORA. Additionally, ORA will not endorse proposals submitted by the PI to sponsors who allow submissions by the PI via email or portal.

Exceptions

ORA recognizes and understands that situations may arise that result in difficulty complying with this policy. Every effort will be made to review and submit proposals in these situations, which may include:

- Situations where there is limited time between the sponsor announcement of the funding opportunity and the due date of the application
- Situations where the PI is notified about the proposal only a few days before the deadline
- White papers and pre-proposals