

Proposal Submission Timelines

Last Updated: August, 2023

Overview

Northern Arizona University is committed to scholarly impact and research. Further, NAU's Research Division has a primary mission to support and increase the scope and impact of research and scholarship conducted. The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and its reporting units, including the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) have overall responsibility for the University's research enterprise. It seeks to create a culture and stimulate an environment that fosters and rewards innovation, creativity, collaboration, and community.

The OSP supports the vision of the OVPR by providing "best-practice" and leading-edge research administration, including the preparation and timely submission of research proposals. The OSP has the fundamental responsibility to assure the Arizona State Board of Regents (ABOR), the public, and the Federal government that the University has in-place systems for internal controls and fiscal accountability for sponsored project funds awarded to NAU.

To help provide the highest quality research administrative services, the OSP Pre-Award group requires receipt of proposal documents well in advance of Sponsor deadlines. This advance receipt helps the Pre-Award group conduct thorough proposal reviews, align the necessary proposal elements and facilitates a seamless electronic submission. This memo underscores important deadlines that facilitate the goal of high-quality submissions and high service to the research enterprise.

Office of Sponsored Projects and your Proposals

The OSP Pre-Award group contains four teams, with each team comprised of two Pre-Award Research Administrators (PRAs). Each NAU unit has its own dedicated [pre-award administrative team](#) to support their proposal development and submission.

The Pre-Award group manages more than 500 proposals with a combined value of more than \$400 million each academic year. Included are a large number of proposals which include substantial budgets (> \$5 million).

To help manage every proposal with best practice intentions, the Pre-Award group requires a basic package of proposal documents well in advance of the submission and Sponsor deadline. The documents and timeframes for submission are summarized as follows:

Minimum Timeframe (Business Days)	Process	Action item / documents required	Responsibility
Day-14	Notification of intent to submit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email of intent to PRA Sponsor solicitation 	PI
Day-13	Proposal discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDC waivers (if applicable) Cost share requirements (if applicable) Tribal Consultation (if applicable) Sub-recipients, including name and number of sub-awards / contractors (if applicable) 	PI, OSP
Day-6	Basic package of proposal documents (incl. sub-awards) due to OSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-recipient Scope of Work Sub-recipient commitment form Sub-recipient budget Sub-recipient budget justification Sub-recipient additional documents, as required 	PI, Subs
Day-4	Basic package of proposal documents (no sub-awards) due to OSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope of Work Budget Budget Justification Draft project narrative Additional documents (i.e., Current & Pending, Bio sketches etc.) 	PI
Day-1	Complete, final proposal documents due to OSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All <u>final</u> documents 	PI
Day-0	Submission to sponsor deadline	SUBMIT TO SPONSOR	OSP
Admin day	Sponsor deadline	Respond to issues as needed	OSP

Proposal documents can be submitted to the appropriate PRA for review at any time prior to the OSP due dates. The latest timeline for submission is outlined below:

Day-14: Notification of intent to submit

At least fourteen business days before the OSP submission deadline – The principal investigator (PI) should contact OSP regarding the intent to submit a proposal to an identified Sponsor and program

announcement / solicitation if applicable.

Day-13: Proposal discussion

As soon as the PRA has received notification from the PI, they will send the PI a welcome email. It is extremely important for the PI to read this email carefully. Within this email the PRA will:

- Provide PIs with their project-specific Cayuse number
- Provide due dates for all relevant proposal documents (per timeframe outlined above)
- Invite PIs to a brief call / Zoom / meeting to discuss any nuances of the proposal (i.e., indirect cost rate and potential waivers; cost-share requirements; Tribal Consultation needs; sub-award communication, if any or all are applicable).

Any waivers required (proposal deadline, PI eligibility, indirect cost rate, etc.) should be submitted at this point or as soon as possible prior to the four-day deadline noted below.

A brief note on IDC waivers: A waiver request is required anytime a proposed budget includes an [IDC rate](#) less than NAU's published and Federally-approved [NICRA rates](#). IDC Waiver requests are required whenever:

- *a sponsor caps rates in proposals, or*
- *when a PI requests to lower an IDC rate on their own volition.*

When sponsors cap IDC at rates lower than the NICRA rates, PIs should complete a waiver request and include sponsor documentation about the rate cap. When a reduced rate is not required by the Sponsor, the PI must include detailed rationale on the waiver form explaining why it is in NAU's best interest to forego IDC funds. All waiver requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Day-6: Subrecipient documents due to OSP

At least six business days before the submission to sponsor deadline - The subrecipients should submit their package of proposal documents, including the Subrecipient Commitment Form, Budget and Budget Justification, and any other documents required by the prime sponsor.

Day-4: Basic package of proposal documents due to OSP

At least four business days before the submission to sponsor deadline – The PI **must** submit a minimal package of proposal documents, including the Scope of Work, Budget, and Budget Justification. Documents should be shared with OSP via Cayuse and/or an email to assigned PRAs.

An in-depth review of the proposal package will occur during this time window by OSP, other applicable institutional offices such as technology transfer, and the faculty member's unit and College.

The PRA will initiate the proposal for Cayuse routing, NAU's internal approval process.

The technical narrative should be a complete version for format and compliance review. The PI may make only final edits during the review period, and such changes should not impact the budget or institutional commitments; this means final edits of the narrative may continue up to the day before the submission to sponsor deadline.

Day-1: Complete, final proposal documents due to OSP

The PI **must** submit all final documents by the end of the day, the business day prior to the submission to sponsor deadline. If this day falls on a Friday, and the PI would like to use the weekend to continue final edits, PIs may make arrangements with the PRA to submit by 8am on the day of submission (Day-0).

Day-0: Submission to sponsor deadline

OSP staff conduct a full, final review of all documents for compliance. Unless alternative arrangements have been agreed, OSP will submit all proposals to the sponsor on behalf of the institution.

Admin Day: Sponsor deadline

In the event there are any technical issues with the submission process, the Sponsor responds with any feedback, or the Sponsor portal is incapacitated, this day is used to solve all proposal submission issues.

If the proposed project is complex (i.e., multi-institutional, over \$5 million, numerous subrecipients etc.), a significant amount of additional time should be allocated to complete each stage of the proposal preparation process. In these instances, the Associate Vice President for Sponsored Projects and the Vice President for Research will be informed of the proposal and may be included for review and feedback on proposed activities.

If the proposed project is a case where NAU is the sub-recipient, additional time may be required to accommodate the prime recipient's institutional deadlines.

Submission of proposal documents outside of these timelines

When a sponsored project proposal package is provided late to OSP (or there is every expectation that proposal deadlines will be missed), a [late submission waiver](#) is required in order to proceed with the OSP review and submission to the Sponsor.

By completing a late submission waiver, the requester acknowledges that late proposals will not receive priority over those complying with the required lead times. In addition, despite best efforts, OSP may be unable to conduct a review of the proposal package per best practice guidelines which may affect the submission and ultimate outcome of the proposal. Furthermore, if an award is made based on a late submission, the PI and the College will be responsible for covering costs incurred because of proposal errors such as unapproved cost sharing commitments, inaccurate rate calculations for indirect costs, or unallowable commitments of resources. Because of all these factors, requests for late submission should be rare.

Late submissions are extremely stressful for the Pre-Award teams to manage. The group is committed to submitting every proposal they receive and will do their best to achieve this. PIs play a significant role in ensuring these high stress levels are avoided and staff enjoy a healthy, productive environment.

OSP Pre-Award Commitment

The Pre-Award group of the OSP strives to implement research administration best practices for every sponsored project. The Pre-Award group values and prioritizes the importance of maintaining a close, collaborative partnership with research faculty and their units. Sponsored projects remain a crucial centerpiece of NAU's mission and faculty success.