



Grant Pre-award Procedure and Policy

The process for submitting a grant/contract proposal for SPDC faculty varies depending on the sponsor, funding amount, partners and timeline. This document provides instructions for determining which path to follow, as well as SPDC policies regarding pre-award budgeting, approvals and post-award tracking.

There are two main paths for getting MSU approval on a grant/contract proposal submission, which includes routing a Proposal Development (PD) through the Kualo Coeus (KC) system, before it is submitted to the funding agency. There is a third, less frequently used option, as a back-up if the first two offices are unavailable to provide assistance.

1. College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AgBioResearch) Office of Research Support
2. SPDC Research Administration Support
3. College of Social Science Research Administration

CANR/AgBio Office of Research Support

The AgBioResearch Office of Research Support (ORS) works in conjunction with faculty and CANR department research administrators to provide pre-award services in support of extramural grant proposal submissions. ORS prioritizes its services to assist with domestic and international proposals for federal grants, large funding requests, multidisciplinary proposals and proposals involving multiple institutions. It will also prioritize support to new assistant professors (defined as their first three years at MSU). A request for ORS services is to be made by the faculty member serving as the Principal Investigator (PI). To request ORS services, an ORS [Proposal Request Form](#) must be completed and submitted.

Timeline

- **30+ business days before deadline:** Complete and submit Proposal Request Form to request ORS assistance.
- **10 business days before deadline:** PI will send draft budget to Mary Beth Graebert for review; she will attempt to respond in 2 business days, but it should not impede the proposal process if she is not available.
- **8 business days before deadline:** Final budget, budget justification and subcontractor documents (if applicable) are due.
- **5 business days before deadline:** All final proposal documents are due to ORS. This includes statement of work/project summary, project narrative, biographical sketches/CVs, current and pending support forms, etc. Proposal development (PD) document begins routing in KC.
- **3 business days before deadline:** ORS will perform final review of the completed proposal package and notify OSP that it's ready for their review.
- **1 business day before deadline:** OSP will submit final proposal to the sponsor.

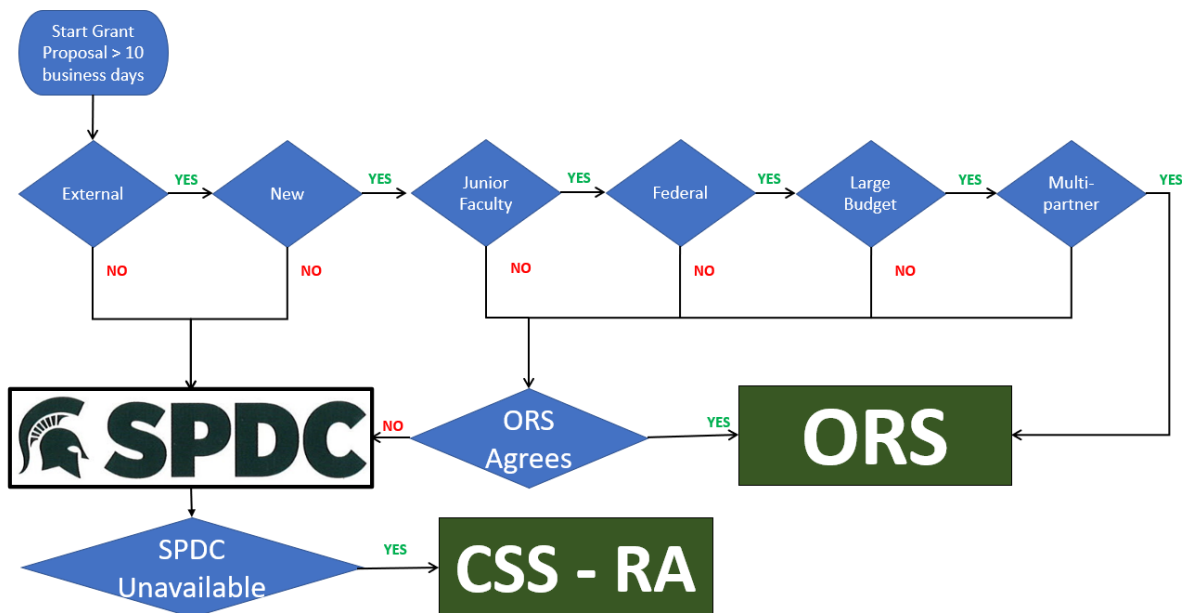
SPDC Research Administration Support

In the event that your proposal cannot be completed by ORS but still follows the timeline indicated above, staff in the SPDC main office can assist you with submitting a PD document through MSU's KC (Kualo Coeus) system. Examples of proposals that must be processed by SPDC include internal grant programs that require a PD and continuation grants/contracts on existing awards. ORS may also decline support when a proposal does not fall into one of their priority categories, and they have a heavy workload (see flowchart below).



SPDC Grant Pre-Award Flowchart

SPDC Grant Pre-Award Flowchart (9-13-2021)



To request help on your proposal, please send an email to Mary Beth Graebert with the funding agency, RFP (if applicable), and deadline; then call her to schedule a meeting for budget development. Because we do not have dedicated staff for the pre-award process, SPDC also follows the ORS proposal submission deadline policy.

Timeline

- **30+ business days before deadline:** Submit an SPDC [Proposal Request Form](#) through the SPDC system. An email will go to Mary Beth Graebert and Janelle Curtis.
- **8 business days before deadline:** Final budget, budget justification and subcontractor documents (if applicable) are due.
- **5 business days before deadline:** All final proposal documents are due to SPDC. This includes statement of work/project summary, project narrative, biographical sketches/CVs, current and pending support forms, etc. Proposal development (PD) document begins routing in KC.
- **3 business days before deadline:** SPDC will perform final review of the completed proposal package and notify OSP that it's ready for their review.
- **1 business day before deadline:** OSP will submit final proposal to the sponsor.

College of Social Science Research Administration

If ORS and the SPDC research administrators are unavailable to assist with proposal development, the College of Social Science research administration office can provide support. Their timeline is included below. A proposal checklist, cost reduction waiver and cost sharing commitment form are available at: <https://socialscience.msu.edu/research/proposal-forms.html>.



Timeline

- **10 business days prior to the proposal due date:** Investigators must inform unit grant and contract administrator of a pending proposal submission.
- **7 business days prior to the proposal due date:** Budget and accompanying documents must be finalized with the Research Administrator and submitted to OSP for review. This gives OSP adequate time to review budgets, suggest edits, and make changes.
- **5 business days prior to the proposal due date:** Complete proposal package must be finalized within the electronic KC Proposal Document and routed. This allows time for all investigators, units and MAUs to review, raise questions if any, and approve.
- **Proposals submitted in a timely fashion:** OSP has a commitment to submit proposals at least **1 (one) business day** before the deadline date for on-time submissions.

In addition, for all proposals with PIs or co-PIs with an assignment in the College of Social Science, for applicable proposals, a cost sharing commitment form is required to be completed and attached to the PD in the Quali Coeus system before CSS will approve.

Office of Sponsored Programs

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is responsible for reviewing a project's budget, budget narrative and scope of work for compliance with university, agency, and federal rules (where applicable). They do not assist with preparation of the budget, but they do review the PD as well as other required proposal submission documents that are prepared for your proposal. They are also responsible for submitting proposals through Grants.gov and Fastlane (NSF), and a few other agencies. Some proposals require submission directly by the PI after OSP approval has been obtained. The timeline for submitting proposals using OSP's deadlines is below (page 4)

A proposal is considered **late** when a PI, their administrator or the departmental/college pre-award office provides the complete proposal to OSP with less than 3 full business days prior to the submission deadline. OSP will make reasonable efforts to review and sign-off on late proposals subject, but they cannot ensure the same proposal service levels for late proposals, which may jeopardize receipt by the sponsor.

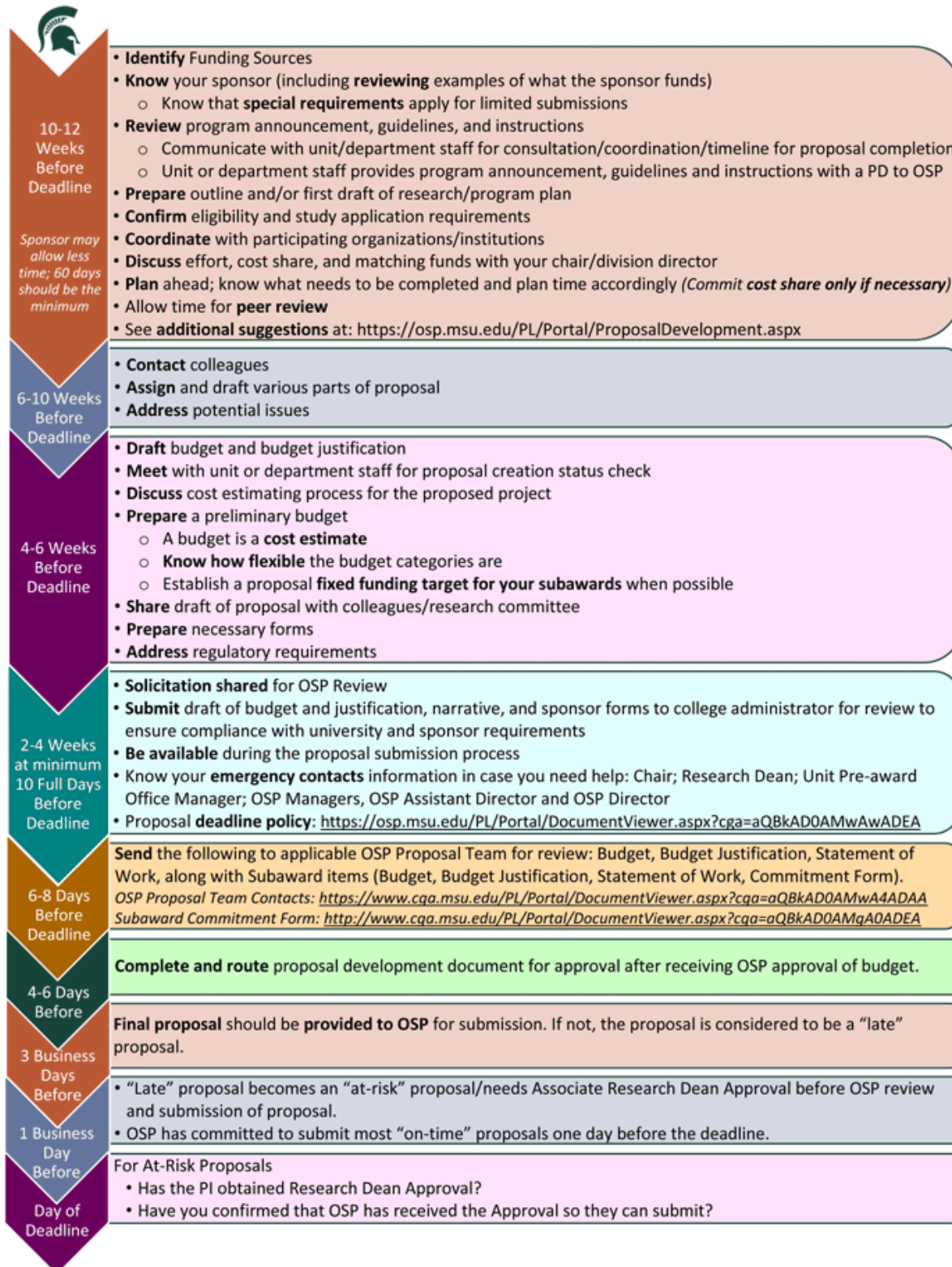
A late proposal is considered **at-risk** when the complete proposal is provided to OSP within 8 business hours of the submission deadline. The at-risk proposal must be approved by the SPDC Director and specifically endorsed by the applicable research dean (Dr. George Smith for CANR and Anna Maria Santiago for CSS) before it is reviewed and submitted by OSP. After receiving the endorsement from the research dean, OSP will make reasonable efforts to submit the endorsed proposal. OSP cannot ensure the same proposal service levels for at-risk proposals which may jeopardize receipt by the sponsor. Endorsement by the research dean should be based on extenuating circumstances that might merit a late submittal.

A complete proposal includes all of the attachments (including subawards), an approved budget, and a fully routed and approved PD.

Instructions to request approval for CANR At-Risk submission can be found at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/ors/pre-award/at-risk-proposals>.



OSP Proposal Timeline Graphic





SPDC Grant/Contract Practices (subject to change)

Pursuing, receiving and managing external funding requires several groups to get involved. Moreover, there are some important things to remember when budgeting for grants. For instance, there are University/College/School restrictions on the amount of summer salary that an AY faculty can receive, limitations on the effort that can go toward grant-funded research based on an individual's assignment, different processes for fee-for-service projects, and there are administrative costs associated with submitting, getting, maintaining and reporting on grant awards. Please keep this in mind as you prepare your proposal, and in particular, your budget.

Overview of Administrative Costs

The annual budget cuts of 1-2% from the university on recurring general funds issued to SPDC have eroded our funding for administrative costs, including our office staff. In addition, the indirect cost (IDC) return that comes back to SPDC from external grants is not sufficient to cover even a portion of one staff person's time, let alone portions of many people's time spent on post-award activities. Therefore, we encourage PIs to keep these administrative costs in mind when budgeting for grants:

1. Will you spend time on the grant project during the academic year, and if so, will the sponsor allow you to charge some AY time to the grant account? If so, this action creates salary savings for SPDC to help defray the administrative costs of post-award support. SPDC's salary savings policy provides 50% of salary savings back to the faculty member in a special fund account. Note that the School Director reviews the contribution from faculty's salary savings as part of the annual review.
2. Will your project require substantial administrative activities that are not covered by the indirect cost return? For instance, if the grant has a 0% IDC rate, or if you need a staff person to perform duties that are outside of the typical post-award activities (such as creating a new website, planning an event, etc.). If it is possible to identify the amount of staff person's time that is needed on a specific project, it may be allowable to include it in the grant budget. Please see the RFP, Mary Beth Graebert and/or ORS to determine whether including staff time is allowable for your proposal.

Faculty Salary on Grants/Contracts

When you are developing a budget, there are some limitations to keep in mind with regard to adding faculty time:

1. Some funders will not allow faculty whose salaries are covered by the university to charge their time to a grant. Be sure to check the RFP for any restrictions on faculty salary.
2. Faculty who are on academic year (AY, nine-month) appointments can often add summer salary to a grant/contract budget: May 16-August 15. Faculty are restricted to two months of summer salary on internal MSU funds and 2.5 months of summer salary on external funds. Faculty who receive more than two months' summer salary must sign a form and attest that they will take less than one month of vacation. This form is reviewed and approved by the School Director and then submitted to CANR/CSS dean for final approval.
3. In order to charge some of your AY salary to a grant/contract, you must have a research, outreach or service assignment. The effort (%) that you charge to a grant (whether paid or cost share) cannot be more than the research, outreach or service portion of your assignment without prior permission from the SPDC Director.
4. In special cases, the Director may allow a faculty member to use external grants to "buy out" their teaching assignment in order to dedicate more time to a grant/contract. Faculty should



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communicate with the School Director and respective Program Director first. In order to buy out a course, the percentage of effort (salary charged to the grant) must be equivalent to 5% per credit for faculty with an AY appointment (e.g., in order to buy out a 3-credit class, 15% of your salary has to be charged to the grant for the nine-month academic year). A buy out for faculty with an AN appointment must be equivalent to 5% per credit for the semester. Faculty buy outs must be approved before the budget is reviewed by OSP. Buying out 100% of courses during the year will not be considered, except in very rare circumstances.

Fee-for-Service Projects

For projects that are not funded by sponsored agencies (e.g., federal, state, etc.), and are not issued under a competitive bidding process (i.e., RFP), it may be possible to use a Fee-for-Service structure:

1. For training and non-credit instructional projects, a unit like SPDC can set up an hourly rate structure with the MSU Controller's office. The hourly rate can include salaries, fringes, and administrative costs. Rates internal to the university must be straight costs, but external rates can include an overhead margin to make rates competitive. The university charges 2% tax on any income deposited into a non-credit instructional account (DN).
2. For fee-for-service projects that do not involve training, a proposal can be routed as noted above, but the award will be set up in a fee-for-service account (DY). The university charges 26% on these types of projects. Again, since the budget is based on an hourly rate established by the Controller's office, external rates can include an overhead margin to make rates competitive, on top of the 26% to the university.
3. There is also a Standard Service Agreement for small projects with communities for outreach activities: <https://vpgrs.msu.edu/msu-services-agreement-form>. These types of agreements are generally small (less than \$10,000) and are run through a university revolving account (DS), so they include a 2% tax. Since SPDC incurs some costs for administering these small contracts, faculty using this agreement should include a 16% overhead fee for the School.