Policy Statement

It is the policy of Boston University (BU) to require the timely submission of complete proposal packages to the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) in accordance with the time line established within this policy document in order to ensure a thorough and complete review prior to submission to the sponsoring agency.

Reason for Policy

As an organization submitting proposals for external funding, BU is subject to numerous sponsor requirements, including but not limited to those set forth in specific solicitations, sponsor guidelines, and the OMB Uniform Guidance, in addition to BU institutional policy.

Sufficient time is necessary to verify a proposal's compliance with those requirements, as well as ensure an overall level of quality assurance, prior to the application's deadline. Allowing adequate time for OSP to conduct a thorough review will provide opportunities for proposal corrections to be made, if necessary, and maximize the overall opportunity for proposal success.

Every effort has always been and will continue to be made to ensure successful proposal submission regardless of when final proposals are submitted to OSP. There are several challenges, that are beyond the control of the University, which can be mitigated when proposals are submitted to OSP sufficiently in advance of the sponsor deadline, including:

1. Grants.gov has a stated processing time of 2 – 4 days with no tolerance if errors exist and cannot be corrected before the deadline.

2. Federal agency servers routinely crash during peak demand times that occur when hundreds of institutions submit proposals at the same time. No tolerance is given for server errors to last-minute proposal submitters by any of the federal sponsors.

3. Alternative proposal submission pathways (other than Grants.gov) can add complexity to proposal submission and can require additional assistance to ensure successful submission.

Who Should Know This Policy

- ☑ Principal Investigators (PIs)
- ☑ School Deans/Department Chairs
- ☑ Local Administrative Support Staff
- ☑ Office of Sponsored Programs
- ☐ Other: _____

Proposal Submission Policy

Introduction:

This policy defines the expected timeline for submitting applications for sponsored funding to OSP in advance of the funding agency deadline, and the associated level of review conducted by OSP Research Administrators based on the timing of proposal submission to OSP.

OSP Submission Deadlines:

OSP Due Date *(in Advance of Sponsor Deadline)*	7 Days	5 Days	3 Days
Required Proposal Components	• Notice of intent to submit a proposal • Funding Opportunity Announcement link	• Completed internal BU documents • Completed sponsor administrative documents • Final budget	• Final technical components

Notice of intent to submit a proposal and the link to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or any other available details for the solicitation should be provided to the assigned OSP Research Administrator as soon as possible and *at least* 7 days prior to the sponsor's proposal deadline, even if Principal Investigators have not confirmed their intent to move forward with writing a proposal.

The complete administrative components of a proposal, including a final budget, together with the completed and signed Proposal Summary Form (PSF) and other required internal forms (e.g. the Export Controls Checklist) must be received by OSP at least 5 business days prior to the sponsor's deadline.

The final technical components of the proposal must be received by OSP at least 3 business days prior to the sponsor's deadline. This option is designed to give PIs additional time to refine the technical component and thereby improve the proposal's chances for success.

Proposals with administrative components submitted to OSP on or before the five business day deadline will be considered "on time". Once the final proposal components are submitted to OSP, in accordance with this policy, OSP will initiate the full review and no further revisions will be accepted, including changes to the final proposal budget. Only revisions to correct issues identified by OSP will be allowed.

Proposals that do not meet the deadlines established in this policy will still be allowed to move forward with submission but will receive a minimum review with the goal to assure (to the degree possible) that it is not rejected from the electronic submission vehicle. See below for details on the level of review based on OSP submission timing.

Boston University
Office of Sponsored Programs
Proposal Submission Policy   **Date Revised**: 2/24/2016

Minimum Requirements for Review:

This policy is designed to streamline OSP's process to review relevant/critical documents while the PI finalizes the technical components of a proposal. The minimum administrative components allow OSP to conduct a meaningful review of the application. The remaining technical documents that constitute a complete application are required for OSP to approve and submit applications or provide institutional endorsement for hard copy submission.

The solicitation guidelines and FOA link must be submitted to OSP at least 7 days in advance of the sponsor deadline.

Components Required for Administrative Review (Submitted to OSP a minimum of 5 Days in Advance)	**Components Required for Approval & Submission** (Submitted to OSP a minimum of 3 Days in Advance)
Completed PSF with **all required signatures**[1]	Final Technical Components (i.e. Final Narrative, Abstract, Milestones, etc.)
Final Budget with Budget Justification	
Subaward Documents (if applicable)	
All Sponsor Forms	
All Required BU Internal Forms	

OSP will conduct a Preliminary Review of submitted materials and notify investigators and their administrative support of those outstanding proposal components that are needed in order to initiate administrative review and those documents that constitute a full submission-ready proposal. If the minimum components required for administrative review are not received within than five business days prior to the sponsor's deadline, the proposal will not be considered "on-time".

Service Level Commitment:

OSP is committed to supporting BU investigators by assuring timely review and submission of complete and accurate proposals that have the best chance possible of success in the sponsor review process. In order to provide the greatest possible benefit to BU's sponsored proposals, balance the service and needs of all BU's investigators and capitalize on OSP's expertise, OSP has defined the following *minimum* service level commitment for proposal review based on the timeframe of proposal submission to OSP in advance of the sponsor's deadline:

- **Solicitation Details Received Seven (7) Business Days in Advance**

  With at least seven days' notice, OSP RAs will ensure understanding of all requirements for submission and also monitor any changes that may occur in the deadlines or submission procedures. Further, OSP will note and alert the PI and departmental support of any unusual, new or atypical submission requirements in order to allow ample time to ensure these requirements are fully addressed.

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[1] Reference X for instructions on completing the Proposal Summary Form and a detailed listing of required signatures by School.

- **Proposals Received Five (5) Business Days in Advance (*Technical Components Received Three (3) Business Days in Advance*)**

  For final proposals submitted to OSP five business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline, with the final technical components ready for submission received three days in advance, OSP offers a comprehensive review which includes:
  - Comparing the proposal to the sponsors' guidelines, including:
    - Font type and size
    - Margins
    - Page limits for sections and proposal
    - Completeness for inclusion of all required sections and forms
  - Verifying accurate budget calculations, appropriate F&A and fringe rates
  - Verifying cost sharing is in line with sponsor requirements and BU policy
  - Verifying institutional information (e.g., DUNS, 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**

  In order to appropriately prioritize those proposals that are submitted to OSP within the defined 5-Day timeframe, proposals with the administrative components received less than 5 days in advance of the sponsor deadline (and/or final technical components received less than 3 days in advance) 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 appropriate F&A and fringe rates
  - Verifying cost sharing is in line with BU policy
  - Verifying institutional information (e.g., DUNS, contact information, etc.)

- **Proposals Received One Business Day or Less in Advance**

  Due to time constraints, proposals received less than 24 hours (or one business day) in advance of the sponsor's deadline will receive a minimum review with the goal to assure (to the degree possible) that it is not rejected from the electronic submission vehicle. Please note, proposals submitted less than 24 hours in advance risk rejection by sponsors, or potentially late submission.

Potential Consequences for Proposals Submitted to OSP Late:

- OSP reserves the right to process proposals submitted late only after all other on-time proposals due that same day have been submitted.
- Proposals are rejected/invalidated via the electronic submission interface (over which OSP has no control) and time does not allow for a second attempt at submission.
- Proposals are successfully submitted, but time does not allow for the correction of any errors or further changes identified by the investigator.

For all proposals, OSP will communicate with the Principal Investigator and the Department Administrator when a proposal will receive less than a complete review due to time constraints.

Roles & Responsibilities

High-level roles and responsibilities related to proposal development, review and submission are outlined below. For more detailed roles and responsibilities, please reference the Proposal Roles and Responsibilities Matrix.

Principal Investigator - Responsible for:
- The content and management of the entire application
- Reviewing the solicitation and understanding sponsor technical and administrative requirements of the funding opportunity and proposal package
- Ensuring proposal submissions are compliant with BU institutional policy and incorporate all sponsor requirements
- Submitting the complete administrative and technical proposal components to OSP by the deadline set forth in this policy
- Being available to OSP for any questions or follow-up during the proposal review and submission process

Local Administrative Support Staff - Responsible for:
- Serving as a resource for the PI on the development and preparation of administrative components of the proposal
- Assisting the PI in submitting the complete administrative and technical proposal components to OSP by the deadline set forth in this policy
- Being available to OSP for any questions or follow-up during the proposal review and submission process

OSP- Responsible for:
- Serving as proposal administration experts and providing advisory services related to sponsored proposals
- Reviewing solicitation guidelines to identify, understand and communicate any atypical, new or changes to application requirements
- Promptly reviewing proposals submitted by the internal deadline in order to ensure compliance with sponsor and institutional requirements
- Conferring with the PI regarding any revisions needed to the proposal
- Ensuring institutional approval of the complete and final proposal
- Submitting proposals via certain sponsor-specific portals, monitoring status to ensure successful submission and coordinating with PIs to address any errors

Related Policies

- BU Cost Share Policy
- BU F&A Waiver Policy
- BU Principal Investigator Status Policy
- BU Conflict of Interest Policies
- BU Export Control Policies
- BU Guidelines for Determining Independent Contractor vs. Employee Status for External Service Providers

Related Forms

- Proposal Summary Form (PSF) (Instructions)
- Export Control Checklist (ECC)
- Cost Share Approval Form
- Request for Reduction/ Waiver of F&A Form
- International Sponsored Project Activity Data Form

Contacts

Topic	Responsible Unit	Contact Information
Policy Questions	Office of Sponsored Programs	