

# Division of Nutritional Science

## Grant Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines

A. DNS Grants Administration Staff and what they will or can do for DNS faculty in support of your grant proposals:

### **Diana Wixson, Grant and Contract Administrator (GCA) responsibilities**

- Keeping faculty informed of proposal opportunities and deadlines for proposal submissions
- Oversee the preparation and submission of proposals for externally funded research projects
- Serve as liaison with our Grants and Contract Officer in OSP
- Coordinate DNS administrative assistance to assemble the full proposal
- Advise and assist the faculty with preparation and budget review
- Offer training and guidance to faculty and OAS staff when preparing and submitting proposals thru grants.gov or Fastlane
- Monitor the indirect costs rates that agencies allow and obtain approval from Patrick Stover when IDC falls below the full Federal rate
- Review proposals to ensure that sponsor and University guidelines are adhered to
- Provide final review and signature for all DNS proposals
- Send to GCO in the Office of Sponsored Programs for review, signature and submission to the agency

### **Athena Kalandros, Grant Development Specialist (GDS) responsibilities**

- Grant searching for individual faculty and the Department
- Develop agency specific grant application checklists
- Work with faculty interpreting agency guidelines
- Research agency priorities and statistics
- Provide content review of proposals
- Provide preliminary review of full proposal prior to submission to GCA
- Meet Diana Wixson's responsibilities while Diana is on vacation or sick leave

### **Evelyn Stilson-Ouderkirk, Donna Whiting and Deanna Owens, Office of Administrative Staff (OAS) responsibilities**

- Download RFA and application packet (or PHS 398 forms for hard copy submissions)
- Fill in information on forms (face page, budget, etc.) and Form 10 materials, acquire PI signature and any necessary approval forms
- Correspond with collaborators and collect Biosketches/other support information, provide assistance in creating Bio's when subcontractors send only CV's
- For hard copy submissions: Collect and label appendix material, create cover sheet and multiple CD's
- For electronic submissions: collect and create PDF's of required sections from PI and upload to Grants.gov or NSF Fastlane
- Investigate costs for conference room/equipment rental, meals/ flights/conference calls for meetings to include in budget
- Update existing tables for training grant graduates/trainees (training grants only)
- Assemble and paginate (hard copy submissions)
- Make photocopies (hard copy submissions)

B. The following grant proposal guidelines are provided to aid DNS faculty in preparing grant proposals in accordance with university, college and DNS policies and procedures.

**1. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS AND PRE-PROPOSALS:**

All proposals and pre-proposals must be approved by the DNS Grants and Contract Administrator (GCA), Diana Wixson prior to submission to the Office of Sponsored Programs. PI's, co-PI's and key personnel do not have the authority to submit proposals or pre-proposals directly to sponsors on behalf of the University. Upon approval of the GCA, proposals will be forwarded to the Office of Sponsored Programs for review and official submission to the Sponsor.

**2. PROPOSAL DEADLINES:**

University policy is that all proposals must be received by the Office of Sponsored Programs five (5) working days prior to the sponsor's deadline.

(See <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/proposalPrep/>)

OSP's timelines are as follows:

- Proposals that are received 5 business days before the sponsor's deadline will be processed first and will receive a full review (consistency with solicitation, format, compliance, etc.)
- Proposals received 3 business days prior to the deadline will have a limited review.
- Proposals received 1 business day prior to the deadline may be submitted without review.

DNS's timelines are as follows.

- 10 days before proposal deadline, all final proposal information should be turned in to the OAS admin staff to allow them time to prepare the proposal for submission
- 6 days before proposal deadline final proposal, form 10 and addendum submitted to GCA for final review and signature
- 5 days before proposal deadline GCA submits to OSP for review and submission to agency

Keep in mind that insufficient reviews increase the possibility of a proposal being rejected due to non-compliance with the sponsor's guidelines. Also, there is a very real possibility that late proposals that are to be submitted electronically will not meet the deadline for consideration due to system failures. OSP has been experiencing a significant increase in the number of grant proposals submitted for funding. Because of the increased volume of submissions, increased complexities with submission requirements, and our stewardship obligation to provide a complete and timely review of all proposals, it is important that all PIs conform to these deadlines.

**Proposals that Require University Approval:**

Occasionally a sponsor may require an institutional cover letter or letter of support from the President or Provost. These proposals should be received by University Development/Office of Sponsored Programs at least ten (10) business days before the deadline for proposal submission. Investigators are strongly urged to coordinate their proposal schedule with OSP as soon as the proposal deadline is known. OSP will then coordinate with university-level offices as needed.

### **Proposals that Require Endorsement from the DNS Director:**

Occasionally a sponsor may require a letter of support from the Director. All such requests for letters of support to sponsoring agencies should be received by the Director's assistant, Molly Berwald, at least 10 business days before the deadline.

### **3. BUDGETS**

A proposal must include an estimate that reflects the cost required to perform the work statement and a corresponding budget justification. If a proposal requests support for a multi-year project, annual budgets and a summary budget should be included. Costs for periods beyond the current are called future year projections. Factors to consider in projecting future costs include the salary improvement program, inflation, history, vendor quote projections, professional judgment, experience, and projects that overlap Cornell's fiscal year. Many sponsors provide guidelines and budget forms. Guidance on budget preparation is available from your GCA, Diana Wixson. Listed below, by major budget category, are general guidelines for constructing a budget. See [Appendices A, B, and C](#) for samples.

### **4. F&A – FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES (INDIRECT COST) RATES:**

**DNS'S POLICY IS THAT ANY INDIRECT COST THAT IS LESS THAN FULL IDC, MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE DIRECTOR**

Cornell's policy is that sponsored projects should pay full indirect costs. The current federal F&A rate is 54.0% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). The MTDC base consists of total direct costs minus the following exclusions: equipment (\$5,000 or higher), subcontract costs in excess of \$25,000, graduate student tuition and health insurance. This rate has been negotiated and accepted by the Federal government and represents the full cost of conducting research at Cornell. However, not all agencies, foundations, or other donors agree to this rate, and we've agreed to alternative rates for some of these.

The various F&A (indirect cost) rates for 2009-2010 are as follows:

- NIH – 54% MTDC (unless otherwise stated in the program solicitation(s)).
- NSF – 54% MTDC (unless otherwise stated in the program solicitation(s)).
- USDA-CSREES – 28.205% on Total Direct Costs (TDC) (unless otherwise stated in the program solicitation(s)).
- The indirect costs on subcontracts will be 54% of the first \$25,000 of each subcontract for those sponsors that calculate indirect costs on MTDC. For agencies where indirect costs are based on TDC, there are no exclusions on the subcontract; indirect costs are calculated on the full subcontract. NOTE: Foreign subs issued under an NIH Prime award are limited to 8% TDC (other sponsor's may also cap this; see individual solicitations).

Projects that do not use University-funded facilities, or where faculty or staff are away from campus for two or more consecutive months qualify for a lower off-campus facilities and administrative cost rate. The current off-campus F&A rate is 26% MTDC.

### **F&A for Foundations, Corporations, and Other Donors**

When working with foundations, corporations, or other donors, it is important to identify whether the funding will be a restricted gift or a sponsored contract. Usually, the criteria listed by the sponsor in the RFP or invitation to apply for funding will help the Office for Sponsored Research make this determination.

If an award is a "restricted gift," University policy requires a 10% indirect cost charge on the award. All other awards from foundations, corporations, or other donors should assume a full indirect (F&A) rate will be required.

## **VARIANCES FOR F&A (INDIRECT COST) RATES:**

Some sponsors use an indirect cost rate different from our standard policy described. If a sponsor does not use the standard Cornell rate **and** is not specifically named on the list above, the DNS Director must approve the reduced indirect cost rate. **Note:** Requests for variances to the set F&A rates must be approved by the Director at least 2 weeks in advance of the sponsor's deadline date. Budget development by the GCA will not commence until approval by the Director.

For proposals requesting a reduced F&A rate, as many "direct" administrative costs as allowable should be included in the project budget to receive funding from the sponsor equivalent to an IDC rate of 20%. The DNS GCA can help advise which direct costs may be allowable to include. This is particularly important for foundations and other sponsors with relatively low allowable F&A rates.

## **5. GRADUATE STUDENT TUITION AND STIPEND, AND HEALTH INSURANCE:**

Tuition: The University is pursuing a plan to lower the cost of supporting research-based graduate students. For academic years 2009-10 through 2010-11, there will be no increase in tuition for the contract college research degree programs (M.A., M.S., M.S./Ph.D., Ph.D.). The tuition has been set at \$20,800 through the academic year 2010-11. College current policy is that CALS or CHE will waive half of the tuition (\$10,400) for assistantships paid on grants/contracts to college faculty. If mandatory cost sharing (matching) is required by a sponsor, the waived component can be listed as cost share (match) on proposals.

Stipend: For the academic year 2009-10 the graduate student stipend has been set at \$21,400 (9 mo.) and \$28,533 (12 mo.). The summer GRA stipend that equals the 2008-09 academic year GRA stipend rate is \$6,903 for the three months. The Graduate School has recommended that we use an escalation rate of 4% of the minimum stipend amount for all years for which stipends are not already established. **Note:** The maximum academic-year stipend that a student may receive is \$36,150. There is no cap on the summer stipend.

Health Insurance: The current health insurance rate for graduate students is \$1,590. The Graduate School is currently recommending a 12.5% increase per year.

## **6. TUITION WAIVERS:**

It is CALS & CHE's policy to waive 50% of the tuition for graduate assistantships that are supported on research grants to faculty. For those graduate assistantships funded by federal, state or non-government sponsored agreements, the 50% tuition waiver can be reported as cost sharing. New faculty start-up funds also qualify for the 50% tuition waiver. The remainder of the tuition and health insurance must be paid by the grant or from other sources.

## **7. FRINGE BENEFIT RATES:**

For the period July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 the federal fringe benefit rate is 44.3% and the non-federal fringe benefit rate is 48.96%. At this time OSP is recommending no increase for future years.

## **8. COST SHARING (MATCHING) FUNDS:**

Requests for matching funds are important to several different types of proposals. Cost-sharing under a federal grant is subject to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 (Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations: Uniform Administrative Requirements). A-110 stipulates that the cost-sharing must come from non-federal sources and contribute directly to the proposed project. Proposals listing cost-sharing should explain how the cost-sharing commitments will be met. **Note:** The

actual cost-sharing is auditable and subject to verification. Cost-share commitments must be reflected in the Form 10 and approved by all of the Department Chairs or Directors.

Please use these guidelines when dealing with cost-sharing:

(a) If cost-sharing is mandatory and it can be met through any combination of department resources, faculty salaries, “automatically-waived” indirect costs (the value of indirect costs above the specified maximum a sponsor will pay compared with the current Cornell standard rate), and half of the tuition for a GRA, the PI should indicate the cost-sharing within the budget, the sources of cost-share and the specific cost-share requirements of the sponsor.

(b) If cost-sharing is mandatory but cannot be met through the sources noted above (i.e., will require some other commitment from Division resources), a request must be submitted to the Director, accompanied by a budget for the entire project. Justification should be included with the request and should describe any requirement of the agency. The Director should endorse this request by pledging some amount from department resources. If the proposal is inter-departmental, the endorsement/involvement of other units should be similarly documented.

#### **9. SPONSORED PRE-PROPOSALS:**

Pre-proposals which contain either detailed budgets or a general, total projected budget, are treated the same as full proposals. They require a Form 10 and they must be reviewed and approved by DNS’s GCA who then forwards to the Office of Sponsored Programs before they are submitted to the sponsor.

#### **10. INTERNAL PROPOSALS AND PRE-PROPOSALS:**

Internal proposals and pre-proposals (e.g., Federal Formula Funds) do not need to be submitted through OSP. They can be submitted directly to the department/person listed on the Request for Proposals. However, it is in your best interest to have the DNS GCA review at least the budget to make sure it is correct.

#### **11. LETTERS OF INTENT:**

If a Letter of Intent requires or contains a detailed budget, it must be submitted through the DNS GCA, who will then forward to the Office of Sponsored Programs for submission to the sponsor. If the Letter of Intent does not contain a budget, it can be submitted directly to the sponsor by the PI/department with a copy sent to DNS’ GCA.

#### **12. FORM 10:**

The Office of Sponsored Program’s Internal Academic Approval of Sponsored Programs, known as Form 10, must accompany every proposal. The Form 10 provides information on where to submit the proposal and identifies what compliance issues exist and what institutional resources are required for the project. Investigators are responsible for completing the Form 10 and, by their signature, accept full responsibility for the project.

#### **When is a Form 10 required?**

- For all new proposals, including pre-proposals and Letters of Intent with budgets;
- For any change in PI;
- For all changes in the scope of work;
- Whenever there are any changes in compliances, including no longer applicable;
- For all budget revisions that impact cost share, both increase and decrease;
- For all supplemental funding requests; and
- To enter into a non-disclosure agreement and /or a teaming agreement.
- **Note:** A Form 10 is not required for a no-cost extension.

In addition to the investigator's signature the Form 10 must also be signed by Diana Wixson or if she is not available, either Rich Duell or Patrick Stover. Investigators requiring signatures for

cross-unit or interdisciplinary proposals should take into consideration the additional time needed to obtain the cross-units signatures.

### **FORM 10 Addendum**

For all NIH proposals, a form 10 Addendum form is required by the Office of Sponsored Programs. The National Institutes of Health requires Cornell to maintain a Principal Investigators Assurance. This Form 10 addendum must be used for each NIH proposal or approval request.

### **13. FORM 5 (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY):**

The policy of Cornell University is that only full-time faculty members may routinely serve as Principal Investigators or Project Directors on sponsored programs. Exceptions to this policy may only be made with the prior approval of the Vice Provost for Research. Proposals for external funding will not be submitted by the University if they do not comply with this policy.

The sections below explain which positions hold PI status automatically, and for which positions Form 5 approval is required. In addition, totally soft-money positions cannot, typically, serve as PIs, nor should they spend substantive time in proposal preparation activities. See more details on these requirements and how to address them at:

[http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI\\_eligibility\\_app.html](http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI_eligibility_app.html) (In general, PIs or those working on proposal preparation activities should have at least 5% of their salary on non-sponsored sources of funding.)

Full-time members of the Faculty who may routinely serve as PIs, for purposes of this policy, include the following titles:

- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- University Professor
- Senior Scientist
- Senior Scholar
- Research Scientist
- Principal Research Scientist

Persons with the following titles are authorized to be Principal Investigators within the identified limitations:

**Senior Research Associate:** Limited to research projects related to an individual's official duties\*.

**Senior Extension Associate:** Generally limited to cooperative extension, training, and public service projects related to the individual's official duties\*. Where a Senior Extension Associate is a Principal Investigator for a research project the department chair or designee signature on the Form 10 will certify the department's determination that the project is related to their official duties.

**Senior Lecturer:** Limited to scholarly projects related to an individual's official duties\* under his/her respective college's policy guidelines (which are approved by the Vice Provost for Research).

**Librarian or Associate Librarian:** Limited to projects related to an individual's official duties\* and which will enhance the mission of the libraries.

**Emeritus Faculty:** Participation as a Principal Investigator is conditional on the availability of departmental resources as determined by the department chairperson or center director.

\*"Official duties" means those duties specified at appointment or subsequently modified in writing.

### **Requesting Exceptions to this Policy:**

Individuals holding academic appointments not covered by this policy may serve as Principal Investigator upon request to the Vice Provost for Research. A request for exception to this policy should be made using the Sponsored Program Services (SPS) Form 5, Application to Serve as Principal Investigator/Project Director, and will be considered under the following conditions:

- An application to serve as PI is to be submitted on the basis of a specific proposal idea or concept. If the same proposal is to be submitted to more than one sponsor, this should be made clear in the application request to the Vice Provost for Research and the sponsors should be identified. If approved, the applicant may submit proposals to multiple sponsors without additional approval from the Vice Provost for Research. Approval to be PI is granted for a specific proposal idea only, and should not be construed to permit the applicant to submit other proposals for different ideas or concepts, **i.e., "blanket" approvals are not granted.**
- The individual must have the necessary experience and independence to compete for his/her own sponsored program and to administer the project should it be funded, as judged by the faculty sponsor, the department chairperson and center director, if applicable.
- The individual must obtain written commitments of support from the department chairperson or center director, and any other individual required to guarantee necessary lab space or other resources or support.
- The department chairperson or center director and a specifically identified faculty member (faculty sponsor) must agree to assume responsibility for the awarded sponsored program should the individual leave Cornell or otherwise be unable to complete the proposed project. A plan should be developed for administering the sponsored program in this case and should, at a minimum, include the identification of a specific individual who will assume the responsibilities of PI, and whether or not the project will stay at the University.
- Applications to serve as Principal Investigator shall be submitted to the Vice Provost for Research on the Form 5 available from Sponsored Program Services, and should be received ten (10) working days prior to any required proposal submission date.
- **Note: The Form 5 must be routed through the Office of Sponsored Programs.**

#### **Other Academic Titles:**

Titles modified with the terms of "acting", "adjunct", "courtesy", or "visiting" do not confer the right to serve as a Principal Investigator. When these modifiers are used, special one-time approval for a specific project and duration may be provided under the Exceptions provision. Since "visiting" and "courtesy" appointments are for individuals whose primary responsibilities rest outside the university, these modified titles would require exceptional justification.

Research Associates, Lecturers, or Senior Assistant Librarians may be designated as temporary Principal Investigators to oversee an existing funded project while the authorized PI is away on leave or extended travel without formal approval from the Vice Provost for Research. The normal approval of the department, SPS, and the sponsor is sufficient.

#### **Non-Academic Titles:**

When a sponsored program will be administered by a non-academic unit, or when the PI will serve in an administrative role only, the Vice Provost for Research may approve an appropriate non-academic staff member to serve as Principal Investigator/Project Director. It is expected that the staff member proposed by the unit will be a regular full-time exempt employee with managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

#### **Non-Sponsored Projects:**

For internal grant programs (i.e., project grants from institutional rather than external funding sources) the application of this policy shall be left to the discretion of the Director of the respective grant program, although this policy's rationale must be considered.

#### 14. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT:

As a matter of Cornell University policy and federal regulation, it is required that Principal Investigators and key personnel (including graduate students) on sponsored projects must have completed a "Disclosure of External Interests and Time Commitments" form, also known as the "annual disclosure statement." The disclosure form may be obtained from the Designated Representative (Lisa Warner in CALS or Kathy Carpenter in CHE). Once forms are complete submit to Molly Berwald, Assistant to the Director, 127 Savage Hall, or mab223@cornell.edu.

C. The following Proposal Checklists & Sample Documents for NIH, NSF, & USDA can be found at <http://www.nutrition.cornell.edu/che/DNS/insideinfo.cfm#Grant>.

- NIH R01 Checklist
- NIH R21 Checklist
- NIH R03 Checklist
- NIH Biographical Sketch Sample
- NSF Checklist
- NSF Biographical Sketch Sample
- USDA AFRI Checklist
- USDA Biographical Sketch Sample
- USDA Current & Pending Sample

D. On Campus Proposal Development Resources

- University Office of Sponsored Programs: <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/>
- Form 10: <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/forms/form10/>
- Form 5: [http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI\\_eligibility\\_app.html](http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI_eligibility_app.html)
- Compliance:
  - IRB: <http://www.irb.cornell.edu/>
  - Animals: <http://www.oria.cornell.edu/animals.html>
  - Conflict of Interest: <http://www.oria.cornell.edu/COI/>
- Proposal Prep: <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/>
- Proposal Checklist: [http://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/Proposal\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/Proposal_Checklist.pdf)

E. Federal Agency Online Proposal Development Resources

- NIH Grant Application Tips: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grant\\_basics.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grant_basics.htm)
- NIH Enhanced Review Criteria: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines\\_general/comparison\\_of\\_review\\_criteria\\_a5.pdf](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/comparison_of_review_criteria_a5.pdf)
- NIH Standard Due Dates: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/submissionschedule.htm>
- Grants.gov: <http://www.grants.gov/>
- NSF – How to Prepare Your Proposal: <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/preparing/>
- NSF Fastlane: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>
- NSF Grant Proposal Guidelines: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg)
- USDA/CSREES/AFRI Grants Process: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html>
- USDA/AFRI Grant Writing Tips: [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/nri/pdfs/general\\_tips.pdf](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/nri/pdfs/general_tips.pdf)

Revised 08/13/09