A. External Grant Proposal Development and Submission Overview

This section provides an overview of the development and submission process of external grants at USI.

**Step 1: Obtain grant application guidelines and read thoroughly.**

Determine if your project and USI meet all eligibility requirements. If you are unsure if your project or USI meets the eligibility requirements, contact OSPRA for assistance.

**Step 2: Complete the OSPRA Grant Application Pre-Notification form.**

This form is due to OSPRA a minimum of 15 business days before the grant submission deadline. This is the initial contact with OSPRA and allows for USI grant administrators to create the application package in Cayuse 424; USI’s grant proposal software. The PI/PD’s dean or supervisor will be notified by OSPRA that a pre-notification form has been submitted. PI/PDs are strongly encouraged to submit the Pre-Notice Form to OSPRA as soon as you identify a grant opportunity you are interested in (See Appendix C for an example Pre-Notification form). As a part of the Pre-Notice Form PI/PD’s will be required to sign acknowledging that they have read the USI Grant Management Guide and understand their responsibilities in the preparation, submission, and administration of the application.

Click here to download the [Pre-Notification Form](#).

**Step 3: Consult with OSPRA staff to develop a timeline, engage on and off campus partners, edit drafts and obtain assistance with the various components of the proposal.**

The nature of external grants is such that deadlines are tight and PI’s must work quickly to meet the funder’s deadline. Development of a timeline is an effective way of strategically planning the execution of the proposal, who is responsible for which components, and can assist in completion of the proposal in a timely fashion.

**Step 4: Start writing your proposal.**

Make sure that you maintain strict adherence to the grant guidelines while also keeping in mind federal, state, and university policies that will apply as well. PI/PDs are strongly encouraged to work with OSPRA staff during the narrative and budget development stages. OSPRA staff can provide insight into federal, state, and university policies, assist with editing, and review drafts for clarity, continuity, adherence to guidelines, and budget/narrative agreement. Working with OSPRA staff prior to the internal approval deadline ensures a smoother approval process.

The PI/PD is also encouraged to contact relevant program officers or personnel at the funding agency to answer questions about proposal development related to the specific grant opportunity.

It is important to note that many grant agencies have very specific formatting requirements for grant applications. It is important to follow all proposal formatting rules including font size,
margins, number of pages, number of words and/or characters. Failure to follow formatting requirements may result in the granting agency rejecting the proposal for non-compliance.

Below is a list of common proposal components:

Abstract

The abstract describes the major objectives of the proposed research and the research strategy to meet these objectives. It serves a variety of purposes. Sponsors often use the abstract in assigning the proposal to the appropriate review panels. Reviewers use the abstract to gain an initial perspective of the key concept of the project and its significance. After funding is secured, the abstract may be used for entry in national databases and its keywords are picked up for quotation indexes.

Narrative/Project Description/Statement of Work

The narrative is the most important part of any proposal. Simply put, the narrative should include sufficient information needed for evaluation of the project, independent of any other document. The narrative is a detailed program account, including an explanation of the objectives in clear and concise terms, and a description of the procedures to be followed in carrying out the objectives of the project.

Biographical Sketch

A biographical sketch is a brief sketch of the key personnel’s CV, or curriculum vitae (resume) and is typically required for all key personnel. A biographical sketch highlights specific research/project experience, related publications, and other important biographical information with regard to professional personnel. Each agency has its own requirements that govern the format of the biographical sketch. See examples from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health in appendix b.

Other Support - Current and Pending

Virtually all funding agencies require information on the PI/PDs present support and pending proposals, inclusive of all external funding sources. The same type of information must be supplied both for active awards and for pending proposals and typically includes the sponsor of the project, the title of the project, the project period, the total project costs, and the percentage of effort devoted by the PI/PD on the project. This requirement applies not only to the PI/PD, but to all other key personnel formally committing effort to a proposed project.

Facilities and Resources

This section of the proposal identifies and describes the facilities and resources that will be used in the proposed research. If unique facilities exist with regard to the proposed research, it is important to emphasize this in the proposal - describing capacities, relative proximity, and the extent of availability to the project. Information can also be provided on university-wide facilities or support services such as the library, computer labs, or specialized centers.
Additional attachments, when applicable and/or required by the funding agency

Often times funding agencies require additional documents to support your proposal or the PI/PD may choose to include them to strengthen the argument for funding of the proposal. Some common supporting documents include but are not limited to:

- References
- Letters of support/ commitment: partners both internal (i.e. OPRA) and external should be identified quickly and letters of commitment/support should be obtained.
- Publications
- Financial documentation: reports, audits, tax exemption letters, F&A agreements. The majority of these documents are available through OSPRA. Contact your grant administrator with questions.
- Curriculum vitae of key personnel
- Graphs, data, or other documents that support the project
- Job descriptions

Note: For grant proposals that include human subject research, agencies generally do not require IRB approval at the time of submission of the proposal, but do require proof of approval before distributing funds to USI if the grant is awarded. All human subjects research, regardless of whether it is funded or unfunded research is required to receive IRB approval before starting the actual research.

Step 5: Work with your OSPRA grant administrator to develop budget and prepare budget justification.
A detailed, line-item budget identifying all proposed costs needed to conduct the research/project must be prepared in compliance with the funder’s guidelines, applicable cost principles and USI policies. Cayuse uses the federal Research & Related (RR budget) budget forms for both federal and non-federal proposals. All budgets for external grant proposals will be developed in these forms. The RR budget has the following categories:

A. Key Personnel (this will automatically be populated with the PI/PD’s salary and benefit information.
B. Other Personnel
C. Equipment (unit price > $5,000)
D. Travel
E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs
F. Other Direct Costs
G. Direct Costs
H. Indirect Costs

PI/PD’s will complete the forms inserting budget items as they fit in these categories. Not all categories will be applicable to all proposals. For additional instructions on budget development in Cayuse visit: [http://www.usi.edu/ospra/cayuse-424](http://www.usi.edu/ospra/cayuse-424), or contact the grant administrator for your college.

A budget justification is one of the most important sections of the proposal. While it used to be sufficient to list the items needed and their costs, now PI’s must make a case for almost everything needed to conduct the project. A budget justification identifies the need for a particular cost and how the cost was estimated. It may seem redundant in many cases, but in fact it is usually not. The need for a particular piece of equipment, for instance, may be implied in the project description, but the implication is not necessarily apparent to a non-specialist

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reviewer or a contract or grant specialist. The need must be made explicit. The place to do this is in the budget justification.

**IMPORTANT:** A budget justification is required for all proposals to be processed and submitted, regardless if one is required by the funding agency or not. The budget justification allows the OSPRA staff and the Controller’s Office to better understand the resources being sought, whether those requests match the project design, and meet federal and USI regulations regarding direct costs. See appendix A for an example.

**Step 6:** Have all documents reviewed by OSPRA staff prior to the eight day review cycle deadline.

The Grant Review and Submission cycle policy requires that all external grant proposals be submitted to OSPRA at least 8 business days prior to the deadline to obtain internal administrative approval (see Step 7).

**Step 7:** Submit proposal for internal approval eight business days prior to the proposal deadline.

All proposals that are submitted for external funding are subject to the internal approval process (see appendix d for the Grant Proposal Approval Review Submission Policy). The process begins with the uploading of the proposal to CAYUSE 424. Visit [http://www.usi.edu/ospra/cayuse-424](http://www.usi.edu/ospra/cayuse-424) for tutorials for using Cayuse with all of the required documents a minimum of eight business days prior to the submission date.

The proposal is then reviewed and receives electronic signature approval by the following offices (in order of approval): OSPRA, Grant Accountant, Assistant Controller, OSPRA, Principal Investigator, Department Chair (or equivalent), Dean (or equivalent), Executive Director of Sponsored Projects, Provost, and a final review by OSPRA. Once all approvals have been obtained the proposal is submitted to the funding agency by OSPRA.

Not sending proposals through the USI approval process as described above puts both the PI and University at significant legal risk. Therefore, OSPRA reserves the right to withdraw applications submitted without approval. In the event a proposal that was not sent through the USI internal approval process is awarded, the funds will be returned to the funding agency. Below is a checklist of documents to include in the proposal submission to OSPRA:

**USI Approval Process – Document Checklist**

All items are to be uploaded into the PI’s proposal shell as both source documents (word, excel etc.) and as a .pdf.

- Pre-Notice form (uploaded by the grant administrator when the application package is created).
- Grant application guidelines
- Abstract
- Proposal narrative
- Proposal budget (in Cayuse R&R Budget forms whether it is a federal agency or not)
- Budget Justification (required by USI even if it is not required by the agency - See appendix A for a sample budget justification)
• Completed Conflict of Interest form for the PI and all key personnel (this is uploaded in the documents section in Cayuse)
• Completed Faculty Workload Assignment form for the PI and all key personnel (this is uploaded in the documents section in Cayuse)

Step 8: Submission of an approved proposal to the funding agency.

OSPRA is responsible for submitting all grant applications to the funding agency and will notify the PI/PD and their dean or supervisor once confirmation of the submission is received.

B. Internal Grant Proposal Development and Submission Overview

This section provides an overview of the development and submission process of internal grants at USI.

Step 1: Obtain grant application guidelines and read thoroughly.
Determine if your project meets all eligibility requirements for the internal grant program you have chosen. If you are unsure if your project or USI meets the eligibility requirements, contact OSPRA for assistance.

OSPRA provides support for the following internal grant programs:

Fall Awards:
• Summer Research Award for Junior Faculty
• Office of the Provost Summer Grant for Pilot Research Projects
• Applied Research Faculty Outreach and Engagement Award
• Darrel Bigham Faculty Engagement Award
• New Harmony Outreach and Engagement Faculty Grant

For information visit: http://www.usi.edu/ospra/internal-awards-and-grants

Spring Awards:
• Faculty Research, and Creative Works Grant

For information visit: http://www.usi.edu/ospra/internal-awards-and-grants

Step 2: Complete the OSPRA Internal Grant Intent to Apply form.
This form is due to OSPRA a minimum of 15 business days before the grant submission deadline. This is the initial contact with OSPRA and allows for USI grant administrators to create the application package in Cayuse 424; USI’s grant proposal software. All internal grants and awards are required to be submitted and approved through Cayuse 424.

Click here to download the Intent to Apply

Step 3: Start writing your proposal.
Make sure that you maintain strict adherence to the grant guidelines while also keeping in mind University policies that will apply as well (i.e. travel policies). PI/PDs are strongly encouraged to work with OSPRA staff during the narrative and budget development stages. OSPRA staff can provide insight into university policies, content development, assist with editing, and review