

To: All CALS Faculty (Ithaca and Geneva) and Department Business Administrators

From: CALS Office for Sponsored Research
Barbara Knuth, Senior Associate Dean
Jan Nyrop, Senior Associate Dean
Lisa Warner, Grant and Contract Officer
Linda Harris, Grant and Contract Officer

RE: CALS Grant Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines

DATE: updated June 19, 2009

These grant proposal guidelines are provided to aid CALS faculty in preparing grant proposals. General resources that may be of use to you related to sponsored research include:

University Office of Sponsored Programs: <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/>

CALS Office for Sponsored Research: <http://www.cals.cornell.edu/cals/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/grants-contracts.cfm>

1. CALS OFFICE FOR SPONSORED RESEARCH:

Because the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) processes such a large volume of grant proposals, we have a CALS Office for Sponsored Research which is separate from the university Office of Sponsored Programs located at East Hill Plaza. All proposals from CALS investigators are to be submitted to the Office for Sponsored Research in 245 Roberts Hall.

Lisa Warner and Linda Harris are the Grant & Contract Officers (GCOs) for CALS. As the Grant and Contract Officers for CALS, the Vice Provost for Research Administration has delegated institutional signature authority to them for certain sponsors, so they may submit proposals from CALS directly to certain sponsors (or through another University, as in Consortium Agreements).

Lisa and Linda (the CALS GCOs) have signature authority, and therefore submission authority, for:

United States Department of Agriculture (all agencies)
National Institutes of Health (including submissions of continuations)
National Science Foundation
New York State (all agencies)

For all other sponsors, the CALS GCOs review the budget for compliance with CALS policies, then send the proposal to the university Office of Sponsored Programs (or Foundations Relations if appropriate) for signature and submission.

2. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS AND PRE-PROPOSALS:

All proposals and pre-proposals must be approved and submitted to the sponsor through the CALS Office for Sponsored Research. 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.

All proposals from CALS investigators must be submitted through the CALS Office for Sponsored Research, even for those sponsors for which Lisa and Linda do not have institutional signature authority. After their review and approval, they will forward to the appropriate office, either the university Office of Sponsored Programs, or, for foundation sponsors, the university Office of Foundation Relations (<http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/foundations/>). (PIs working on

proposals to foundations should begin with the CALS Office for Sponsored Research to be sure budget requirements are clear before engaging in specific discussions with Foundation Relations.)

3. PROPOSAL DEADLINES:

The Cornell University Office of Sponsored Programs has indicated that they prefer completed proposals at least five (5) business days prior to the sponsor's deadline. (See <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/proposalPrep/> . **CALS Office for Sponsored Research policy, however, is that all proposals ARE DUE five (5) business days prior to the sponsor's deadline.**

The CALS Office of Sponsored Research timeline is 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 be reviewed for compliance only.
- Proposals received 1 business day prior to the deadline may be submitted without review, subject to subsequent withdrawal if content of the proposal is later determined to be in error. We discourage departments and investigators from submitting proposals on such short notice.
- **Same-day proposals will not be submitted. Same-day proposals are defined as those for which this office has not received prior notice that a proposal is in development and that arrive in this office on the same day they have to be sent to the sponsor to meet the sponsor's due date. We have also requested that the Office of Sponsored Programs not submit same-day proposals from CALS investigators.**

Keep in mind that insufficient reviews increase the possibility of a proposal being rejected due to non-compliance. 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. The College 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 Requiring Endorsement from Provost, President, or Dean:

Occasionally a sponsor may require an institutional cover letter or letter of support from the President, Provost, or Dean. All such requests for letters of support to sponsors, including research agencies as well as corporations and foundations, must be coordinated with the CALS Development Office. Such proposals and requests should be received by the CALS Development Office and the CALS Office for Sponsored Research at least 10 business days before the deadline. In addition to the required internal review, extra time is necessary to obtain a signature due to the President's, Provost's, and Dean's extensive travel schedules. Investigators are strongly urged to coordinate their proposal schedule with the CALS Development Office and the CALS Office for Sponsored Research as soon as the proposal deadline is known. These offices will then coordinate with university-level offices as needed.

4. 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 2007-08 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. Our current policy is that CALS 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 minimum recommended summer GRA stipend (according to the Graduate School) is \$4,100. 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.

5. TUITION WAIVERS:

It is CALS 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. Requests to waive these expenses are requests for monetary support (subsidy) from the college. Payment of these costs centrally is very rare. However, if there are such requests they should also come to the appropriate Senior Associate Dean via the department chair and the chair is expected to assign a priority to the request. Such requests are in competition for the limited financial resources of the college. Requests to waive any portion of the tuition for assistantships that are paid by an outside agency need to be submitted to the appropriate Senior Associate Dean via the department chair.

Any request to the Graduate School for graduate student financial aid for a graduate student in CALS needs to be pre-approved centrally (Dean's office). The reason is that we receive a bill for such financial aid. The bill ranges from \$1.0 – 2.5 million/annually.

6. F&A – FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES (INDIRECT COST) RATES:

Cornell's policy, and that of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 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 that CALS will accept 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)).
- USDA – Other divisions (such as ARS, SARE, etc). Rate is dependent upon individual program.
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets – 12.3% TDC. (The rate is not uniformly applied among the contract colleges. There are many grants to CALS from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets that have an indirect cost rate of 0%. This rate is currently a subject of discussion among the contract colleges, and may change in the coming months.)
- New York Farm Viability Institute – 18% on TDC.

- Other NYS Agencies – 18% TDC.
- NYS Education Department – 8% MTDC.
- NYS Grower groups – no indirect costs (but this is based on the prime sponsor, and if the funds are passed through, the rate depends on the original source).
- 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 CALS Office for Sponsored Research make this determination, in consultation as necessary with the CALS Office of Business Partnerships and Corporate Relations

<http://www.cals.cornell.edu/cals/public/businesspartnerships/index.cfm> . In addition, the wording in the proposal can assist in determining whether an award will be considered a restricted gift or a sponsored project, specifically, the description of activities and deliverables contained in the proposal. For basic guidelines describing gifts and sponsored research, visit: <http://www.cals.cornell.edu/public/businesspartnerships/CorporateCollaborationGuidelines.pdf> .

If a foundation has a stated F&A rate different than the current university rate, see Section 7 below on requesting a variance.

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, unless the procedures for requesting permission for “variances” to the F&A rates described in the next section are followed. Please contact the CALS Office of Business Partnerships and Corporate Relations at calspartnerships@cornell.edu with any questions regarding restricted gifts.

All proposals to foundations and corporations must be submitted to the CALS Office for Sponsored Research with a Form 10. The CALS GCOs will then send the proposal to either the Office of Sponsored Research or the Office of Foundation Relations, as appropriate, with a copy to the CALS Office of Business Partnerships and Corporate Relations to assure coordination between offices.

7. VARIANCES FOR F&A (INDIRECT COST) RATES:

Some sponsors use an indirect cost rate different from our standard policy described in Section 6 above. If a sponsor does not use the standard Cornell rate **and** is not specifically named on the list above in Section 6, the Department Chair must request an exception to the standard rate from the Senior Associate Dean. (The rates stated in Section 6 are not considered exemptions, so for those agencies and those rates, no special permission is required from the SAD.) . **Note:** Requests for variances to the set F&A rates must be conveyed at least 2 weeks in advance of the sponsor’s deadline date.

These requests should be accompanied by a summary description of the project, rationale for reduced F&A, and a simple budget for the entire project. Also include the stated policy of the sponsor regarding indirect costs, if the stated policy is to allow a certain maximum F&A rate which is below the University rate.

The chair should be willing to convey the priority of this request. It will need to be balanced against initiatives (renovations, equipment, positions, bridging funds) desired by the department as a whole

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. The CALS Office for Sponsored Research 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.

8. 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%. Per Office of Sponsored Programs guidance, they are, at the time of this writing, recommending no increase for future years.

9. 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 parties.

Please use these guidelines when dealing with cost-sharing:

(a) If cost-sharing is voluntary, see Item 10 below.

(b) 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, the specific cost-share requirements of the sponsor, and gain approval from the CALS Grants and Contract Officer (Lisa Warner or Linda Harris) by providing this information and request to them.

(c) If cost-sharing is mandatory but cannot be met through the sources noted above (i.e., will require some other commitment from College resources), a request must be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean via the department chair, accompanied by a budget for the entire project. Justification should be included with the request and should describe any requirement of the agency. The chair should endorse this request by pledging some amount from department resources. If the proposal is interdepartmental, the endorsement/involvement of other CALS units should be similarly documented. If the proposal is intercollege, matching funds will need to come from other colleges as well. The request for the remainder of the match should be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean by the chair no less than 2 weeks prior to the sponsor’s deadline date.

(d) Typically, NSF and other major equipment programs that require matching funds from the institution (CALS, Cornell) will require a cost-share request conveyed through the department chair to the Senior Associate Dean, following item (c) above.

10. VOLUNTARY COMMITTED COST SHARING (MATCHING):

Voluntarily-provided cost sharing can be deleterious in the larger scheme of things. Cost sharing (defined as any quantified commitment of university resources to the project) must be formally documented by the university. If the resources are not currently within the university’s

research base, this additional cost sharing increases the university's organized research base – which serves to reduce the F&A (indirect cost) rate. While that probably sounds attractive to the individual faculty member, it translates to less F&A revenue to our College (and to departments). This revenue is used (among other purposes) to renovate facilities for faculty, provide mandatory matching funds for equipment grants, and to fund initiatives that otherwise would not be funded. For these reasons, any voluntary committed cost sharing that would increase the university's organized research base requires approval from the Senior Associate Dean. **Note: Requests to include voluntary committed cost sharing of this type in any proposal must be conveyed to the Senior Associate Dean by the Department Chair at least 2 weeks in advance of the sponsor's deadline date.**

If a department determines that the funds being cost shared are already classified as research, and included in the university's research base, no prior approval is necessary from the Sr. Assoc Deans. A simple statement to the Grants and Contracts Officer (Linda Harris or Lisa Warner), e-mail or otherwise, from the department business manager or department chair, acknowledging that the cost share is already part of the base should be attached to the Form 10. This will insure that the issue was addressed. (An example of this type of cost share is the portion of a faculty's current, approved effort that is research, e.g., 50% Research. If the cost share would require increasing the % effort that is research, e.g., to 60%, approval from the Senior Associate Dean would be required, as this would increase the university's research base.)

In all cases where voluntary cost sharing will require "new" funds to be classified as research prior approval from the Senior Associate Dean, requested by the Department Chair, will be necessary as stated in the first paragraph of section 10.

NOTE: There are instances by which a sponsor forces the college into "voluntary cost share" by requiring a PI's effort to be quantified either in the proposal or most commonly, in the budget justification. NIH's R01's are a good example (see specific program solicitations). In this instance, to avoid the voluntary cost share issue, we recommend that the percent effort listed be based on the salary requested. If this is not possible the resulting cost share must be listed on the Form 10 and is auditable. Prior approval from the Senior Associate Dean is not required in situations such as this "forced" voluntary cost share because of the requirement of the sponsor to quantify effort.

11. 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 the CALS Office of Sponsored Research before they are submitted to the sponsor.

12. LETTERS OF INTENT:

If the Letter of Intent contains a detailed budget, it must be submitted to the CALS Office of Sponsored Research for approval, and then CALS will convey it 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 the CALS Office of Sponsored Research.

13. INTERNAL PROPOSALS AND PRE-PROPOSALS:

Internal proposals and pre-proposals (e.g., Biotechnology CAT, Federal Formula Funds, President's Council of Cornell Women, Sun Grant Initiative, etc.) do not need to be submitted through OSP or CALS Office of Sponsored Research. They can be submitted directly to the department/person listed on the Request for Proposals. However, it is in your best interest to have your department business administrator and the CALS Office of Sponsored Research review at least the budget to make sure it is correct.

14. 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 signing it, 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.

In addition to the investigator's signature the Form 10 must also be signed by the department head or chair and Linda or Lisa will sign on behalf of the College Dean or Center Director. Investigators requiring signatures for cross-unit or interdisciplinary proposals should take into consideration the additional time needed to obtain the cross-unit signatures.

15. 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.cals.cornell.edu/cals/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/upload/Grant-Writing-Effort-Final-11-08.pdf> . (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 CALS Office for Sponsored Research before being transmitted to the Vice Provost for Research.**

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.

17. 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 in each college (Lisa Warner in CALS) or unit or by contacting the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and/or the Office of the Dean of Faculty.

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