

Preparing Proposals – Helpful Tips

- **Review Sponsor Instructions** (including general agency-wide guidelines, program-specific announcements or solicitations and frequently asked questions) in preparing proposals.
- **Consult with OSP Staff** early in the process of developing your proposal if you have questions or need help interpreting guidelines. New faculty should contact OSP to register in the electronic systems for NIH, NSF, and other agencies as appropriate.
- **Use Current Versions of Internal Boston University Forms.** Be sure to use current versions of Proposal Summary Form and other required internal forms (i.e., the versions posted on the OSP web site [<http://www.bu.edu/osp/forms-and-templates/>]) rather than templates you may have retained from previous proposal submissions).
- **Obtain Approvals for Special Requests.** Allow adequate time for the review of special requests by institutional officials (see below). Such special request approvals must be obtained before you route your proposal for final internal approval.
- **Provide Your Completed Proposal to OSP Well before the Sponsor Deadline** to ensure adequate time for review and allow time to correct any errors in the electronic submission process. (Please note that since NIH has eliminated the two-day correction window all errors must be corrected before the NIH deadline.)

When you route your proposal for internal review, be sure to include the following documents.

- ___ A completed Boston University Proposal Summary form signed by the investigator and appropriate administrators at the department, center, and college/school levels.
- ___ A copy of the sponsor's proposal guidelines or program solicitation number.
- ___ Completed application forms as required by the sponsor (for example, standard cover sheet, biosketches, current and pending support pages, description of facilities and equipment, NIH F & A checklist).
- ___ A project summary and draft technical narrative. (Note: required for all CRC proposals. Not required for electronic applications submitted by MED-OSP, as these documents are included in the electronic application file saved in the PI's folder.)
- ___ The final budget and budget justification in the format required by the sponsor.
- ___ Completed and signed BU compliance forms as required (e.g. Conflict of Interest Project Specific Disclosure forms for investigators involved in designing, conducting or reporting research, Export Control Checklist).
- ___ Complete documentation for all proposed subcontracts to other institutions (if applicable).

Approvals for Special Requests, if applicable (<http://www.bu.edu/osp/policies/>):

- ___ F & A waiver/reduction approvals for voluntary indirect cost-sharing requests.
- ___ Documentation of appropriate approvals for all direct cost-sharing requests.
- ___ Major Project Status documentation if administrative and clerical costs are budgeted.
- ___ PI status for an investigator whose Boston University appointment does not automatically confer that status.
- ___ Exceptions from the five-day application submission deadline policy.

- **Check all Sponsor Forms for Completeness, Accuracy, and Proper Formatting.** Provide all the information required in sponsor forms, and verify that the entire proposal complies with sponsor formatting instructions. Take advantage of agency checklists and check functions with electronic systems (e.g., Grants.gov) to make sure your application is complete and required fields are filled in. Commonly required institutional information can be found in the [OSP Information Sheet](#).
- **Budget and Budget Justification.** Review your budget to make sure that all costs are allowable, accurately calculated, and properly presented on sponsor forms. Confirm that:
 - (1) salaries are based upon current actual salaries for Boston University employees or standard BU rates;
 - (2) you have correctly applied current fringe benefit and F&A (indirect) cost rates;
 - (3) budget justification notes are consistent with the budget and provide a level of detail required by sponsor; and
 - (4) annual increases have been estimated at reasonable rates.
- **Subcontract Documentation.** Provide complete subcontract documentation (including an authorized institutional letter of intent to subcontract, subrecipient contact information, scope of work, budget and budget justification, CVs for key personnel, information on the status of IRB and IACUC approvals [if applicable], and other documents as required by the prime sponsor).