

Friday, October 18, 2024

Questions & Answers

Q1: WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO START WHEN BEGINNING A GRANT?

A: Start by identifying your ultimate goal, and then determine the need, significance, and potential outcomes/impacts of a project. This will help you determine the level of resources, collaborators, and financial support you need to accomplish the project. Next, identify funding sources that would be appropriate to support your project.

Once you have identified a funding opportunity, and reviewed the sponsor guidelines, please notify OSP of your intent to submit a proposal by completing the [proposal assistance form](#).

Q2: HOW DO I DETERMINE HOW MUCH TO PAY STUDENT EMPLOYEES?

A: Following federal cost principles, it is important that costs are consistently applied. This means we should pay students rates that are consistent with students in similar roles across campus and within your department (regardless of funding source). OSP is happy to assist you in the budget development process, which includes student workers.

Q3: I WON'T BE PERSONALLY APPLYING FOR GRANTS, BUT WILL BE WORKING WITH STUDENTS, BOTH GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE, THAT ARE HIGH ACHIEVING AND LOOKING TO APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIP/GRANT OPPORTUNITIES. I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO HELP THEM IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND BEYOND.

A: OSP supports external grant awards that run through the university. Typically, student funding is awarded directly to the individual, so it is not run through our office.

Q4: I WOULD LOVE AN UPDATE ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE GRANT RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. THERE ARE TIMES I HAVE OBSERVED PIS COMPLETE SOME STEPS ON ONE GRANT AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT STAFF FOR OTHERS.

A: While each proposal is different, the [Pre-Award Responsibilities Matrix](#) is a great resource for determining roles and responsibilities during proposal development.

Q5: WHEN SHOULD WE BEGIN PREPARING FOR THE NEW FISCAL YEARS?

A: For awards that have renewals each fiscal (or project) year that require new proposals, please work with OSP as soon as possible. Once the sponsor has provided guidance on the requirements for that year, you can complete the [proposal assistance form](#).



Q6: DO WE HAVE A SPREADSHEET OR SOMETHING WITH A LIST OF THINGS THAT SHOULD BE COMPLETED EACH YEAR?

A: Awarded projects may have deliverables, reports, or other actions that need to be completed each year. Typically, award documents will outline such requirements.

Q7: CAN DEPARTMENTS REQUEST FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL ON CERTAIN GRANTS? OUR DEPARTMENT HAS FOUR SPECIFIC GRANT PROGRAMS THAT WE APPLY TO EACH YEAR, SO WE WOULD LIKE TO BE NOTIFIED IF ANY OTHER DEPARTMENT WANT TO APPLY TO THOSE PROGRAMS SINCE NOT BEING ABLE TO APPLY WOULD JEOPARDIZE SIGNIFICANT SOURCES OF OUR ANNUAL FUNDING FOR COLLECTIONS CARE AND EXHIBITIONS.

A: In cases where a sponsor limits submission to a particular funding opportunity, WKU deploys a limited submission process; this is essentially an internal competition to determine the most competitive/beneficial project. Often the Research and Creative Activity Council (RCAC), which is made up of representatives from across campus, are part of this decision-making process. Specific questions regarding limited submission opportunities can be directed to proposal.development@wku.edu.

Q8: CAN WE USE AI IN CONTENT CREATION OR WRITE UP OF THE GRANT AND THEN REFERENCE TO IT IN BIBLIOGRAPHY?

A: This will depend on the sponsoring agency. As AI is becoming more relevant, many sponsors are releasing guidelines surrounding AI use in proposal development.

Q9: WHEN SHOULD WE TALK WITH THE NSF PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO GET FEEDBACK ON PROPOSAL IF IT IS ALIGNED WITH THE TARGET SOLICITATION?

A: While we encourage PIs to speak to their program officer early on in the proposal development process, it is often recommended that a general outline of the proposed project is conceived first. Typically, program officers find it helpful to review a 1-page white paper detailing the concept of your project.

Q10: WHAT KEY ELEMENTS MAKE A GRANT APPLICATION STAND OUT TO REVIEWERS?

A: First, we recommend focusing on elements that will ensure that your proposal will make it to the review stage. This includes ensuring eligibility, that your project aligns with sponsor priorities, that your project is responsive to the request for proposals, and that you follow all guidelines in proposal development and submission. External proposals, especially for federal funding, are highly competitive. Often reviewers are scoring many proposals in a short period time. Below are some helpful tips:

- Make the reviewers' job easy – use clear (and/or recommended) section headings so they can easily determine that your proposal is responsive to the guidelines.
- Ensure you have addressed all required and recommended components adequately.
- Clearly state your project objectives. Project activities, outcomes, and funding should all tie back to these objectives.
- Ask for what you need and ensure project costs correlate back to your objectives, activities, and outcomes. Project budgets that are inflated, or even those requesting too little, in relation to the scope of your project are typically not reviewed highly.
- Have a colleague in your field as, as well as a colleague outside of your field, review your proposal. This ensures that the technical aspects are sound, while also ensuring reviewers that might not be subject-matter experts are able to understand your project. Peer reviewers can also assist with identifying grammatical errors that detract from review.
- Most funding opportunities include details on review criteria and scoring metrics. Review these closely to ensure your proposal adequately addresses these elements.

Q11. WHAT GRANT WRITING SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE AT WKU OR WITHIN THE COLLEGES?

A: Grant writing supports would not be at the institutional level however you may want to check with your College's Associate Dean or Faculty Fellow for Research.

CEBS

CHHS

GFCB

OCSE

PCAL

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Q12. ARE THERE LIMITS ON GRANT FUNDING ACROSS THE COLLEGES DUE TO INFRASTRUCTURE?

A: There are no limits on grant funding across colleges.

Q13: HOW TO SELECT GRANTS BASED ON MY PROPOSAL AND FOR INSTRUMENTATION?

- A. There are three tools available to help you find funding for a specific topic.
1. Pivot
 2. NIH Reporter
 3. NSF Program Page

Q14: WHAT IF THE PI RELOCATES TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY?

A. If a PI moves institutions, it is WKU's decision as to allow the project to transfer to the new institution or, with sponsors permission, switch the PI.

Q15. I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ROOM IN THE BUDGET FOR WKU'S F&A RATE, CAN I LEAVE IT OUT?

A. Depending on the F&A restrictions. If a sponsor requires a reduce rate in the RFP, we will use the reduce rate. If the sponsor does not restrict the F&A rate, on rare occasions, an IDC waiver form can be submitted to reduce the F&A rate. WKU's policy is to include our federally approved rate in full, when allowable.

Q16. I WOULD LIKE TO INQUIRE IF OSP IS CONSIDERING THE ASSIGNMENT OF A DEDICATED STAFF MEMBER TO SUPPORT GORDON FORD COLLEGE OF BUSINESS FACULTY WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WRITING AND SUBMITTING GRANT PROPOSALS.

A. OSP staff have the professional expertise to assist all faculty across WKU's campus, regardless of academic college or sponsor.

Q17: HOW IS FUNDING ALLOCATED WHEN COLLABORATING WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

A. Collaborations with other institutions and organizations are common. Often one collaborator will be designated the “lead” institution, and the others will be “subrecipients”. Funds flow from the sponsor, through the lead organization, on to any subrecipient organizations. The lead organization is responsible for monitoring the project activities and spending of the subrecipient.

Q18. HOW MUCH PILOT OR PRELIMINARY DATA ARE RECOMMENDED WHEN APPLYING FOR A GRANT TO DEVELOP AN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT?

A. This will depend on many variables, including the type of research, sponsor preference, and type of programs (exploratory, etc.). Most sponsors consider return on investment when funding proposals. Projects without preliminary data may be deemed as higher risk.

Internal grants such as RCAP and QTAG, as well as small state and foundation awards, may be great “seed funding” opportunities to not only obtain preliminary data, but also allow the PI to gain experience in project and funding management.



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
QUESTIONS!**