

ORSO Guideline 1

Proposal Review, Processing, and Submission

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

The Office of Research
Office of Research Support & Operations

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SECTION I--GENERAL INFORMATION

A. **Introduction.** Research, instruction, public service, and scholarly or creative activities are major functions of the faculty of Washington State University. All academic units of the university encourage and facilitate these activities. The Office of Research Support & Operations (ORSO) provides information and services to those seeking extramural support. It is also responsible, as the employing unit of the University's Authorized Institutional Official, for the final review and transmission of all requests for extramural support. This guideline

addresses the current WSU procedures which have evolved over a period of years, for the review, approval, and submission of extramural support applications and/or collaboration. Sections I and II deal with the development of proposals or other solicitations for extramural funding or collaboration. Sections III and IV describe the internal review and approval procedures for extramural proposals by Washington State University. **(See also [BPPM 40.02](#))**

B. Application. The following procedures apply to all extramural applications including, but not limited to, support from foundations, industry, businesses, and charitable organizations. The requests are coordinated by ORSO, and are reviewed and approved by appropriate university personnel. ORSO serves as the central clearinghouse for extramural proposals and ensures that the commitments and obligations communicated in such requests are appropriate and acceptable for WSU.

C. Required Non-Profit Submission. If the sponsor requires applicants to have a specific 501 (c) 3 non-profit status with no exception for institutions of higher education, or if the sponsor is listed on the [WSU Foundation Private Grant Sponsor List](#), the principal investigator or departmental administrator should contact the WSU Foundation (WSUF) to coordinate the application submission with ORSO.

D. Related Information. The Office of Research Advancement & Partnerships (ORAP) provides assistance in locating funding sources, proposal preparation, and preliminary budget development. For these specific services, please access information at the [ORAP Website](#). ORAP also assists in the review of internal WSU Faculty Seed Grant competitions and awards, and limited submission selection of proposals. Grant & Contract Coordinators within ORSO are also available to advise faculty and administrators on appropriate facilities and administrative costs, employee benefits, cost-sharing, and related matters for all funding opportunities. Guidance and policies related to proposal submission and budget preparation can be found on the [ORSO website](#). Guideline 2, which provides detailed budget information, is periodically updated with current rates and regulations. Guidance is available for proposals or activities involving any of the following can be found on the [ORSO website](#) and/or at the additional links provided. If further help is needed, contact ORSO or the contact listed within the applicable guidance document.

E. Topics Related to Research/Sponsored Activity.

- Research Involving Classified Material or Topics: [\(Policy 5 on Classified Research at WSU\)](#)
- Intellectual Property and/or Copyrights -- [WSU Faculty Manual](#) & [WSU Office of Commercialization](#)

- Conflict of Interest—[ORSO Policy 3 on Conflict of Interest](#), [Office of Research Assurances - COI](#)
- Biohazard Use--- [ORSO Policy 1 on Experimental Use of Pesticides](#), [ORSO Policy 13 on Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\) Policy](#), [Institutional Biosafety Committee](#)
- Human Subject Use—[ORSO Policy 4 Regarding the Use of Human Subjects in Research](#), [Institutional Review Board](#)
- Animal Use---[Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#)
- Export Controls—[Office of Research Assurances—Export Controls](#); [ORSO Guideline 27 Q&A on Export Controls](#)
- Working with [Foreign Agencies and Individuals](#)

F. **Departmental Contact List.** Many departments and colleges have research administrators and/or fiscal officers who can assist with proposal documents and proposal budget preparation. When available, these individuals should be utilized to assist in the preparation of your application. See the [Departmental Contact List](#) for individuals who assist in your department/area.

SECTION II—COMPLETION OF PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS

- A. **Proposal Contents.** Some sponsors may require formal documents from applicants while other sponsors may only want a one-page letter provided to them for their award of funding. In most cases, formal and strict procedures are required when applying for funding. Below is a list of commonly used documents by sponsors. There could be a variety of combinations of these documents where some are required, some are optional and some are not required by all sponsors. Please be sure to thoroughly read your proposal application instructions and other documents to ensure you have met all requirements.
1. Cover Page/SF424 - The cover page, which may be a word document developed according to the proposal instructions or one of the federal Standard Form 424 adobe documents. See ORSO's online [Frequently Required Information](#) section for information needed to complete this form.
 2. Brief Abstract.
 3. Table of Contents.
 4. Introduction/Summary - Short description of the objectives of the project.
 5. Project Description - Longer, detailed description of the project. Page limits may apply.
 6. Available Facilities and Equipment – A list of the facilities and equipment available for the project completion – this is where we include unfunded institutional commitments, personnel or resources.
 7. List of Key Personnel.

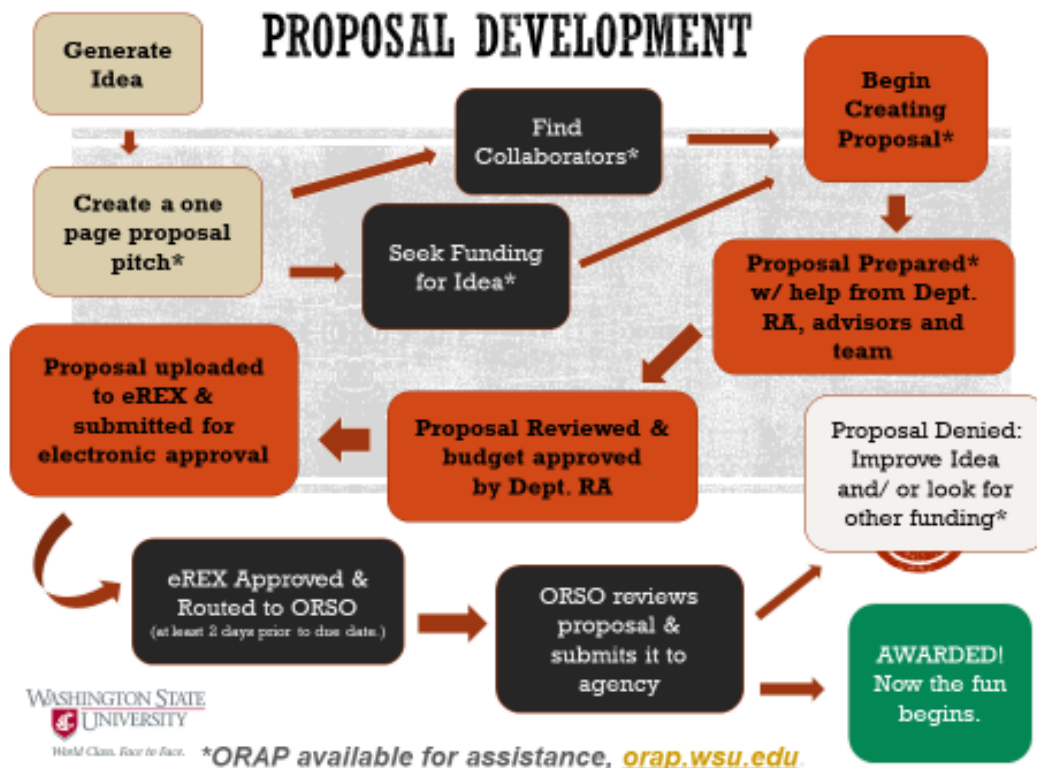
8. Biography and List of Publications for each key person.
9. Budget and possibly a budget justification - A detailed budget outlining the costs of the project and a supporting written justification for those costs.

B. **WSU Forms.** WSU requires the following internal documents for each proposal being submitted to an outside sponsor be attached to the [eREX form](#): (this form is the mechanism used to route all relevant proposal information/instructions for institutional approvals, review and submission - see further instruction on these documents in Section III.)

1. Application printout or proposal document for submission.
2. Certified budget with allocation detail according to WSU budget objects.
3. Any supporting documents required for cost share, excess compensation, or other special situations which need to be endorsed by the appropriate parties.
4. Solicitation, funding announcement or request for proposal information
5. If subawards/external collaborators are proposed, include letters of commitment, budget/budget justification, F&A rate agreement for each party.

SECTION III—PROPOSAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL WITHIN WSU

A. **REVIEW OF PROPOSALS** – After a proposal has been compiled by the Principal Investigator and/or other departmental individuals, it should be submitted to ORSO for review. Below is a flow chart showing the course a proposal will take through WSU.



Officials within the area, department and central offices of WSU will review the proposal for the following items, preferably prior to submission of the proposal to the sponsor. Should submission of the proposal occur before a detailed review of these items is conducted by officials within WSU, withdrawal of the proposal may occur should the obligations communicated in a proposal not meet the expectation of any such officials.

1. Careful review of proposals for extramural support includes:
 - a. the appropriateness of the activity in order to justify university involvement;
 - b. its relationship to the academic program;
 - c. its commitment of faculty time;
 - d. the current and continuation of the program benefits beyond the termination of the grant/contract period;
 - e. commitments required for the sustainability of the project; and
 - f. the use of university facilities and other resources.

2. All proposals for extramural support of WSU research and/or other activities must be reviewed by all appropriate WSU officials prior to submission to the external sponsor. This includes requests for support of research, academic, scholarly, creative, instructional, extension, and service activities, and for the use of research facilities, traineeships and fellowships, institutes, and special teaching programs. WSU officials will review proposals taking into consideration the following aspects:
 - a. the substance and merit of the proposal, including the academic appropriateness and desirability;

 - b. acceptance only when consistent with the following objectives:
 - i. the education of the undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral student;
 - ii. the advancement of knowledge through research and scholarship;
 - iii. the preservation and dissemination of knowledge;
 - iv. the creation of works of art; and
 - v. the advancement of the public welfare.

 - c. Protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects where the proposed research involves their use. This review will be accomplished by the appropriate [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) in accordance with university, state, and federal policy. The reviews conducted by the IRB are coordinated by the [Office of Research Assurances](#).

 - d. Principal investigators proposing research involving the use of bio-hazardous agents, recombinant DNA molecules and known carcinogens, mutagens, or infectious diseases must be trained in the use and regulations related to the use of these materials. PI's should review [ORSO Policy 13 on Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\) Policy](#); [ORSO Guideline 8 Responsible and Ethical Conduct for Research \(RCR\)](#).

- e. Commitments of faculty and/or staff time and the possible effects of such commitments on the teaching and other obligations of those personnel involved in the project.
 - i. For example, salary reimbursement arrangements— provisions for summer support, provisions for a section of support during the academic year, or other compensation.
- f. WSU space and/or WSU facilities needed for the performance of the project, giving a higher level of scrutiny for projects which may require new space and/or facilities.
- g. The proposal budget:
 - i. Budget is approved by a WSU sponsored project budget certified individual;
 - ii. verification that all costs including facilities and administrative costs are accurately determined;
 - iii. that needs are realistically estimated and stated;
 - iv. that items included are not contrary to the policies and procedures of the university or the sponsor;
 - v. that specified cost share is available and approved for commitment by applicable WSU officials, when cost share is required by the sponsor; and
 - vi. any lasting obligations to be assumed by WSU when the project terminates.

B. WSU ELECTRONIC REX (eREX) APPROVAL PROCESS –Upon completion of the sponsor required proposal documents (along with the internal WSU certified budget and any related documents) the *Electronic Request for Approval of Application for Extramural Support Form* (eREX) should be completed as noted below.

NOTE: Some WSU areas, departments, and off campus units may have specific procedures that need to be followed within the appropriate divisions prior to the submission of the eREX to ORSO. Please contact the Research Administrator listed in the [Departmental Contact list](#) for the appropriate department to determine what steps should be followed with those specific divisions.

1. **Complete the online eREX** found at [ORSO Forms](#).
 - a. Answer the necessary questions being sure to pay attention to the instructions in the details as an incomplete eREX will cause delays during the electronic approval process.
 - b. Attach the full copy of the proposal document in the attachments section of the eREX. This should be in the form in which it will be submitted to the agency. (e.g.: Workspace/ASSIST/Fastlane print preview, word document to be emailed, a copy of the proposal as it will be entered on the sponsor website, etc.) See [Narrative Hold Primer](#) for federal submission option.
 - c. Attach the WSU Budget which has been approved by a Certified WSU Budget Individual (see [ORSO Guideline 2](#)) in the indicated attachments section.

- d. Attach any other required documents. Such as:
 - a) F&A documentation to validate a lesser rate than normal.
 - b) WSU Excess Compensation Approvals—[See Guideline 21-Excess Compensation.](#)
 - c) Any Cost Share Approvals (e.g. Office of Research or Office of the Provost, Graduate School)
 - d) Any other documents needed to add clarity to the proposal.
- e. Be sure to list all of the appropriate PI's, Co-PI's, Chairs, and Deans/Directors/VP's/Chancellors in the signature areas for all those employees having responsibilities outlined in the proposal.

2. **Submit the completed eREX** with all the necessary attachments.

- a. ***ORSO will receive your submitted eREX electronically.*** Once received, the eREX is reviewed for correctness and completeness prior to beginning the online approval process. In some cases, eREX forms may require resubmission if information is missing or incorrect.
- b. Once the eREX is considered correct and complete, ORSO will begin the **Electronic Approval Process (EAP)** for all WSU area and department officials.
 - a) Types of approvals. There are two types of approvals which can be completed within the eREX process.
 - 1) Automatic Approval: Approval is automatically given to Co-PI's, Chairs, Deans, Directors, and upper administration unless:
 - a) A departmental Research Administrator (RA) believes that one or more of these individuals need to specifically approve the eREX/proposal, in which case the RA has the ability to change the auto approval to required approval prior to moving the process forward.
 - b) At least one of the conditions listed in the required approval description below is present (see #3).
 - 2) Individuals required to approve the eREX. The only individual required to approve the eREX, regardless of the content of the proposal or the commitments made within the proposal, is the Lead Investigator(s) for WSU. Lead PI's MUST review and certify that the commitments which they have previously communicated are clearly outlined in the eREX and proposal, and they are capable of fulfilling the responsibilities related to the project. If the PI cannot approve the eREX him/herself, a written authorization to allow another individual to approve on his/her behalf, specific to the project, must be submitted within the eREX as an attachment, or the approval can be provided to ORSO through personal delivery (e.g. a phone call).
 - 3) Required Approval: If the following issues are present within a proposal, chairs, deans, directors, and upper administration may be required to specifically approve the eREX/proposal.
 - a) New space assignments or changes in current space assignments;
 - b) Alterations, remodeling, or installation is required.

- c) Facilities and Administration cost splits do not follow established policy (manual split).
- d) Cost Share
- e) RUSH/Waiver eREX's, for eREX's processed within the 2 day window leading up to the agency deadline (See also [BPPM 40.02](#) for details).

3. **Approving an eREX.** The EAP will be started by ORSO through an automatic email system, which sends emails to those individuals who are listed as the WSU officials within the eREX as indicated below:
- a. Research Administrator (RA) – RAs play a very important role in the eREX process. The RA is responsible for reviewing the eREX and documents attached to ensure that all the necessary approvals for their department and area have been correctly communicated. Once the RA has received the email notice from ORSO, the RA may allow the process to continue as originally submitted or, if an RA believes that contacts within their department or area need to have specific approvals, he/she may adjust the approvals for each individual to require their specific review and approval of the eREX/Proposal.
 - b. Lead Principal Investigator (PI) - Upon receipt of their automatic email, lead PIs will be required to follow the link within the email to review and approve the eREX and Proposal.
 - c. Co-Investigators (Co-PI), chairs, deans, directors or other upper administration – These individuals will receive one of the following emails when the eREX/proposal has been submitted for approvals:
 - a) An email indicating that the eREX has been submitted and their automatic approval was applied. In this case, the individual may choose to:
 - a) Let the eREX go forward and finish the proposal process;
 - b) Click on the link indicated and view the eREX and related information and specifically indicate his/her approval with any comments needed.
 - c) An email indicating the eREX has been submitted and their approval IS REQUIRED, in which case the individual must follow the link provided to review the substance and merit of the proposal. Particular attention should be paid to the budget items, including the salary and employment of present or proposed personnel, and all aspects of the proposal which may affect the role and mission of the college, and the use of WSU space and WSU facilities assigned to the department and the college. The Director/Dean will pay particular attention to any comments made by previous individuals who have reviewed and approved the eREX and proposal. This review and acceptance constitutes their endorsement of all aspects of the proposal.
 - d. ORSO's AVP/Director will be the final approval required on the eREX. The Director will review the eREX package, ensuring that the lead PI has specifically approved the eREX or provided written approval for a person to approve on his/her behalf. Once the final approval from the Director of

ORSO has been received, ORSO will move the electronic eREX and attached proposal documents into the ORSO MyResearch Database and routed to an ORSO Grant & Contract Coordinator for administrative review and submission to the Sponsor.

e. HINTS: Paying careful attention to the following will expedite the review and approval of your eREX and attached proposal at the specific level of approval mentioned below:

- 1) Other WSU Officials' Review of eREX and Proposal:
 - a) In some cases WSU Vice Presidents may be required to review the eREX. Higher WSU officials will usually pay particular attention to the budget details of the proposal, special cost share commitments outlined, special obligations or commitments made and any special publicity or notorious items that may be communicated in the documents. It is important to take great care in communicating any special obligations which would require the review of a VP.
 - b) WSU Research Administrators and/or an Area Finance Officer are required to review the eREX and proposal to ensure that the necessary prior checks and balances have been completed within each area and department prior to Chairs, Deans, and VP approval of the eREX. Work with these individuals prior to submitting the eREX.

C. DEADLINES FOR PROPOSALS -

Principal Investigators are strongly encouraged to submit the eREX form with all proposal documents and approvals to ORSO five working days prior to the sponsor's deadline. It is important to allocate sufficient time for the routing process to obtain all necessary approvals no later than two working days prior to the sponsor's deadline to allow for a full proposal review before submission to the sponsor. Office of Research Support and Operations processes proposals that are fully approved up to two working days prior to the sponsor's deadline. In addition, it is strongly recommended that areas/campuses create an internal deadline policy for their faculty to encourage on-time proposal submissions. (See also [BPPM 40.02](#))

Many online submission sites run a validation process which reviews the proposal that has been input into their system, that validation creates a report indicating any errors or warnings regarding the submission to the PI and Authorized Official. Please address and correct any issues listed in that validation prior to routing it to ORSO for review and submission.

Often, especially when the website is being accessed frequently by individuals from institutions across the US during times with heavy deadline cycles, this validation and routing process gets delayed and/or experiences glitches which can cause proposals to be stalled. As well, there may be specific items which will cause rejection at the electronic processing site or at the sponsor reception site. The eREX submission recommended time frame of 5+ day allows ORSO to work through any rejections or glitches, while still meeting the sponsor deadline.

** This is the standard time frame expected to allow for all the electronic approvals

to be received, and for the ORSO Coordinator to review and submit with a thorough review of the proposal materials.

1. Proposals to be submitted where there is no agency deadline should be routed through the normal eREX Approval Process. These will be reviewed in order of receipt, keeping in mind the immediate deadlines of other proposals in the same pool.
2. Number of Hard Copy Proposals - The number of copies of proposals required by sponsoring agencies varies. Some agencies use a single reproducible form. Others do not prescribe a standard form, but require many copies to allow a copy for every member of their review panel. When submitting proposals through hard copy submission, please clearly indicate on the eREX the amount of originals/copies to be submitted to the sponsor. Be sure to include an additional copy of the proposal for ORSO's records only if the proposal was not included in the original eREX. If the sponsor requirement cannot be determined, it is recommended that at least three copies of the proposal be provided to the sponsor contact. Additional copies of the hard copy proposal may be requested for Office of Research Assurances reviews, or other officials as appropriate.

D. PROPOSALS SUBMITTED WITHOUT REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL -

1. Proposals which are submitted without thorough review and/or approval are usually due to one of the following:
 - a. The eRex Form was not submitted within the time frames mentioned above, allowing ORSO only enough time to log and submit the proposal as it was presented, directly to the agency without thorough review and/or the needed approvals from other areas and departments.
 - b. The proposal was previously submitted by a WSU individual outside of ORSO. Informal discussion of proposals outside of university channels and prior to university review should be undertaken with caution. Where such discussions are involved in developing agreements for outside support, it is highly desirable to inform the chairperson and Dean at all stages, and provide copies of correspondence to ORSO, even at the preliminary stages.
 - c. In circumstances as stated above, proposals not meeting the deadline shall be submitted with conditional approval only. In these cases, the PI shall be responsible for making appropriate changes to the proposal, at a later date, if subsequent review reveals that the proposal is incomplete, contains errors, inaccuracies, misrepresentations, or does not conform to WSU or sponsoring agency requirements. In addition, WSU reserves the right to withdraw the proposal if subsequent review reveals any of these problems listed.
 - d. In cases where an eREX was submitted, but the required electronic approvals are not received in time to submit the proposal by the sponsor deadline, the department and college will need to work with the AOR/Director of ORSO on whether or not to submit the proposal and garner the required approvals after the fact per the RUSH/Waiver policy. (See [BPPM 40.02](#) for details)

Note: Many agencies and foundations have deadlines for the submission of future proposals. These are usually stated in the sponsor's information brochure or other organizational publications. In the case of the Department of Health and Human Services (NIH) for instance, new or competing renewal proposals have a series of deadlines, while non-competing renewals must meet a deadline set by the Program Manager or the previous project period.