



**Policy Name:** Alternative Proposal Submission Option

**Unit Responsible for Policy:** Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC)

## 1. Purpose

This policy establishes an alternative option for Principal Investigators (PIs) within the College of Agricultural Sciences to prepare a grant proposal. This policy outlines how PIs may engage with an external Professional Service Provider (PSP) to secure fee-based grant preparation services to prepare a grant proposal in the event that the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) is unable to process the proposal because of other commitments to PIs.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies in cases when OGC must deny OGC pre-award grant preparation support due to missed deadlines per policies OGC-102 or OGC-103 by any eligible College of Agricultural Sciences Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-PIs, per Penn State policy RA03, who plan to seek extramural funding, including new proposals, preproposals, subawards, supplements, continuations, renewals, resubmissions, and any other forms of added funding. OGC reserves the right to deny or approve the submission of PIs that have missed deadlines based on existing workload and other extenuating circumstances unique to the submission. It does not apply to proposals where the RFP provides a timeline for submission that does not comply with OGC requirements. In such circumstances and when OGC is unable to process the proposal, the Office of Research and Graduate Education will cover any expenses associated with a PSP contracted to prepare the grant.

It is a violation of Penn State policy RA20 Proposal Submission for principal investigators to submit proposals on their own and without the authorization of the Penn State Authorized Official.

## 3. Prerequisites

A Notice of Intent (NOI) must be received by the OGC for review and consideration prior to engaging the PSP (address below in References).

## 4. Responsibilities

OGC leadership — the Director of OGC and the Assistant Director of Pre-Award Services — will be responsible for evaluating NOI and grant documents when received outside of the deadlines established by policies OGC-102 and OGC-103. They will deny or approve submission of NOIs that have missed deadlines based on existing workload and other extenuating circumstances unique to the submission. OGC leadership will serve as the first point of contact in inquiring about the availability of the PSP. OGC leadership will follow up with the PSP on the progress of grant preparation and respond to any questions or concerns from the PSP. OGC leadership will establish the standard of practice for engaging the PSP, including defining the structure and timeline for providing an invoice of services and protocol for following up on unpaid invoices.

The PI is responsible for submitting a NOI for all proposals. If a PSP is recommended by OGC leadership for proposals outside of the deadline established by OGC-102 or for late documents per the policy OGC-103, the PI or their home

department must pay for these services from unrestricted funds (fees outlined in Policy below). PIs are expected to adhere to any deadlines that the PSP establishes for the completion of documents.

## 5. Definitions

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The **proposal development process** includes all pre-award work (e.g., the review of the solicitation, the establishment of the timeline for the preparation of documents required by a sponsor, gathering the necessary approvals, development of budgets, recommendation of proposal submission to the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR), and other pre-award work as necessary).

## 6. Policy

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When deadlines per OGC-102 and OGC-103 policies are missed, OGC leadership will evaluate the circumstance and may choose to offer the option to PIs to hire a PSP to carry on the proposal development process through completion. The PI may choose to hire the PSP at the expense of the PI or her/his home department at a rate of \$100 per hour, billed in 15-minute increments. The completed proposal package must be submitted to OGC at least three business days prior to the sponsor deadline. The PSP will provide an invoice for services to the PI and OGC. Payment of the invoice must be charged to unrestricted funds and processed in a timely manner.

## 7. Procedure

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If a deadline per OGC-102 or OGC-103 is missed and after evaluation OGC is unable to continue with the proposal development process, they will offer the option to hire the services of a PSP to the PI. If the PI is interested in working with a PSP and the PSP is available, the OGC leadership will schedule a virtual meeting and make introductions. The PSP will provide their deadlines for the receipt of information and documents to the PI. The PI will then work with the PSP to continue the proposal development process, adhering to any deadlines set by the PSP for the receipt of documents. The PSP will be in regular communication with the OGC regarding proposal development.

The PSP may choose not to accept a proposal for development or may cease services if deadlines agreed upon by the PI and PSP are not met.

The completed proposal package will be submitted to OGC, who will route and approve the Internal Approval Form (IAF) and review the final proposal package. After reviewing the proposal documents, OGC will recommend submission of the proposal to the AOR. The AOR will submit the grant to the sponsor via an electronic system or sign a cover letter endorsing the grant submission.

On completion of services, the PSP will provide an invoice to the PI and OGC, which must be paid within 30 days. The PI should direct invoicing questions to the PSP, and if questions remain unresolved may contact OGC leadership for assistance.

## 8. References

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- OGC Online Notice of Intent Form (<https://agsci.psu.edu/grants/pre-award/submit-intent-to-prepare-a-proposal>)
- Policy RA03 – Eligibility to Serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) (<https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ra03>)
- Policy RA20 – Proposal Submission (<https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ra20>)
- Policy OGC-102 – Internal Notice of Intent Deadlines
- Policy OGC-103 – Proposal Documents Deadlines

## 9. Version History

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- Version 1.0, March 8, 2023