

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Proposals are written by the PI assisted by his or her department. BARA provides assistance with obtaining and interpreting agency guidelines, providing all administration data such as rates and assurance dates, and by reviewing the completed proposal.

In general, a proposal consists of: (a) a narrative or technical section, (b) an administrative section or document, and (c) a budget. The narrative or technical section should be a clear and concise explanation of the planned research including specific goals and methodologies. The budget is the best estimate of support needed to perform the research proposed. It should detail and justify each item of cost.

GENERAL FORMAT

Most federal and many private agencies provide application forms and guidelines. Be aware that a proposal could be eliminated even before reaching the selection committee if the agency's instructions are not precisely followed. In cases where instructions are not provided, the following basic format is suggested:

1. Cover page
2. Certifications and Representations (as required by agency)
3. Abstract containing a brief overview (approximately 250 words) of the proposed research including goals and methods
4. Introduction which identifies the problem and the need for the research
5. Statement of work which outlines precisely the goals, methodologies, dissemination of information and a description of resources
6. Budget estimates for every item of cost and supporting detail
7. Listing of current and pending research support
8. Appendix, including vitas for key personnel and other pertinent documents for forms

BUDGET FORMAT

Budgets generally contain itemized direct and F & A costs, other cost requirements, appendices, and required forms. Budget estimates should outline all costs for a given project. The following is a general budget format.

Direct Costs

Direct costs are the expenses directly associated with a specific research project. The sponsor is expected to provide for all direct costs, which may include:

- **Salaries and Wages:** List professional personnel to be involved along with a percentage of effort. Next, list staff required and the estimated number of calendar months to be devoted to the project each year. On federally funded projects, administrative salaries are generally unallowable. If they are to be included, it is essential that sufficient justification for clerical and administrative staff be provided. Refer to the university policy regarding administrative support for further information, the web page address is www.controller.jhu.edu. Remember to deduct staff vacation charges prior to calculating effort.
- **Fringe Benefits:** Varying fringe benefits are associated with different personnel categories. See [Informtion](#) for current fringe benefits rates.
- **Materials and Supplies:** These are normally expendable items with a useful life of less than one year. It is generally unacceptable to include office supplies. Provide details for all materials and supplies required.
- **Capital Equipment:** Identify the piece of equipment including the model number, manufacturer, name of the vendor, contact person and telephone number on a separate budget explanation page. Capital equipment must be directly related to the proposed research, have a useful life of more than one year, and cost in excess of \$5,000. General purpose equipment, such as desks and typewriters, is generally not allowed. Consult agency regulations or call BARA for more specific information.
- **Travel:** Describe separately domestic and foreign travel associated with the project. Provide a breakdown of costs according to destination, reason for travel, number of travelers, number of trips, etc. When appropriate, use Federal Travel Regulations (FTRs) as a guideline to allowable travel costs.
- **Consultants:** Identify the names of consultants, specialty, daily rate, and justification for their use.
- **Printing and Publication Costs:** Estimate the number of pages, page charges, and name(s) of journal(s).

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

- **Subcontracts:** List the names and addresses for all subcontractors. Also submit a letter of intent from the subcontractor (signed by an authorized representative) along with a detailed cost estimate and rate agreement. If the subcontractors' work is not described in detail in Johns Hopkins's proposal, have the subcontractor submit a separate statement of work. Refer to "**Subawards**" for specific guidelines and procedures.
- **Alterations and/or Renovations:** Itemize the requirements and costs. These changes must be approved by the appropriate dean prior to submission of the proposal.
- **Other Direct Costs:** Includes direct costs not specifically described by the general headings above, such as 20% tuition, and health insurance fees for graduate students on research grants.

Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A)

Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs, previously known as Indirect Costs, are the expenses incurred for general University operations while conducting the research project, such as library services, administrative costs, and building use and maintenance. F & A costs are calculated as a percentage of direct costs and are set by the Federal Government.

The Federal Government provides rules ([OMB Circular A-21](#)) governing the calculation of F & A cost rates and periodically audits the costs supporting the rates we have negotiated. Some items, such as capital equipment and tuition/stipends, are excluded from the F & A cost calculation. Known as Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC), this formula entails deducting the following direct cost items prior to calculating F&A: Equipment exceeding \$5,000; Subcontracts (amounts in excess of \$25,000); Tuition; Patient Care Costs; Rental of off-site facilities; Capital Expenditures; and Fellowships and Scholarships.

F & A cost rates may vary according to the type or location of the research project. Consult [Standard Proposal Information](#) for current rates, and contact BARA for updates and rates not covered by the information sheet.

Application of F&A Rates to Sponsored Projects

F&A cost rates are applicable to all sponsored projects (grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, subgrants and subcontracts) funded by federal, state or private sponsors. The application of these rates allows JHU to recover certain costs (e.g. facilities, utilities, libraries, administration, student services, etc.) associated with externally funded training and research activity that, although they are true costs, cannot be identified specifically with a particular project or activity. The Federal Government determines the rate that is necessary to collect these costs from sponsored awards. Therefore, any reduction in the allowable rate is considered cost sharing, and JHU must cover those costs from other sources.

The first step in determining the proper F&A rate is to read the sponsor's program guidelines. If there is a limit on F&A, the program guidelines or announcement will list the rate that should be used. If the guidelines do not mention F&A or do not indicate that something other than the applicable Federally negotiated rate should be used, the appropriate full rate should be used.

The next step in determining the appropriate rate is to establish what type of project you are proposing. ([OMB Circular A-21](#)) describes the different types of awards – Organized Research, Instruction and Training or Other Sponsored Activities.

When JHU is submitting a proposal utilizing APL as an Other Direct Cost, JHU shall not apply additional F&A to the APL proposal costs. This also applies to any post-award allocations that may be required. When APL is proposing JHU for work under a contract or grant, JHU may include its normal fees for the work proposed: however APL may not charge their standard Overhead and G&A, but may include a Fee Category as approved in their accounting system. This fee is applied to Contracts only and not grants. It should be included in the Budget Justification Statement, that APL operates under Commercial Cost Principles and is separately audited.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

On- vs. Off-Campus

Based on the planned activity and statement of work, determine if your project qualifies for an off campus rate. In order for a project to be considered off campus, the following qualifications must be met:

1. The PI will be away from his or her campus facilities (i.e. office and laboratory) for a minimum of three consecutive months;
2. The PI's on campus facilities will be made available for use by other faculty and/or students during the PI's absence; and
3. The PI will be performing work in accordance with the statement of work of the proposed and funded project while at the off campus location.

These qualifications are a fiscal determination based upon space utilization and are not simply a definition of where some of the project work is being performed.

Off Campus Allocation Policies in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

Requests for an off-campus F&A rate for costs associated with any Federal grant should be made with the following policies in mind:

An off campus rate will be considered for research projects that require an investigator to be away from the university for three months or more. Given that the investigator is away, her/his office will be available to KSAS to be assigned to another person during the period the investigator is away.

Salary and fringe benefits paid to the investigator from the grant during the period he/she is away will be subject to the off-campus F&A rate.

Travel to and from all sites related to the research project including conferences, collaborator sites etc are subject to the full university F&A rate.

Requests for other personnel or items to be based on the off campus F&A rate should be made to the Dean of Research and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Please submit all requests to the Dean of Research in advance of the proposal to expedite processing of the proposal.

COST SHARING

Some agencies require that the University share a percentage of the research costs. Cost sharing represents a financial commitment to a research project. Whenever the full costs of a project are not recovered (direct or F & A), the University is, in fact, sharing a percentage of the research costs and it is considered cost sharing. University cost sharing should not be included in a proposal **unless it is mandatory by statute, regulation or written policy**.

No cost sharing, waiver or modification can be accepted without the approval of the KSAS Vice Dean for Research. The School of Arts & Sciences generally will not approve voluntary cost sharing, and requires that all cost sharing be approved in advance and documented by written approval of the Vice Dean for Research.

Cost sharing may take the form of outright, in-kind or matching.

- Outright cost sharing generally constitutes a cash contribution coming from University sources.
- Matching usually refers to a third-party cash contribution through gifts or grants specifically earmarked for participation on a project.
- In-kind contributions may include University or third-party contributions of efforts, services or goods.

To be acceptable as cost sharing, expenditure must:

- Be verifiable from the official University records;
- Not be used as cost sharing for any other sponsored program;
- Be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project;

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

- Be allowable under the University governing cost principles and policies ([OMB Circular A-21](#)) and Johns Hopkins University Charging of Departmental Administrative Costs Policy;
- Be incurred during the effective dates of the award; and
- Not be paid by the Federal Government under another sponsored project.

It is important to remember that all types of cost sharing must be accounted for, even if only mentioned in the proposal text and not specified in the budget. See the [Office of the Controller's Accounting for Cost Sharing Policy](#) for further information on accounting and tracking cost sharing.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS

JHU enters into Non-Disclosure Agreements with Companies or other entities, when the activity of the parties involves provision or exchange of sensitive or proprietary data or technology. The agreement may be either unilateral or bilateral.

The Unilateral Universal Non-Disclosure Agreement is used when only one party is disclosing the confidential information.

- [Unilateral Non-Disclosure Agreement - \(pdf Format\)](#)
- [Unilateral Non-Disclosure Agreement - \(doc Format\)](#)

The Bilateral Universal Non-Disclosure Agreement is used when both parties are disclosing confidential information to each other.

- [Bilateral Non-Disclosure Agreement - \(pdf Format\)](#)
- [Bilateral Non-Disclosure Agreement - \(doc Format\)](#)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION – OTHER DATA

COMPLIANCE

The University must provide sponsors with certain assurances regarding every research project. These assurances generally involve areas of potential physical, psychological, financial or legal liability that the researcher, the sponsor, and/or the University may be subject to during the course of the research project and beyond. In order for the affected parties to minimize potential liability, the federal government and the University require that certain approvals be obtained before a proposal is actually submitted. "Approvals" in this sense involve the conduct of an examination by unaffected, technically qualified individuals of those specific elements of the research proposal that pose potential risks. The examination of these risks is based, for the most part, upon federal and/or University regulations specific to the elements being examined. BARA offers detailed information regarding policies, training, and other information pertinent to the responsible conduct of [research online](#). The BARA "Information Sheet" must be attached to the front of every proposal. This form can be filled out online or downloaded onto your local PC. In addition to requiring basic information about the award, this sheet outlines the areas requiring institutional assurances. These generally include the following:

Animals

Any research proposal that uses vertebrate animals, or tissue derived therefrom, must have the animal "protocol" approved by the University. This refers to the specific methodologies that describe how the animals will be used and maintained. Research involving animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Information regarding requirements for approval of protocols can be obtained by examining the ["Use of Experimental Animals at Johns Hopkins University"](#) Handbook. For further information on JHU policy, please consult the following link: <http://www.jhu.edu/animalcare/committee1.html>. NIH announced a new policy regarding humane care and use of laboratory animals in August 2002. To review this change in PHS policy in detail, consult the following link: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/phspol.htm>.

Human Subjects

The University must approve any research project involving the use of human subjects. The University must give assurances regarding research which involves both physical and psychological testing. This includes social data

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

collection and analysis. If the research involves clinical trials, Homewood investigators are referred to the School of Medicine IRB.

There are two JHU Training sites for education and training on the protection of human research subjects for all investigators as mandated by the Public Health Service. The Public Health Service (PHS) later extended the requirement to all persons supported by PHS funds. The successful completion of this module is designed to fulfill the PHS requirement.

- The School of Medicine website is <https://secure.lwserver.net/default.cfm>
- The Bloomberg School of Public Health website is http://www.jhsph.edu/chr/training_module.html
- The Homewood Human Subjects Review website is located at <http://www.cog.jhu.edu/hsrb/>.
- The NIH Office of Human Subjects Research website is located at <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsr/site/>
- The HHS provides guidance charts at their website located at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/decisioncharts.htm>
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) site supplies [valuable questions and answers related to human research](#).

Infectious Agents or Other Biohazardous Materials

The University must examine and approve the handling, storage and disposal of any materials in this category. These approvals are obtained by contacting the Biosafety Division of the Office of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE). <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hse/biosafety.htm>

Radioactive Materials

The handling, use, storage and security of these materials must be registered with the Biosafety Division of HSE.

- For use of Radioactive Materials please go to the following website:
http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hse/radiation_homewood.htm

Recombinant DNA

Research involving the use or manipulation of recombinant DNA must be registered with the Biosafety Office in order to maintain compliance with institutional and federal regulations. This is the link to the [Recombinant DNA Registration form](#). Additional information on NIH guidelines for research involving recombinant DNA molecules can be found at http://www4.od.nih.gov/oba/rac/guidelines_02/nih_guidelines_apr_02.htm.

Alterations, Renovations, or Additional Electrical or Steam Service

Any modification of laboratory or office space must be approved by the department chairperson and the appropriate dean before any information is conveyed to a potential sponsor. The alteration of space involves various levels of cost and has ramifications that could affect space allocations for an entire academic department.

Capital Equipment

First rate research often requires the acquisition of major equipment systems. However, the University is required by the Federal Government to avoid acquiring equipment that is duplicative or easily and conveniently available within a department. This inquiry, therefore, helps the University to determine equipment needs in those instances where it is disadvantageous to utilize existing equipment.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest exists when external commitments made by University employees threaten or impair independent scholarly inquiry; compromise one's freedom of thought or action; or impede an employee's ability to capably perform the duties of his/her University position. To minimize the likelihood of such conflicts, KSAS has developed a Policy on Conflict of Commitment and Conflict of Interest of which every employee pursuing external activities with income potential should be cognizant.

<http://www.jhu.edu/ksas/website/aboutksas/policies/KSASCoCCoIPolicy.pdf>

PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDE

Certifications and Representations

Due to Federal mandate, the University must often certify that it conducts its activities in a manner that does not violate specific federal laws or regulations associated with the obligations of entities that receive federal funds. These assurances to the federal sponsors constitute "promises" on the part of the University that it understands the sum and substance of the regulation, and that it will do its best to behave in accordance with such regulations. The documents which convey our assurances in these matters are called "certifications and representations".

Most agencies have a single form which covers a general set of certifications regarding non-discriminatory employment practices, accuracy of cost and pricing data, employer identification number, and other similar items of information. The more highly visible certifications are the "special certifications." Among these assurances are those attesting that the University is a Drug Free Workplace; that Johns Hopkins has not experienced Debarment or Suspension in previous federal grants or contracts; that the University does not attempt Lobbying in order to attract research funding; and that equipment purchases are not duplicative (Equipment Certification). Because certification requirements are constantly changing, BARA monitors federal requirements in these areas. Whenever there are questions about required certifications and representations, please direct them to BARA.