



Research and Sponsored Programs Procedure

Letters of Intent, White Papers, Concept Papers, and Pre-Proposals

1. Overview

Sponsors occasionally require that applicants submit a pre-application (e.g., Letters of Intent, White Papers, Concept Papers, and Pre-Proposals) for review before a full proposal. The pre-proposal typically includes a project summary, a list of personnel, and (sometimes) a budget amount / basic budget breakdown.

2. Purpose

Outline expectations and requirements for pre-application submissions and provide guidance to faculty and staff regarding the submission of pre-proposals to external sponsors. This procedure allows faculty/project directors to submit pre-proposals as expeditiously as possible to solicit interest in their respective programs. This procedure outlines the steps required for the pre-application review and approval by Research and Sponsored Programs prior to submission.

3. Who Must Comply

- Principal Investigators Project Personnel/Staff
- Deans, Directors, Chairs, and Department Heads
- Department Personnel Business Managers
- Research and Sponsored Programs Office for Research

4. Definitions

Pre-application: A summary application that is submitted for sponsor approval prior to being invited to submit a full proposal. Pre-application designation listed in the program announcement.

5. Procedure

When a sponsor requires a pre-application, the Principal Investigator (PI) must submit the pre-proposal through the University Research Administration Proposal Submission System (RAPSS) for review and approval by Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP).

A. Pre-Applications Routed for Review and Approval through Sponsored Programs:

All pre-applications must be submitted to Research and Sponsored Programs via RAPSS for review and approval and may include some or all, but not limited to, the following information:

- A general or detailed line-item budget that may or may not be altered when submitting the full proposal,
- A summary and, possibly, a general project description of the research to be conducted
- Rutgers, or third-party, cost-sharing/matching, and requires a firm commitment to be included in the pre-proposal.
- An Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) signature may be required.
- Other documentation as specified by the Sponsor.

B. Pre-Application Submission Deadline:



- Pre-applications will follow the RSP Proposal Submission Deadline Policy, which states that: All proposals must be received by RSP via RAPSS no later than two (2) business days before the sponsor’s deadline. Note: The RAPSS pre-proposal process does not include departmental approval and is automatically routed directly to the appropriate RSP Grant Specialist for review.

C. Application of Appropriate F&A Rate (Indirect Costs):

- PIs are responsible for ensuring that any required pre-application budget includes the appropriate F&A rate. The Rutgers federally negotiated rate must be used unless the solicitation or the sponsor’s published guidance specifies otherwise. Any deviation from the appropriate rate requires prior approval under the RSP F&A Waiver Policy before submitting the pre-application.
- If the appropriate F&A rate is not included in the pre-application budget, Research and Sponsored Programs will require that the F&A be included upon full proposal submission, even if it affects and lowers the total direct costs for the project.
- PIs are not authorized to negotiate F&A rates with sponsors. Any negotiations conducted by individuals outside of Research and Sponsored Programs will not be recognized and may result in the proposal not being submitted.

D. Limited Number of Pre-Proposals

- If the Program Announcement (PA) or Request for Proposal (RFP) limits the number of pre-application submissions per institution, the PI must contact the Research Development team at ufo@research.rutgers.edu. For further guidance and information regarding upcoming limited submissions and appropriate steps, please visit [Finding Funding](#).
- The screening, review, and selection process could take several weeks. Submit early and allow ample time for this process.

If you have any questions/concerns regarding any of the information included herein, please contact ufo@research.rutgers.edu

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Department Personnel:	Support the current PI in submitting the Pre-proposal. Provide guidance on Department/School policy for pre-proposal review.
Principal Investigators:	Submit via RAPSS for RSP review and approval. Make sure the RAPSS Funding Proposal is noted as Pre-application prior to submitting for review in section 1.0.3. Make sure to include the applicable F&A rate pursuant to University Policy: 90.1.1 Sponsored Programs Facilities and Administrative Costs Policy .
Research and Sponsored Programs:	Support the PI through the review and submission of the pre-proposal Review the Pre-Proposal and, if required, the budget to ensure they conform to University and Sponsor guidelines.

7. Resources

- [Research Administration Proposal Submission Systems \(RAPSS\)](#)
- [Rutgers Facilities and Administrative Negotiated Rate Agreement \(F&A\)](#)
- [Rutgers Budget Template](#)