

College of Sciences (COS) Service Zone and Proposal Submission Policy

Effective Date: 10/25/2024

COS Research is implementing this policy to ensure timely and efficient processing of proposal submissions. This policy outlines the services and support provided to COS Faculty and defines a timely submission based on sponsor due dates. This policy covers both the initial notification of a pending proposal and timely submission of draft and final documents ahead of the sponsor deadline. Adherence to this policy by COS Faculty and the College Research Office will ensure COS Research can maintain a balanced workload while providing a fair and comprehensive review of sponsor requirements and documents prior to proposal submission.

PLEASE NOTE:

- The COS Research Office Business Hours are Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm.
- The COS Research Office is closed on Weekends and University Holidays.
- The COS AOR **WILL NOT** submit documents received after 5:00 p.m. Eastern time regardless of the sponsor deadline.
- Initial notification to COS Pre-Award regarding a proposal submission is via the [Proposal intake form](#). No other form of communication (including PINS routing) will be considered notification.
- Proposals will receive full COS review and budget assistance if initial notification is **20 or more business days** from sponsor deadline and PIs follow the guidelines below.
- Full review depends on proposal budgets and budget justification being complete, PINS being routed, and all non-science documents being submitted to COS Pre-Award **5 business days** (for example, 11:59 p.m. the previous Friday for a 5:00 p.m. Friday deadline) prior to sponsor deadline and final science documents being submitted to COS Pre-Award **3 business days** prior to sponsor deadline (for example, 11:59 p.m. Tuesday for a 5:00 p.m. Friday deadline). Final science documents received fewer than 3 business days prior to the sponsor deadline will be submitted without review; final science documents received after 8:00 a.m. on the submission deadline will move the proposal to the Red Service Zone.
- Proposals that do not meet these deadlines will receive limited COS Pre-Award services and Lead PIs will be expected to provide all documentation including collecting and managing subaward packets.

The benefits to COS faculty:

- **Defined Expectations:** Defines the roles of and mutual expectations for PIs and Pre-Award Officers during the proposal development and submission process.
- **Compliance:** Provides a timeline that allows for ensuring proposals are compliant with funding agency requirements.

- **Clarity and Consistency:** Clarifies COS proposal preparation and submission procedures, making the proposal process more consistent, straightforward, and fair.
- **Early Submission:** With sufficient notice, PIs can request early submission of proposals.
- **Strategic Workload Management:** Enables COS Pre-Award office to strategically manage workload in an equitable manner to all COS faculty.
- **SPARCS Timely Submission Policy:** Adheres to the new [SPARCS policy](#) requiring more than 2 business days for SPARCS to review and sign off on proposals.

What proposals fall under this policy?

All proposals must follow this policy and all proposals must go through PINS. This includes proposals submitted directly by faculty to the sponsor.

Exceptions: Any request for an exception to the Proposal Submission policy must be made in writing by emailing cos_preaward@ncsu.edu and will be reviewed by the ADR and Director.

COS Pre-Award Service Zones

COS Pre-Award offers three service zones (Green, Yellow, Red). Each service zone is based on when the PI completes the intake form, the complexity of the proposal, and sponsor due date.

NOTE: PI's should take note of the complexity of their proposal and provide additional information on the intake form.

- **Green Service Zone** - Intake form notice of **20 business days** or more
 - Robust service for all proposals but specifically:
 - Proposals that involve multiple institutions (proposals with subawards, contractors, or collaborative proposals)
 - Complex sponsor requirements such as letters from Senior Administration and Leadership and / or complex budget forms
 - Required cost-sharing / matching
 - [SPARCS](#) submissions and / or signatures
 - Collaboration with other NCSU faculty / departments
 - If applicable, the following should be obtained prior to the 20 business day notification:
 - Limited submission approval (see <https://research.ncsu.edu/rdo/funding/ltd-sub-opps/>)
 - PDU assistance (request at <https://intranet.research.ncsu.edu/pdu/request-pdu-services/>)
 - NIH approval of more than 500K Direct Costs per year
- **Yellow Service Zone** - Intake form notice of **19 to 6 business days**
 - Reduced service for proposals compared to the Green zone
 - PI will be responsible for managing and collecting sub-award documentation
 - PI will be responsible for managing and collecting cost share documentation
 - Robust service for proposals that involve only COS PIs with:
 - no subawards / collaborations
 - no cost matching

- **Red Service Zone** - Intake form notice of **5 or fewer business days**
 - Reduced service compared to the Green and Yellow zones when the intake form is submitted 5 or fewer business days prior to sponsor deadline
 - Reduced service when the budget and administrative documents are not received 5 business days prior to the deadline regardless of initial service zone
 - cursory review of Budget and Budget Justification
 - COS submits documents to sponsor without compliance review
 - PI and Department take full responsibility for errors in the budget and / or proposal

Green Zone: Notification 20 or more Business Days Prior to Submission

Timeline and Actions for Green Zone

The Green service zone allows for the most thorough and comprehensive support. The following list includes elements of a complex proposal and what Pre-Award can support at the Green zone; please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- **Mandatory Cost-Sharing:** Assistance with documenting cost-sharing arrangements in PINS.
- **Subawards:** Coordination and documentation for any subawards included in the proposal.
- **International:** Support for proposals with international components, including compliance with international regulations.
- **Collaborative proposals:** Assistance with COS lead collaborative federal proposals (NSF, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, etc.). Includes external institutions and collaboration with other NC State Colleges.
- **Multiple co-PIs:** Support for proposals involving more than two co-principal investigators.

NOTE: Failure to submit necessary subcontract, cost-sharing documents, and / or non-scientific documents by the below specified time will push the proposal into the Red zone.

20+ Business Days Prior to Sponsor Deadline

- **Proposal Intake Form:** PI submits the proposal intake form with information that includes the proposal title, period of performance, the RFP / RFA / NOFO / equivalent, and the contact information for any subawards or collaborating institutions.

Within 3 Business Days of Intake Submission (Pre-Award Office)

- **Proposal Assignment:** Proposal is assigned to a Pre-Award Officer and PI is notified of their Service Zone
- **Timeline and Responsibilities:** Provide the PI with an email confirming the timeline and responsibilities of both the PI and the Pre-Award Officer.
- **Budget Discussion:**
 - Schedule a meeting if the PI prefers.

- Confirm the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate.
- Plan a timeline for drafting / reviewing the budget.
- Assist with drafting the budget and justification.
- **Cost-Sharing Discussion** (if applicable):
 - Discuss needed documentation and timeline for the PI.
- **Sub-Award Discussion** (if applicable):
 - Obtain sub-award sites and points of contact.
 - Pre-Award Officer contacts other institutions to request sub-award proposal documents.
- **Institutional Forms** (if applicable):
 - Clarify any required institutional forms and the timeline for their sign-off by COS Pre-Award or a Central University Office.
- **Submission Portal:** PI and Pre-Award Officer will discuss the method to share documents for review (email, Google Drive, PINS, etc.) and who will upload final versions of documents to the sponsor portal.

8 Business Days Prior to Submission Deadline

- **Budget and Justification:** If the PI has provided initial budget information by this date, the Pre-Award Officer will provide PI with drafts of the budget and budget justification for review and final changes prior to the 5 day deadline for budget documents. If the PI has not provided initial budget information by this date, the PI will be responsible for creating a budget justification using the [template found on the COS Website](#).
- **Sub-Award Documentation:** Any required documentation from a sub-award entity is due to the Pre-Award Officer. This includes, but is not limited to, budget, budget justification, statement of work, biosketches, and letter of intent signed by an authorized official of the sub-award entity.
- **Cost-Sharing Documentation:** If cost-sharing is required, an email or letter is required from each responsible party documenting
 - The source of cost-sharing funds
 - The amount committed per year
 - How the funds are authorized to be used

5 Business Days Prior to Submission Deadline

- **PINS to be reviewed/completed and approved by COS PI / Co-I**
- **Draft Science Documents:** Draft Project Narrative / Description, Abstract, and References are submitted to the Pre-Award Officer for formatting review.
- **Final Non-Science Documents:** All non-science documents are now considered final and due to the Officer. This includes all sponsor required senior / key personnel documents.
- **Final Budgets:** Any "in-process" budget and / or budget justifications are now considered final and no further changes are permitted by the PI.

3 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- **Science Documents:** All science documents are now considered final and due to the Pre-Award Officer. Final science documents received fewer than 3 business days prior to the sponsor deadline will be submitted without review; final science documents received

after 8:00 a.m. on the submission deadline will move the proposal to the Red Service Zone.

- **Sponsor Portal:** Submit access to the Sponsor portal is granted to the Research Office.
- **Final Proposal Version Available for PI Review:** For proposals to be submitted in Cayuse, Pre-Award Officers will provide the PI with the final version of the proposal for review and edits.

2 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- PI provides feedback on final proposal via email
 - Notifies Officer if changes are needed ~or~
 - Notifies Officer if proposal is ready to submit
- If SPARCS action or submission is required:
 - Following PI approval of final edits, Pre-Award will forward the PINS and proposal to SPARCS for their sign-off and / or submission.
 - This complies with SPARCS 2 business day policy for signatures or submission.

1 Business Day Prior to Submission Deadline

- **Final Submission:**
 - COS submits proposal with submission confirmation to the PI
 - COS will address any errors in the submission of the proposal.

Yellow Zone: Notification 19 to 6 Business Days Prior to Submission

Timeline and Actions for Yellow Zone

The Yellow service zone allows for a moderate level of support*:

Unlike the Green service zone, the PI will be responsible for:

- **Obtaining Sub-Award Documentation:** The PI will request any required documentation from each sub-award entity. The Sub-award package must be signed by an authorized official of the sub-award entity; documents certified only by the subcontract PI will not be accepted. The Pre-Award Officer will provide the PI with a list of required documents and templates.
- **Documentation of Mandatory Cost-Sharing:** The PI will upload an email or letter from each responsible party to PINS documenting
 - The source of cost-sharing funds
 - The amount committed per year
 - How the funds are authorized to be used

*The amount of service / review by Pre-Award is dependent on how close to the deadline the intake form is initiated and the number of other proposals Pre-Award is facilitating at the time.

Failure to submit necessary subcontract, cost-sharing documents, and / or non-scientific documents by the specified time will push the proposal into the Red zone.

19-6 Business Days Prior to Sponsor Deadline

- **Proposal Intake Form:** PI submits the proposal intake form with information that includes the proposal title, period of performance, the RFP / RFA / NOFO / equivalent, and the contact information for any subawards or collaborating institutions.

Within 3 Business Days of Intake Submission (Pre-Award Office)

- **Proposal Assignment:** Proposal is assigned to a Pre-Award Officer and PI is notified of their Service Zone
- **Timeline and Responsibilities:** Provide the PI with an email confirming the timeline and responsibilities of both the PI and the Pre-Award Officer.
- **Budget Discussion:**
 - Schedule a meeting if the PI prefers.
 - Plan a timeline for drafting / reviewing the budget.
 - Assist with drafting the budget and justification.
 - Confirm the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate.
- **Cost-Sharing Discussion** (if applicable):
 - Discuss needed documentation and timeline for the PI to secure it.
- **Sub-Award Discussion** (if applicable):
 - Discuss needed documentation and timeline for the PI to secure it.
- **Institutional Forms** (if applicable):
 - Clarify any required institutional forms and the timeline for their sign-off by COS Pre-Award or a Central University Office.
- **Submission Portal:** PI and Pre-Award Officer will discuss the method to share documents for review (email, Google Drive, PINS, etc.) and who will upload final versions of documents to the sponsor portal.

8 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- **Budget and Justification:** If the PI has provided initial budget information by this date, the Pre-Award Officer will provide PI with drafts of the budget and budget justification for review and final changes prior to the 5 day deadline for budget documents. If the PI has not provided initial budget information by this date, the PI will be responsible for creating a budget justification using the [template found on the COS Website](#).
- **Sub-Award Documentation:** Any required documentation from a sub-award site is requested by the PI and due to the Pre-Award Consultant. This includes but is not limited to: budget, budget justification, statement of work, biosketches, and letter of intent signed by an authorized official of the sub-award site.
- **Cost-Sharing Documentation:** If cost-sharing is required, the PI uploads an email or letter from each responsible party to PINS documenting
 - The source of cost-sharing funds
 - The amount committed per year
 - How the funds are authorized to be used

5 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- **PINS is routed and approved by COS PI / Co-I**
- **Draft Science Documents:** Draft Project Narrative / Description, Abstract, and References are submitted to the Pre-Award Officer for formatting review.

- **Final Non-Science Documents:** All non-science documents are now considered final and due to the Officer. This includes all sponsor required senior / key personnel documents.
- **Final Budgets:** Any "in-process" budget and / or budget justifications are now considered final and no further changes are permitted by the PI.

3 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- **Science Documents:** All science documents are now considered final and due to the Pre-Award Officer. Final science documents received fewer than 3 business days prior to the sponsor deadline will be submitted without review; final science documents received after 8:00 a.m. on the submission deadline will move the proposal to the Red Service Zone.
- **Sponsor Portal:** Submit access to the Sponsor portal is granted to the Research Office.
- **Final Proposal Version Available for PI Review:** For proposals to be submitted in Cayuse, Pre-Award Officers will provide the PI with the final version of the proposal for review and edits.

2 Business Days Prior to PI-Requested Submission Deadline

- PI provides feedback on final proposal via email
 - Notifies Officer if changes are needed ~or~
 - Notifies Officer if proposal is ready to submit
- If SPARCS action or submission is required:
 - Following PI approval of final edits, Pre-Award will forward the PINS and proposal to SPARCS for their sign-off and / or submission.
 - This complies with SPARCS 2 business day policy for signatures or submission.

1 Business Day Prior to Submission Deadline

- **Final Submission:**
 - COS submits proposal with submission confirmation to the PI
 - COS will address any errors in the submission of the proposal.

Red Zone: Notification 5-0 Business Days Prior to Submission

Timeline and Actions for Red Zone

In this critical time frame, the Pre-Award Research Administration team can offer only limited support due to the short interval between notification and submission:

- **PI must create, route, and approve PINS ASAP:** Ensure the proposal is routed in the Proposal Information and Navigation System (PINS). Required documents include a budget, budget justification, Request for Applications (RFA), subcontract documents (if applicable), and cost-sharing documentation (if applicable).
- **Document Review:** The Pre-Award Officer will perform a cursory review of the budget to ensure basic compliance and accuracy of cost-sharing and indirect costs. NOTE: No other documents will be reviewed.

- **PI uploads documents:** The PI will upload all proposal documents to the Sponsor system.
- **Submission to the Sponsor:** COS will facilitate the final submission of the proposal to the sponsor.
- **Financial and Programmatic Responsibility:** Under the Red Zone, the PI / Department assumes full financial and programmatic responsibility for the final proposal, including any audit or compliance issues that may arise from lack of thorough review.

PI Responsibilities:

- **Proposal Intake Form:** Complete and submit the proposal intake form.
- **Proposal Documents:** PI creates and uploads all proposal documents to the sponsor portal.
 - For Subaward proposals: PI assembles all lead institution required documents into a single PDF and forwards to cos_preaward@ncsu.edu. COS Pre-Award will prepare the Institutional letter of intent (LOI) and email the packet to the sponsor.
- **PINS Record:** Create and upload all required documents into PINS. Route and approve the PINS record.
 - **Documentation:** Prior to approving PINS, include a comment on the Project Info tab in PINS acknowledging that the PI / Department takes full financial and programmatic responsibility for the final proposal submitted, including any audit / non-compliance issues that may arise from lack of thorough review, such as unallowable costs, budget shortfalls, mathematical errors, etc.

NOTE: The PI will not be provided a PDF copy of their proposal for review prior to submission.

COS AOR (Authorized Organizational Representative) Responsibilities:

- **Submission:** Submit the proposal to the sponsor and / or route it to SPARCS for their sign-off / submission.
- **SPARCS Signature / Proposal Submission:** If the proposal needs SPARCS action and is within 24 hours of the deadline, it is considered a RUSH by SPARCS and requires communication from the COS Director of Research Administration and Associate Dean for Research in accordance with University Policy.

Important Notes:

- **SPARCS Requirement:** SPARCS requires a two business day lead time for any institutional signatures required by the sponsor.
- **RUSH Proposals:** RUSH proposals will not take precedence over proposals that follow the COS Pre-Award Submission Policy.
- **Pre-Award Assumes No Liability:** COS Pre-Award will make every effort to submit RUSH proposals by the sponsor-designated timeline. COS Pre-Award will not be held responsible if the proposal is rejected due to errors. COS Pre-Award reserves the right to withdraw the proposal from the sponsor, if necessary, upon consultation and approval from the COS Associate Dean for Research.