

External Grants & Sponsored Funding

ARHU Routing Review Guidelines

For official university guidelines, see the Office of Research Administration ([ORA](#)). Also take a look at their [FAQ](#). This is an overview of sponsored research for getting started.

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1. How do I find funding for my idea or project?

Sources and types of funding vary widely depending on the area of study and type of project. Explore these links for grant opportunities offered by [NEH](#) and [NEA](#), and a compilation of [all federal agency opportunities](#). In addition, UMD subscribes to [SPINplus](#), a funding search database of over 40,000 federal agency and private foundation funding opportunities. Most campus computers have an IP address that allows you to access SPIN without a login, but for use off campus and for the more advanced features that include setting up an individual funding profile to save searches and receive regular funding alerts, you'll need to create your own login/password. ORA provides an [Instruction Book](#). Additionally, you can [opt-in](#) to the weekly Funding Alert provided by the UMD-College Park Division of Research.

The Dean's office can provide guidance during the budget development process; however, budgets should not be formally routed to the Dean's office without prior review by the department Business Manager.

2. I have found a proposal I am interested in. What are the first steps?

Once you identify a Request for Proposals (RFP), contact your department head to ensure their support for implementation if ultimately awarded. As early as possible after this, notify the Dean's office via the [Intent to Submit Form](#). Your Business Manager will be your main support through the proposal creation process.

3. What is the role of a Business Manager in the proposal development process?

Department Business Managers must be involved in budget development and be familiar with the sponsor's budget restrictions. In most units, the business manager will be responsible for proposal routing in Quali Research (KR).

4. How do I know if a proposal needs to be routed?

For all sponsored research, including grants, fellowships, contracts, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) for which you will be required to provide financial or program reports to the sponsor or funder (i.e., anything that is not a gift), the proposal needs to be reviewed by ORA before it can be sent to the sponsor.

5. How long does routing take?

[ORA requests](#) that routing occur at least six business days prior to the proposal deadline. The Dean's office must review/approve before forwarding on to ORA. Note that for most proposals, only the budget, budget narrative, and project summary are necessary for routing. The process can be sped up by passing the budget and budget narrative to reviewers ahead of routing. If routing will occur in less than six days, notify each person in the routing chain in advance.

Business Managers and Dean's office staff can be consulted for assistance. Remember that the more time given to this process, the better your proposal will become.

6. How do I route a proposal through Kualu Research (KR)?

The university's official routing process is completed online through the [Kualu Research \(KR\) system](#). It is up to the department to decide if the faculty member or the business manager is responsible for [KR entry](#). For questions on the KR entry process, KR Help (kr-help@umd.edu) is a great resource, and they respond quickly to inquiries.

Once the proposal is finalized and saved by the KR initiator, it needs to be electronically "certified" by the PI. The certification process entails answering nine questions attesting to the nature of the proposal. After certification, the KR initiator will click "Submit." At this point, the proposal will be automatically routed to the specified departmental contact (usually the chair), then to the college, and finally to ORA. Approvals must be completed sequentially; steps cannot happen simultaneously.

The Dean's office will review budgets and budget narratives to ensure compliance with sponsor guidelines and UMD sponsored research policies. The more time Dean's office reviewers have for a proposal, the stronger the submission becomes. Once approved at the Dean's office, the proposal will be electronically routed to the Office of Research Administration (ORA) for final institutional sign off.

How can I access support to write a compelling narrative?

The Dean's office Research and Grant Writing Coordinator will provide thorough review and feedback on proposals if received with adequate time. You may reach out at any stage of the process by emailing ARHUresearch@umd.edu. Please include the grant name, deadline, and a link to the Request for Proposals.

7. What do I need to know about writing a proposal budget?

Budgets are estimates of anticipated spending. The precise costs for some items may not be known at the time of the proposal. The proposed budget should be the best estimate of the anticipated project costs. It is important to remember throughout the budgeting process that grants are awarded to the university, and therefore all university policies apply.

All costs budgeted to the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. This means that each line item must be allowed by the Sponsor's guidelines and/or UMD campus policy, there must be a rational method for allocating it to the project, and the cost of the item must be reasonable and in line with the overall budget. In cases where UMD campus policy is more restrictive than the sponsor, it is typically the protocol to defer to [UMD campus policy](#).

8. What are the general cost categories I should think about including in my budget?

ORA's [Sponsored Research Handbook](#) has a great list of typical budget categories and thorough descriptions of each (beginning on pg5). Budget categories fall under direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include salaries of TTK, faculty assistants, and other labor (student workers and GA's), [fringe benefits](#), equipment, consultant fees, supplies and expendable equipment, travel, publication, subcontracts, and any other direct costs. Indirect costs include Facilities and Administration (F&A) costs. [F&A](#) is a university requirement, and you should calculate the [required percentage](#) of funds into the total cost of the proposal (dependent on the type and location of the project). See [ORA's website](#) and reach out to ARHU's ORA representative for details on which rate will apply to your project.

9. How do I determine the salary rate for personnel being included in a proposal?

To calculate academic year pay:

1. Start with the current base academic year salary and multiply by the percentage of time (out of 100% effort) which would be dedicated to the project.
2. Figure in COLA/merit increases (3-5%) each year on multi-year projects (as allowed by sponsor).
3. Time charged to a grant does not automatically mean receipt of a course release/buyout. Release from instruction time is negotiated between the faculty member and Chair/Director, and subject to the Dean's approval.

The amount of salary must be a reasonable estimate of the amount of effort each employee will devote to the project. Any employee who is paid from grant funds must complete an effort report, a semi-annual attestation that the salary funded matches the effort put in by the staff or faculty member. The amount must match the time attested to on [effort reports](#), and the amount of effort must match the time invested.

10. What if I need to include summer pay in a proposal?

There are several types of summer pay to consider. Note that for personnel not on 12-month contracts (meaning 9- or 9.5-month employees), academic and summer salaries need to be detailed on separate budget lines as they are paid out separately and have different fringe percentages applied.

Academic year salary rates can be budgeted as Summer Research pay if a faculty member is working full-time on the research during the full summer period applicable to their term. Alternatively, a portion of the salary can be applied if they are working less than full time or during only part of this period. The following lists the percentage and dates for summer pay per term of employment:

Term of employment	Maximum of pay allowed	Dates of summer period
9-month	33.3%	5/23 - 8/22
9.5-month	26.3%	6/1 - 8/16

CAUTION! If the grant states that the full summer salary percentage (33.3% or 26.3% respectively) will be charged, this means that the employee is working full time exclusively on the grant for their entire summer term. *More commonly*, employees would be putting time into other tasks (such as administration or proposal writing) and would therefore not be requesting the maximum percentage allowed.

11. How do I account for student employees on a grant?

For GA salaries, use department stipend levels or hourly rates commensurate with GA level (Step I/II/III). Reach out to your Business Manager for current rates. As a backup, you can inquire with the Dean's office at ARHUResearch@umd.edu.

Typical undergraduate and hourly student rates can be found [through University Human Resources](#). Hourly undergraduate employees are not eligible for benefits. FICA is not charged to GA's if they are enrolled at least half-time for the term (this stipulation also applies to Summer term).

12. How do I determine the benefits for personnel being included in a proposal? **Note this has been updated as of 7/1/2019******

Fringe benefits must be included in the overall budget for any proposal with faculty and staff included. For a comprehensive list of policies, see [ORA Employee Benefits](#). Fringe benefits designated by employee type. GA benefits include tuition remission (except when paid hourly). Note that for summer pay, the fringe rate for academic year salaries is different for research unless otherwise justified. For 12-month faculty/staff the benefits rate remains [the rates provided by ORA](#).

13. What should I know about travel?

All travel must be directly relevant to the project and justified within the project narrative. Foreign travel is particularly subject to audit questions and must be appropriately justified. For more information, see [UMD Travel Policies](#).

All federally funded travel must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the [U.S. Fly America Act](#); a United States flag carrier MUST be used. Per diem allowances should be included in accordance with University of Maryland [domestic](#) rates and U.S. State Department [international](#) rates. Receipts are not required when utilizing UMD domestic per diem rates (or lower allowances as may be required by budget constraints).

14. What should I know about including consultants or contractors in a proposal?

For a detailed comparison of which is appropriate -consultants, contractors, or subrecipients - see [ORA's delineation](#).

15. I am seeing different guidelines depending on the source I look at. What is the order of authority?

There are many sources of regulations for grants. It is important to be aware of all for audit readiness. ORA advises the order of authority begin with the subaward terms (if your grant is a subaward), and on from there in the following order:

1. Subaward terms
2. Prime award terms
3. Program announcement
4. Agency-specific regulations and research terms/conditions
5. [Uniform guidance](#) (if a federal grant)
6. UMD policies

16. What should I know about executing a subaward?

A [subaward](#) (as [opposed to a consultant or vendor](#)) is appropriate when a collaborator from another institution or organization will perform a substantive portion of the proposed Statement of Work, has responsibility for internal programmatic decision-making and design, and/or is responsible for assisting the prime recipient with the project goals.

UMD employees are responsible for the work we pay subawardees to complete. The PI must carefully review and approve all invoices considering both deadlines for deliverables. Invoices should NEVER be signed off on if work has not been completed. For more details, see UMD's [Subcontract Manual](#).

17. What should I know about being the recipient of a subaward?

If a collaborator from another institution or organization is applying to or has won an award, they may ask you to participate as a [subaward recipient](#). Subaward recipients are accountable to the same grant requirements as the prime recipient. Subawards must be routed through the university just like prime awards, and ORA signoff is a requirement before implementation of the subaward.

18. What should I know about cost sharing?

In light of [university policy on cost share](#), cost sharing should not be included except when mandated by the sponsor. Any cost sharing will need to be formally accounted for if the award is made. Cost sharing commitments by the department and/or college must be approved in advance of budget preparation. Notify the college at least six weeks in advance if you anticipate requesting College resources.

19. What is F&A and why does it matter?

Facilities and Administration (F&A) is another name for indirect costs. Indirect costs pay for things like facilities, operations, maintenance, administrative staff (including research support), and office supplies that cannot be clearly charged to the grant. There are different rates for different types of projects. For details, see [Indirect Costs \(F&A\)](#).

Use the [current F&A Agreement's](#) applicable rate for your project, unless there is a written sponsor policy stipulating a lower maximum allowed F&A rate. To calculate F&A, you need to know the amount of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). MTDC is the total amount of funding requested excluding tuition remission, equipment over \$5,000, rental costs of off-campus facilities, participant costs, and the portion of individual subcontracts over \$25,000. Once MTDC is calculated, you can multiply the amount by the applicable F&A rate.

For a visual explanation of the importance of F&A, watch this [short video](#).

[Waivers of indirect costs](#), either partial or complete, in rare cases may be necessary. These have to be approved by the Department Chair and Dean, before review by the VPR. It is in the department's best interest to include indirect costs, as the recovery of indirect costs results in Designated Research Initiative Funds ([DRIF](#)).

20. What is a conflict of interest? Will my proposal be disqualified?

A [conflict of interest](#) occurs when one or both of the parties of an agreement have the ability for personal benefit or financial gain. Personal relationships (spouses, relatives, previous business partners, etc.) are one common form of conflict of interest. Past or current business relationships between the PI and proposed project partner is an example of a financial conflict. A conflict of commitment arises when otherwise acceptable activities may compromise the fulfillment of an employee's basic job responsibilities to the university.

Decisions about conflicts of interest fall under the scope of the [Research Compliance Office](#). Having a conflict of interest does not necessarily mean the proposal is disqualified. Usually, it just needs to be appropriately documented by the RCO.

21. How do I submit my proposal?

Once your proposal has been routed in KR and approved by the department and college, you are ready to coordinate with ORA for final approval and proposal submission via the sponsor's designated system.

Each sponsor or funding agency has a specific method of submission: look at the Request for Proposals (RFP) or funder communications to identify their preference. Funders may request submission over an online portal (access can be gained by contacting your ORA representative), hard copy submission, or email submission, among others.

The PI is responsible for uploading the final proposal to the electronic system and notifying ORA that the proposal is ready for submission. Generally, the final submission will be completed by an authorized ORA representative. Work closely with your ORA representative to ensure everyone knows who will be submitting the proposal to the sponsor once completed.

22. The Request for Proposals has very specific stipulations (on font, borders, page limit...). Is it really necessary to follow these requests perfectly?

Yes! A proposal should meet Request for Proposals (RFP) stipulations perfectly. Often funders are receiving many proposals; they can narrow them down by disqualifying non-compliant proposals without even reading them. Make a comprehensive list of every stipulation and confirm each prior to submission. Lastly, remember to stay within the page limit!

23. What happens if I am awarded the contract/grant?

Congratulations! Now the real work can start. Once the PI is made aware of a successful bid, they should notify the college of the good news and ensure their ORA representative has the appropriate documentation. The ORA representative will indicate award receipt in the [Kuali Research](#) (KR) system. The award documentation will be made available at all times on the KR site.

Once notified to do so, your ORA representative will reach out to the [Sponsored Programs Accounting and Compliance](#) (SPAC) office to issue you a financial account number in [KFS](#). Account creation typically takes a few days. If you need to start spending on an award before the KFS account is created, you will need to apply for an Advanced Account Number Authorization ([AANA](#)) by contacting your ORA representative. You can begin using an AANA up to three months before your award officially begins.