GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

This document provides instruction on internal requirements for proposal submission for Vanderbilt Divinity School.

Vanderbilt University's contact for grants proposals is the Sponsored Programs Administration office (SPA) at spa@vanderbilt.edu

Please see the **Glossary** at end of this document for explanations of terms.

Grants Guidelines

- For grants below $25K, applicants must discuss with the dean.

- For grants above $25K, applicants must submit their proposal to the Institutional Planning Committee for review. The Institutional Planning Committee will analyze the impact on the school's resources, provide feedback for improving the proposal, keep track of all proposals to make sure that a potential funding source is not receiving more than one proposal at a time, and offer guidance on potential synergies within the school/university.

- For any grants from private foundations or agencies, **Research Development and Support (RDS) in the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR)** (rds@vanderbilt.edu) should be notified of the intent to submit a proposal. This team can support the PI with proposal development also. For any grants seeking funding from a family foundation, **Development & Alumni Relations** (**DAR)** (darannualgiving@vanderbilt.edu) should be notified of the intent to submit.

- The Grant Manager (GM) and Chief Business Officer (CBO) are resources to assist in budget development and writing of the budget narrative. They should be involved in the process early, to be sure that proposals meet all HR and financial objectives and policies.

- Because grants are decreasing their overhead rate returns, it is more important than ever that the Divinity School endeavor to cover its administrative costs when applying for a new grant. All grants should strive to achieve a 20% indirect cost recovery rate, which can be achieved either by (a) overheads furnished by the funder or (b) including in the budget an amount for administrative and/or financial support. In the event that the funder refuses to pay indirect overheads, PI's are advised to write into the grant an amount to cover the services of administrative support. In small start-up grants, this may not always be feasible, but keep in mind that submitting grant proposals with no overhead support actually costs the Divinity School money.

- When appointing staff to your project, approval must be obtained from the staff member's immediate supervisor prior to submission of the grant. It is important to remember that a different set of compensation rules apply to staff members as opposed to faculty members.

- When private foundation support is awarded, the post-award review process determines whether it should be accounted for as a grant or gift. If a gift, then DAR Finance will handle the new project setup, grantor reporting, etc., and if a grant, then Research Finance will handle the new project setup, grantor reporting, etc.

- RDS and DAR are only able to support proposals where awards are made directly to Vanderbilt. Support for budget data from the VDS Finance and Administration Team will follow that policy. Quick questions can be asked, but full budgetary support will not be available. When funding is sought that will not come to Vanderbilt, Dean approval is still required prior to application.

Grants Process

Prior to applying for any grant awards, the proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Dean.

Please provide the following information:

- Name of funding agency;
- Program name and/or number (if applicable);
- Deadline for submission;
- Approximate dollar amount of proposal;
- Any special circumstances or requests surrounding the project/proposal.

The Dean will provide comment and guidance for the next steps.

Grants Proposal – Prior to the Sponsor Submission (Vanderbilt Internal Approval)

For the Grant's proposal submission, please make sure to complete the following:

- ❖ The Budget and Budget Narrative must be reviewed and approved by the CBO and GM prior to submission to the sponsor. **Please send your final budget and budget narrative for approval at least one week prior to the proposal due date. The GM should be involved in the development of the budget and budget narrative from the onset of the grant development process.**

- ❖ **Once the Budget and Budget Narrative are approved and the proposal has been completed:**

  - ✓ The grant proposal is entered into VERA by the GM one week prior to submission. Please provide the GM with the following information:
    - Name of the sponsor and name of the proposed grant
    - Sponsor proposal's guidelines/RFP
    - Due date of the grant proposal
    - Title of the proposal
    - Start and end date of the proposal
    - The names of PIs
    - Proposal and Budget Narrative
    - Budget
    - Any additional documents required by the sponsor
  - ✓ If a federal grant, the proposal will be entered into Grants.gov.
  - ✓ The Principal Investigator(s) (PI(s)) receive email from VERA to complete the PI Certification.
  - ✓ The PI(s) complete PI Certification in VERA.
  - ✓ VERA proposal is submitted for internal approval by the GM.
  - ✓ The Vanderbilt Divinity School authorized approvers, Dean or CBO, approves the proposal in VERA.
  - ✓ The VERA proposal is approved by the Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) office.

✓ The PI submits the proposal to the sponsor, unless RDS or DAR will be responsible for that step, and it has been determined in advance.

Once the Grant Is Awarded – Setting up New Center

❖ Once the proposal is awarded:

✓ The PI forwards the award letter and sponsor's approved budget to the GM.
✓ GM processes "Send Grant Status Update" in VERA, SPA Coordinator will create Draft Award
✓ SPA Coordinator sends Ancillary Review to GM for "Department Award Set-up"
✓ GM reviews all forms, ensures correct project structure is requested and budget in VERA is reconciled, then submits through VERA to Research or DAR Finance for Oracle project set up
✓ Research Finance sets up an Oracle Award and Oracle Project or DAR Finance sets up an Oracle Project for the grant and then approves in VERA
✓ VERA sends out notice of the Award being activated to GM and PI
✓ The GM forwards the new project#, task# and costing string information to PI, confirming receipt of information to know where to cost expenses for the grant.
✓ While the grant is being spent, the PI and the GM review spending, to make sure it is aligned with the sponsor approved budget.

Awarded Grant – Annual Reporting to the Sponsor

❖ For the annual reporting to the sponsor, the following must be prepared:

✓ The PI prepares a progress report on the project. Reach out to GM to ensure financial report is underway.
✓ Research Finance or DAR Finance prepares the annual budget report that includes how the funds were spent in the prior year and the remaining fund balance, with signature.
✓ The PI submits the annual progress and budget report to the sponsor.
✓ The sponsor approves the report.
✓ NOTE: Can "Add attachments" in VERA to store documents received related to grants which are outside of VERA.

Awarded Grant – Budget Revision/No Cost Extension

❖ Budget Revision:

✓ If the PI is planning to submit a budget revision on an existing grant, the revised budget needs to be approved by CBO and GM prior to PI submitting it to the sponsor.
✓ The PI submits to the sponsor the internally approved budget revision. (SPA is able to assist with this step if needed)
✓ GM submits "Award Modification Request for Re-budget Approval," if the PI wants SPA assistance to gain approval for budget revision.
✓ GM submits "Award Modification Request for a Re-Budget" in VERA once budget revision approved by sponsor so that the budget will be updated in Oracle by appropriate party.
✓ SPA Coordinator sends an Award Modification Ancillary Review in VERA for GM to reconcile budget as needed per Sponsor approval

- Once GM submits Ancillary Review back to SPA in VERA, then SPA submits the Award Modification to Research Finance or DAR Finance for final review and to make changes in Oracle and then approve the Award Modification step in VERA
- VERA sends out notice of the budget being revised to GM and PI

❖ Grant No Cost Extension

- The PI informs the CBO and/or GM of the extension request in advance of the expiration of the current grant period. No cost extensions aren't automatically granted.
- The PI proposes how the funds will be spent and the end date of the extension.
- The GM assists in preparing the budget with the remaining balance.
- The PI submits to the sponsor the internally approved no cost extension. (SPA is able to assist with this step if needed)
- GM submits "Award Modification Request for Re-budget Approval", if the PI wants SPA assistance to gain approval for budget revision.
- The PI forwards the no cost extension approval to the GM.
- GM submits "Award Modification Request for a Re-Budget " in VERA once budget revision approved by sponsor so that the budget will be updated in Oracle by appropriate party
- SPA Coordinator sends an Award Modification Ancillary Review in VERA for GM to approve no cost extension
- Once GM submits Ancillary Review back to SPA in VERA, then SPA submits the Award Modification to Research Finance or DAR Finance for final review and to make changes in Oracle and then approve the Award Modification step in VERA
- VERA sends out notice of the grant end date being revised to GM and PI

Awarded Grant – Close-Out Procedures

- At least two months prior the grant's end date, the GM will send the PI information on the remaining funds.
- The PI decides how the remaining funds will be expensed.
- Once all the expenditures are posted, the GM will begin the close-out procedures.
  - The GM works with Research Finance or DAR Finance as they prepare the final financial report, by reviewing prepared report and requesting needed updates.
  - The GM works through the Research Finance Department Award Closeout Checklist
  - The PI will prepare and send the final report to the sponsor.

Glossary

- **Overhead rate return** – Indirect cost percentage (see below) that grant sponsors allow a grant applicant to include in grant budget to cover general university costs that support the teams actually doing the work on the grant.
- **Indirect cost recovery rate** – Percentage allowed by grant sponsor to be included in grant budget to cover facilities and administrative costs that have no direct relationship to a specific sponsored project's scope of work but provide support to the grant indirectly.