



Proposal Submission: Avoiding Common Pitfalls

With ever-changing rules and regulations, revised proposal preparation guidelines and new application forms and/or systems -- it isn't always easy to stay on top of proposal compliance. Compliance in this context means that a proposal uses the correct formatting and includes the required content. It also means that a proposal follows internal University of Rochester policies. Submitting a non-compliant proposal to a sponsor is risky because the proposal could be withdrawn or returned without review. In addition to a potential loss of future funding, the applicant won't have the opportunity to receive valuable feedback on the proposal from reviewers.

Outlined below is a list of requirements to help avoid the common pitfalls ORPA sees most often for NIH, NSF and all proposals in general. Feel free to use this list while reviewing your proposal and before submitting it to ORPA (5 business days before the deadline) via IORA. In addition, due to the heightened awareness by federal agencies regarding appropriate disclosures of other research support, additional information can be found at [Policies on Current and Pending Support, Biosketches and Foreign Components](#) on the ORPA site.

NIH Requirements

- The abstract does not exceed 30 lines (including the heading)
- An eRA Commons ID has been entered for all Senior/Key Personnel
- For multiple PD/PI proposals, the PD/PI role has been selected for each PI in the Sr/Key person profile form and in the R&R budget form if a detailed budget is being submitted
- Zip codes are entered throughout the application with 9 digits (e.g., 14627-0140)
- The biosketch meets NIH format requirements, is no more than 5 pages and includes the required headings for each section. Check to be sure there are no more than 4 publications or research products listed under the Personal Statement and that each of the maximum of 5 Contributions to Science include only 4 publications.
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>
- The budget justification for modular budgets should list personnel information (name, role and number of person-months devoted to the project), total costs (direct plus F & A) for each consortium rounded to the nearest \$1,000 , an explanation of any variation in the number of modules requested annually, a description of direct costs that were excluded from F & A (ie Equipment) and a description of any work being conducted offsite, especially if it is being conducted at a foreign site or using an off site F & A rate . No other budgetary justification is necessary. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/develop-your-budget.htm#modular>

- Non-modular proposals must include a detailed budget justification addressing all cost categories.
- For multiple PD/PI proposals, ORPA's [required language](#) is included in the leadership plan (whether UR is the prime institution or a Subrecipient).
 - a. If UR is a proposed Subrecipient, the Leadership Plan prepared by the Prime institution must be uploaded as part of the IORA PI Certification
 - b. If the other PD/PI(s) are at UR, the [Multiple PI Assurance form](#) must be uploaded as part of the IORA PI Certification
- For applications requesting \$500K or more direct costs per year, the PD/PI has obtained permission from the Institute and the approval (e-mail is acceptable) has been included in the cover letter attachment. (Note: Subrecipient F & A costs are not included when considering the \$500K threshold).
- Appendix material is included [only if required or allowed by the FOA](#). As of 1/25/17, the only allowable appendix materials are clinical trial protocols, Investigator's brochure from Investigational New Drug (IND), as appropriate, blank informed consent/assent forms, blank surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments and/or FOA-specified items

NSF Requirements*

- The biosketch includes no more than 5 closely related publications, no more than 10 total publications, and no more than 5 synergistic activities (collaborators have been alphabetized)
- Information regarding collaborators and other affiliations has been separately provided for each individual identified as senior project personnel- NSF format used
- The budget justification does not contain voluntary cost share - in kind effort by personnel should be discussed in the Facilities and Resources attachment
- NSF templates have been used for current and pending support and the biosketch; use of ScienceCV is also acceptable for preparation of the biosketch
- The current proposal has been included as pending and identified as "This Proposal" in the current and pending support form
- Letters of commitment do not go beyond a brief statement confirming collaboration- appropriate language is found in the PAPPG
- Project Description includes results from Prior NSF Support for PI and all Co-PIs
- Project Description includes a section – with a heading – for Broader Impacts of the proposed work
- If foreign travel included in the budget, the coversheet has been appropriately marked. "Worldwide" to be used if destination (ie site of conference) not known at time of submission
- Special documents requests by RFP uploaded in the Supplementary Documents section and not as Single Documents unless otherwise directed by the RFP

* Please review the [Common NSF errors document](#) for a comprehensive list

DOD/CDMRP Requirements

- The log number assigned to the pre-application by the eBRAP system has been entered in the full application under 4a. Federal Identifier
- The PI's eBRAP user name has been entered in the agency login field in the senior/key personnel section
- Current and Pending support has been provided for all key personnel and has been signed by each individual to certify that the Current and Pending support as submitted is current, accurate and complete.
- Full salary applied for personnel – the HHS salary cap does not apply for DOD applications
- Do not select DOD for the sponsor in IORA. Please be sure to select the appropriate sponsor from the list [here](#)

All Proposals

- There are no underscores in the short title of the IORA Funding Proposal (FP)
- The correct Specialist is listed on the FP workspace. If the Specialist is not correct, please contact your ORPA RA as only ORPA can change the Specialist.
- Flow-through sponsor has been added under 5b of the General Proposal Information smart form if the Instrument Type is subaward or subcontract
- Proposal documents have been uploaded using Add Attachments from the FP workspace. Do not attach any documents to the budget.
- The budget justification matches the budget
- Formatting requirements and page limits have been followed
- Effort has been included for the PI and all Investigators per the UR [Effort Reporting Policy](#)
- If effort has been included but no salary has been requested, a cost sharing budget has been created in IORA and Dean's office Ancillary Review has been obtained.
- Dean's office Ancillary Review has been added for proposals pursuant to the applicable Dean's Office sign off policy <http://rochester.edu/orpa/policies/>
- Proposals involving multiple schools (e.g., School of Medicine and Dentistry, College of Arts and Sciences) have answered yes for #10 under Additional Proposal Information, a completed [sharing of indirect cost recovery form](#) has been uploaded and Dean's office approvals for all schools involved have been requested via Ancillary Reviews in IORA
- The maximum indirect costs allowed by Sponsor have been requested, otherwise Dean's office approval must be requested via an Ancillary Review in IORA
- The correct Ancillary Reviewer has been selected, if applicable. For Dean's office review at URMC or RC, please be sure to choose an Organization and not a person. See the Choosing Ancillary Reviewers document [here](#)