**Applying for Sponsored Programs UPPS No. 02.02.12**

**(Graduate Students) Issue No. 1  
 Effective Date: 07/15/2024  
 Next Review Date: 07/01/2029 (E5Y)  
 Sr. Reviewer: Dean, The Graduate**

**College**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to maintaining a clear and effective process for supporting graduate student applications to sponsored programs.*

1. **PURPOSE**

01.01 This policy will:

* + 1. provide direction to faculty and staff supervising graduate student applications for external funding;
    2. provide guidelines for graduate students developing and submitting proposals to support their own studies and research through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP); and
    3. describe the procedures and timelines for applying for grants, fellowships, scholarships, and other awards that must be submitted by the vice president for Research and are developed with The Graduate College’s research coordinators.

**02. DEFINITIONS**

02.01 Graduate Students – master’s and doctoral students enrolled in degree-granting programs of graduate study.

02.02 Sponsored Programs or Projects – activities sponsored, in whole or in part, by sources external to the university for which there is an expectation on the sponsor’s part for deliverables or project specific outcomes. The university awards sponsored programs through various mechanisms (e.g., grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other legally-binding means of transfer). For graduate students, such programs are often called scholarships, fellowships, grants, or awards. Regardless of the sponsor’s language or award mechanism, any application to a sponsored program that meets one or more of the distinguishing traits listed in 03.01 must be submitted through OSP.

02.03 Supervising Faculty Member – the faculty member who agrees to serve as the principal investigator (PI) for the purposes of the project being proposed, usually the student’s dissertation chair, thesis director, or other faculty member who oversees the student’s studies and research.

**03. GRADUATE STUDENTS APPLYING FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING**

03.01 This policy applies only to graduate students who are applying for external funding through OSP to support their own studies and research. These applications are typically in response to a call for proposals from a sponsor that are usually solicited as part of established grant-making programs to graduate student applicants. Distinguishing traits of graduate student applications that must be submitted through OSP include one or more of the following:

1. the applicant is the institution of higher education, not the student or supervising faculty member;
2. the application must be approved by an institutional administrative or financial official with signatory authority, usually the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR);
3. the application must be submitted through portals to which a graduate student and their supervising faculty member do not have access;
4. the student must submit the application in conjunction with a supervising faculty member, who typically serves as the PI on the project;
5. the sponsor is a foundation, in which case University Advancement (UA) must be notified, whether or not the application is in response to a solicitation, as outlined in [UPPS No. 03.05.01](https://policies.txst.edu/university-policies/03-05-01.html), Soliciting, Accepting, and Processing Gifts and Grants from Private Sources; and
6. the funds will be awarded to the university -- not directly to the student or via Financial Aid and Scholarships -- and will be distributed to the student through a grant account managed by OSP and overseen by a PI.

03.02 This policy does not apply to the following groups: undergraduate students, post-docs, and graduate students who are concurrently employed as faculty or staff and who are submitting a proposal in their faculty or staff roles (i.e., not as graduate students or as graduate assistants). Graduate students who are concurrently employed in faculty or staff positions should consult all relevant policies and their supervisor before applying for sponsored programs to determine the implications, if any, of receiving external awards on their employment status.

03.03 This policy does not apply to faculty or staff proposals under which named or unnamed graduate students would receive funding if the proposal were successful. These proposals should be submitted using the procedures outlined in [UPPS No. 02.02.01](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/02-02-01.html), Applying for Sponsored Programs.

03.04 This policy does not apply to graduate applications that can be submitted independently by graduate students, for which fellowship advising services are also provided by The Graduate College.

03.05 This policy covers only those proposals submitted via OSP to external sponsors providing financial support for research. It does not apply to unfunded student research or research funded internally.

03.06 Graduate students and their supervising faculty members who are unsure if a proposal can be submitted independently should contact The Graduate College to request a review of the solicitation, guidance, or call for proposals and advisement on the correct processes and procedures.

03.07 Texas State’s policies apply to all sponsored programs, unless the granting agency establishes exceptions. In these cases, sponsor guidelines must clearly identify any policies that deviate from Texas State policies. These exceptions may not conflict with federal or state law or with the [Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html). The Division of Research (DoR) shall determine all conflicts and mediate all solutions.

**04. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS**

04.01 Graduate students who wish to submit applications for sponsored programs have two options: 1) the student can work with The Graduate College’s research coordinators to develop and submit an application through OSP; or 2) their supervising faculty member can submit the student’s application on their behalf using the faculty member’s normal organizational channels, as outlined in [UPPS 02.02.01](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/02-02-01.html), Applying for Sponsored Programs. The initial choice between these two options cannot be altered.

04.02 In both cases, the graduate student cannot serve as the PI unless explicitly required by the sponsor. Regardless of the sponsor’s requirement that the student be considered the PI, the student must be supervised by a faculty member designated on the proposal who meets the criteria for and assumes the responsibilities of a PI, as outlined in [UPPS 02.02.01](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/02-02-01.html), Applying for Sponsored Programs.

04.03 Supervising faculty members who are unsure about which option to choose are encouraged to contact The Graduate College’s research coordinators for advice and consultation.

04.04 Proposal by The Graduate College on Behalf of Students

1. The graduate student must request an appointment for an initial meeting with The Graduate College’s research coordinators to discuss their planned submission. During this meeting, which the supervising faculty member is encouraged to attend, the research coordinator will review the solicitation with the applicant, outline the required documents, and detail the submission process and timeline. Graduate students should request initial appointments as soon as they identify a funding opportunity and decide, in collaboration with their supervising faculty member, to pursue an application. Initial appointments should be requested according to the [normal timelines established by The Graduate College](https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/funding/external/appointment-policy.html), ideally 120-180 days in advance of the deadline or immediately upon release of the solicitation.
2. The Graduate College’s research coordinators will notify Pre-Award Support Services by initiating the proposal in the proposal management system to begin working with assigned staff on budget development and initiating the internal routing process. The supervising faculty member receives a notification from OSP as a result.

When The Graduate College initiates the proposal in the proposal management system, it is automatically considered the lead unit for the proposal at the time of submission. In this case, any distribution of Facilities & Administration (F&A) Costs are manually allocated by The Graduate College’s research coordinators to the supervising faculty member’s academic college/department. If a proposal is funded, the lead unit usually changes in post-award to the supervising faculty member’s academic unit for the purposes of award management, unless the sponsor requires The Graduate College to serve as PI during both pre- and post-award.

1. The Graduate College’s research coordinators will collaborate closely with the graduate student to comprehensively develop and review all elements of the proposal package, in coordination with the supervising faculty member, who is expected to provide substantive feedback to the student on those elements of the proposal requiring subject-matter expertise.
2. The Graduate College’s research coordinators are the primary point of contact for any graduate student questions. They serve as the liaison for the student and their supervising faculty member to OSP staff.
3. The graduate student and their supervising faculty member must provide all elements of the proposal to The Graduate College’s research coordinators no later than five working days prior to the submission deadline. Additional time is needed beyond OSP’s three-day rule for research coordinators to confirm that all documents are complete and correct and upload all elements of the proposal package by the deadline established by Pre-Award Support Services.

Any proposals that do not meet this deadline may not be submitted.

Within this five-day period, no additional changes may be made to the proposal documents, except those that are necessary to correct any error or warning messages to ensure submission to the sponsor – including any final feedback provided to the graduate student by the supervising faculty member – all of which should be made well in advance of this internal submission deadline.

1. The Graduate College’s research coordinators will load the complete proposal package into the proposal management system for internal routing and work with Pre-Award Support Services to troubleshoot any warning or error messages.
2. Pre-Award Support Services must receive the complete and correct proposal package (including a complete budget, narrative, executive summary, and all required sponsor forms) no later than three working days prior to the submission deadline to ensure timely submission.
3. The supervising faculty member must approve the proposal in routing in their role as the project’s PI.
4. If the proposal is not to be submitted by OSP to the sponsor, the graduate student and supervising faculty member must wait to submit the proposal until they receive notification from The Graduate College’s research coordinators that proposal is approved by Pre-Award Support Services for submission to the sponsor.
5. The Graduate College reserves the right to rescind, recall, or otherwise remove the proposal from the sponsor’s funding consideration.

04.05 Proposal by Faculty on Behalf of Students

If a faculty member is willing and able to submit a proposal on the student’s behalf (i.e., the faculty member is an experienced researcher with their own externally funded awards, is familiar with the sponsor/funding opportunity and its review criteria, and feels capable of assisting the student in the development of all application requirements), they must take the following steps:

1. The supervising faculty member must notify Pre-Award Support Services by initiating the proposal in the proposal management system to begin working with assigned staff on budget development and initiate the internal routing process. Ideally, the supervising faculty member should initiate the proposal promptly as soon as the graduate student decides to apply so that Pre-Award Support Services can allocate resources and staff time efficiently for supporting the submission process. When a supervising faculty member initiates the proposal in the proposal management system, the lead unit for the proposal is the supervising faculty member’s academic college/department. In this case, any F&A distributions are automatically allocated to the lead unit.
2. The supervising faculty member must indicate in the “Graduate Support Questionnaire” that the proposal is being submitted on behalf of a named graduate student. As a result, The Graduate College will be notified about the proposal during the internal routing process.
3. If any approvals are required from the dean of The Graduate College, the supervising faculty member must request these approvals during the pre-award process (not during proposal internal routing, post-sponsor submission, or upon awarding). Examples include requests for letters of support or recommendation, endorsements, and exception requests for employment over 50 percent full time equivalent (FTE) during the fall and spring terms.
4. The supervising faculty member should work closely with the graduate student to develop and review all elements of the proposal package.
5. The supervising faculty member should serve as the primary point of contact for any graduate student questions and should serve as the liaison for the student to the college-based research coordinator and/or OSP staff.

**05. REVIEW PROCEDURE**

05.01 With the help of Pre-Award Support Services staff, graduate students and their supervising faculty members must receive approval for their proposals by releasing their proposal for routing and approval through the proposal management system. Proposals from private sources will also be reviewed by UA for possible coordination, per [UPPS No. 03.05.01](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/03-05-01.html), Soliciting, Accepting, and Processing Gifts and Grants from Private Sources.

**06. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

06.01 The notification of acceptance or rejection from the sponsor might be sent to various locations. The recipient of the notification must forward it to Pre-Award Support Services. Failure to do so will delay the establishment of a Texas State account for accepted grants.

Supervising faculty members who serve as PIs must notify The Graduate College of any accepted applications for sponsored programs by their graduate students.

06.02 The actions necessary post-rejection of a proposal vary depending on the specific circumstances of each proposal. Therefore, either the PI or Pre-Award Support Services will determine the appropriate individuals to notify regarding the rejection notification.

Supervising faculty members are also strongly requested to notify The Graduate College of any rejected applications for sponsored programs by their graduate students.

**07. AWARD IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES**

07.01 A sponsored program is not operational until the funding document is signed by all those required, and the PI approves all terms and conditions. Awards at Texas State are made to the university and are not personal grants or contracts to the PI or to the graduate student. Only the president, or designee, can obligate the university and are the only persons authorized to sign a grant or contract. Before making a commitment, financial or otherwise, the university must receive a signed copy of the contract or a formal award in writing or the funding source must provide written documentation to the senior director of Sponsored Programs that such award is in transit.

If a PI or other unauthorized individual or contracting official signs a contract or award with a funding source, the university may hold that individual personally liable for any expenditure or obligation of university resources to the subsequently invalid contract or award. Additionally, the university may take disciplinary action against that individual including revocation of the individual’s status as a PI.

07.02 The supervising faculty member is responsible for helping the externally funded graduate student researcher to secure all approvals required by the sponsor regarding compliance, including but not limited to those provided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), as well as to meet all training requirements, such as Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

07.03 Acceptance of the award constitutes a commitment by the PI to comply throughout the award period with all policies of The TSUS, the university, all state and federal regulations, and all funding agency requirements. If the PI does not comply, the vice president for Research will ensure that the university fulfills its contractual obligations under the award’s terms. These steps may include removing the PI from the grant or contract and prohibiting them from future work as a PI.

PIs are responsible for making sure that graduate students complete and submit any reporting requirements of the sponsor.

07.04 Refer to [UPPS No. 02.02.02](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/02-02-02.html), Sponsored Programs – Post Award, for policies regarding acceptance and management of an awarded grant.

**08. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

08.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Dean, The Graduate College July 1 E5Y

Vice President for Research July 1 E5Y

Vice President for University Advancement July 1 E5Y

Assistant Vice President of Research July 1 E5Y

**09. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Dean, The Graduate College; senior reviewer of this UPPS

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

President