



3-Business-Day Internal Proposal Deadline Policy

I. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy addresses the Internal Proposal Deadline set forth for Proposal Review and Submission by the Research Office, and applies to all departments, faculty, and staff involved in externally sponsored projects at the University of Delaware (UD).

The Research Office should be notified of an investigator's intent to apply for external funding at least ten business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline or Submission Target Date. If the application involves significant facilities work, this should be included in the notification of intent to apply. Furthermore, proposals must be submitted to the Research Office by 8:00am, at least three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline or Submission Target Date, or they are not guaranteed to be submitted to the sponsor.

Depending on the funding sponsor and program, these proposals, with their required text, references cited, budgets, forms and appendices, may range in size from a few pages for a small proposal to more than a thousand pages for large, multi-institutional efforts. The Research Office conducts a thorough review of proposals prior to submission to ensure compliance with institutional, sponsor and federal regulations, and increase their funding success rate. Due to the large volume of proposals submitted, the 3-Business-Day Internal Proposal Deadline Policy has been established to facilitate this review and ensure a smooth and successful proposal submission process at UD.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Funding Opportunity** – A formal request by an external sponsor to request participation in an upcoming project, outlining project-specific goals, deadlines, eligibility, and deliverables.
- B. **Internal Proposal Deadline** – The deadline by which proposals must be provided to the Research Office for full review prior to the Sponsor Deadline.
- C. **Internal Proposal Deadline Exception Request (Exception Request)** - A form required when a sponsored project proposal package will not be submitted to the Research Office at least three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline.
- D. **Proposal** – A formal application by UD to participate in an externally-sponsored project, made in response to a Funding Opportunity or request for proposal.
- E. **Proposal Review and Submission** – The process by which a Proposal is formally reviewed by UD and submitted to an external sponsor.
- F. **Sponsor** – An external entity that provides sponsored project funding.

- G. **Sponsor Deadline** – The deadline by which a UD Proposal must be submitted to an external sponsor for review and consideration.
- H. **Submission Target Date** – The date by which a UD investigator wishes to submit a Proposal to an external sponsor. Also known as a “rolling deadline” or “rolling submission”. This is a date determined by the UD investigator, not by the external sponsor.

III. **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Research Office is committed to facilitating the submission of proposals of the highest quality to increase the probability of funding success at UD while appropriately managing institutional risk. The 3-Business-Day Internal Proposal Deadline Policy allows the Research Office to conduct a meaningful review of the final sponsored project proposal package prior to submission. This includes a thorough review for compliance with federal, sponsor and UD rules and regulations, while allowing time for principal investigators to finalize the scientific content.

IV. **POLICY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

A. Internal Deadlines for Proposal Submission

1. Proposals must be submitted to the Research Office by **8:00am, at least three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline or they are not guaranteed to be submitted to the sponsor**. *Recognizing that the proposal's technical content requires maximum time to develop, the Research Office accepts proposal packages for review excluding the final technical component/narrative and references cited*. This allows the proposal package to be prepared and readied for submission while the technical content is finalized. Final technical content must be provided to the Research Office no less than nine (9) business hours (8:00am – 5:00pm) prior to the Sponsor Deadline to ensure all formatting requirements are met and potential submission issues are avoided. For sponsor deadlines at 5:00pm, submissions made by 8:00am on the same business day are acceptable. Earlier sponsor deadlines will require submission on the prior business day to meet the nine-hour minimum review window.
2. **In the absence of a Sponsor Deadline, the Research Office must be given the full three business day review period.**
3. **Submitting colleges, departments, units (i.e. centers, institutes) may have their own review timeline** that is in addition to the Research Office deadline. Both the Research Office and the Principal Investigator's submitting department/unit need adequate time to review and approve proposal submissions. Proactive coordination is important to ensure all complexities are understood and addressed well in advance of the Sponsor Deadline, especially for complex awards. It is the lead UD investigator's responsibility to confirm applicable department/unit review timeline.
4. In the event that the Proposal cannot be submitted to the Research Office by 8:00am, at least three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline, an [Internal Proposal Deadline Policy Exception Request](#) must be completed by the lead UD investigator and approved by the department/unit and Research Office.

- a. An Exception Request is required for each Proposal that cannot be submitted to the Research Office three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline.
- b. The Exception Request must be submitted to the Research Office as soon as the lead UD investigator is aware that the three-business day Internal Proposal Deadline will not be met.
- c. Once completed by the lead UD investigator and signed by the Chair/Director and Associate Dean for Research of the lead department, the Exception Request must be submitted to the Research Office Contract & Grant Analyst for the lead department/unit for Research Office approval.
- d. A Proposal that does not meet the three-business day Internal Proposal Deadline will not be submitted without a fully signed Exception Request.**
- e. The Research Office will monitor and track the number of Exception Requests by lead UD investigators. All Exception Requests are subject to approval by the Vice President for Research, Scholarship and Innovation (VPSRI) or designee.
- f. Further review by the VPSRI or designee may be required for lead UD investigators who repeatedly submit Exception Requests.
- g. Exception Requests will not be granted for proposals with Submission Target Dates (i.e. “rolling submissions”). The 3-Business-Day Internal Proposal Deadline Policy must be followed.

B. Sponsored Project Proposal Package

- 1. Sponsored project proposal packages must contain **all** elements, in **final** form, listed below for review by the Research Office. If any of the elements below are missing, the Proposal will be considered incomplete, and therefore review will not begin:
 - a. Funding Opportunity
 - b. Fully approved Proposal Approval Summary webform
 - c. Statement of Work (SOW) and/or Abstract
 - d. Final Science/Technical content must be provided to the Research Office no less than nine (9) business hours (8:00am-5:00pm) prior to the Sponsor Deadline or Submission Target Date.
 - e. Detailed budget
 - f. Budget justification, per sponsor requirements
 - g. Subaward documents (SOW, budget, budget justification, etc.)
 - h. Other components (per sponsor and UD requirements), which may include granting access to the sponsor’s submission system.

C. Proposal Review and Submission

1. Proposals received prior to the three-business day Internal Proposal Deadline will take precedence over those received after the Internal Proposal Deadline.
2. The Research Office follows a “staggered” review process wherein the date a Proposal is received dictates the level of review provided per below:
 - a. **Full Review** if received at least three business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline.
 - b. **Limited Review** if received two business days prior to the Sponsor Deadline.
 - c. **Minimal Review** if received one business day prior to the Sponsor Deadline.

Full Review ≥3 Business Days	Limited Review* 2 Business Days	Minimal Review* ≤1 Business Day
PI Eligibility		
Fully approved Proposal Approval Summary Webform		
UD, Federal, and State Compliance		
Budget Details (including cost share)		
Sponsor Guidelines, Terms, and Conditions		
Other Proposal Documents/Details		

* Exception Request required for all proposals receiving limited or minimal review.

3. Proposals received after the three-business day Internal Proposal Deadline will be submitted to external sponsors with “Minimal” or “Limited” review per above, with a fully approved Exception Request. Any Proposal submitted without “Full” review is subject to the following:
 - a. If any grave errors are found (i.e. budget and/or compliance) post-submission, the application will be withdrawn by the Research Office.
 - b. The submitting department/unit agrees to assume responsibility for any budget errors/omissions made in the Proposal.
 - c. The submitting department/unit acknowledges that proposals may contain terms and conditions that may be non-negotiable and, if not resolved, may require UD to decline an award.

4. Proposals submitted with insufficient review present a greater risk of being rejected/invalidated by the sponsor and/or may be subject to various adverse scenarios such as:
 - a. Risk of proposal rejection due to non-compliance with sponsor guidelines
 - b. Risk of proposal rejection due to electronic system failure
 - c. Risk of department/unit incurring financial burden due to budget errors or omissions
 - d. Risk of UD withdrawal of proposal post-submission or UD rejection of the award
 - e. Risk of certifying problematic terms and conditions.