

Standard Operating Procedures for CEHS Research

Introduction

The College of Education and Human Sciences is dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals, families, schools and communities and strengthening the relationships among them. We recognize that generating solutions to the world's most thorny problems is only possible when we utilize our collective strengths and work collaboratively across disciplinary lines. CEHS is fully committed to supporting research, scholarship and creative activity that advances our collective genius across three grand visions: thriving young children, comprehensive health and well-being, and strong communities. In all endeavors, we strive to promote a research culture characterized by cooperation, respect and support wherein every person and every interaction matters.

Structures and processes are helpful to ensure a climate that encourages high quality research and grantsmanship, and maximizes the success of CEHS PIs, collaborators, and staff. Thus, this document is intended to support faculty and optimize research services available in CEHS. **CEHS Standard Operating Procedures for Research** are being piloted to ensure clarity and equity in most aspects of grant proposal development, submission, and execution. Initial policies surround the following:

- Timelines for grant submissions
- Salary savings
- Non-F&A generating proposals
- Cost-share

Procedure #1: Timelines for Grant Submissions

The **CEHS Guidance and Timeline for Grant Proposal Development and Submission** was developed with thoughtful consideration of as many steps in the grant submission process as possible. General adherence to the guidelines creates the optimal condition for effective grant submissions and is highly recommended. Failure to adhere to these timelines may result in the inability of research staff to provide full support, and in a suboptimal grant submission. Please see **CEHS Timeline for Grant Proposal Development and Submission** for details.

Whereas all stages of grant proposal development are important to develop successful proposals and lead to the most positive outcomes (i.e., funding), the final days prior to a proposal deadline are crucial. It is at this time that many individuals must coordinate schedules, responsibilities, and other commitments to ensure that a complete, responsive, and competitive grant is submitted. Thus, to the greatest extent possible, **deadlines in the final 3 business days prior to a proposal deadline must be adhered to.**

- **All completed, finalized application materials should be submitted to the designated grant specialist at least 3 business days prior to the proposal deadline.** In these cases, CEHS grant specialists commit to forwarding the materials and liaising with OSP as they review materials and identify readiness for submission. *PIs should be available and responsive to grant specialists and OSP staff in a timely way to avoid delays in the submission process.* **Final revisions** should be submitted **at least 1 - 2 business days prior to the proposal deadline.** CEHS grant specialists will work with OSP staff to ensure that all final documents are uploaded at least one business day before the proposal deadline. PIs are

expected to review and approve the final application package and to respond to ORED notifications and emails immediately to allow package submission prior to the proposal deadline date.

- ***When initial application materials are submitted to a grant specialist 2 or fewer days before the proposal deadline***, staff will make reasonable efforts to review, prepare, and submit the application to OSP. Unless otherwise agreed-upon (such as in the case of late notices of applications from funders), grant support staff cannot ensure the same service levels and compliance reviews for late proposals. In addition, other “on-time” proposals will be prioritized. The PI assumes full responsibility if the proposal is returned as non-responsive or noncompliant with agency requirements.

Procedure #2: Salary Savings

Personnel costs -- including those for faculty serving as Principal Investigators (PIs), co-PIs, co-Investigators, and key personnel -- represent significant components on grant applications. In many cases, funders expect to see reasonable personnel commitments to ensure the successful execution of projects. Additionally, it is increasingly expected that faculty in R1 institutions generate funding to cover their research apportionments in whole or part. Thus, faculty are expected to dedicate a reasonable and appropriate level of research effort on projects and request associated salary remuneration on grants as allowed. Salary can be committed to cover a faculty member’s summer support; in addition, it is expected that some effort and salary be committed during the academic year. Distribution of salary savings should be arranged through a discussion between the faculty member and their department chair.

Procedure #3: Non-F&A Generating Proposals

CEHS is committed to supporting all faculty research and grant activity, regardless of size, scope, budget, and sponsor. The “cost” of supporting research at most universities, including UNL, is supported through Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs, also known as “indirect costs” or overhead (e.g., electricity, central administrative services). F&A represents the real costs of university operations which are not readily assignable to a particular project.

Most external sponsors allow a certain percentage of grant proposal budgets to be allocated to F&A, thereby covering a portion of the research facilities and administration costs. However, some prohibit such expenses. CEHS recognizes that at times faculty are interested in submitting grants to agencies that prohibit or greatly limit the F&A return. In these cases, PIs are encouraged to consider carefully the supports needed to execute the grant (e.g., post-award budget support, staff time associated with hiring or scheduling) and enter nominal funds (e.g., 5-10% of total) as direct costs in annual budget periods. This is especially recommended for external grants totaling more than \$100,000.

Procedure #4: Cost-Share

Cost sharing, also called matching, refers to resources contributed or allocated by the university for any project cost that is not reimbursed by the external project sponsor to support the scope of work defined by the sponsored award. Cost sharing may be allowed when it is mandated by a sponsoring agency.

Cost sharing occurs when institutional, college, or departments redirect their resources to support a specific sponsored project beyond the funding level provided by the sponsor. Cost sharing can be direct costs, the associated Facilities & Administrative (F&A) costs, and/or when permitted by the sponsor, the portion of the F&A costs not paid by the sponsor (i.e., unrecovered F&A costs). Note that salary caps instituted by NIH or other agencies are treated as a special case of cost share; these procedures may not fully apply in those cases.

In some cases, such as those associated with the use of cost sharing to match sponsor funds for equipment or facilities, this process allows the institution to stretch and leverage resources. In many other cases, however, reallocating funds from institutional activities to a sponsored project can have a detrimental effect. This occurs when cost sharing:

- Reduces the flexibility of researchers to conduct other research by obligating their effort to specific projects
- Increases the requirements for capturing, monitoring, and documenting all commitments and expenditures of cost shared funds (e.g., for audit purposes)
- Decreases the recovery of indirect costs by the addition of cost sharing to the research base

The PI is expected to identify cost sharing items, identify a funding source for each, and seek approval for cost sharing. Potential sources of cost share can include:

- Personnel costs covered by the department
- Academic year salary savings made available in a negotiated research budget
- Gifts of cash or other items donated through NU Foundation
- Unrecovered F&A costs
- Funding support from other university units or departments (e.g., in the case of cross-departmental or cross-college PIs and co-PIs)
- Others as indicated by the sponsor

CEHS will consider requests to provide partial cost share support to bridge a gap between what the PI has already secured and the minimum required amount. Except in unique cases, CEHS will not typically support voluntary committed or non-committed cost share.

All cost share requests must:

1. Be made at least **one month** before the submission deadline (or more if sizable cost share is required).
2. Have a budget proposal drafted in collaboration with a CEHS grant specialist
3. Include cost share support from the PI's department (i.e., this discussion should occur before presenting a request to the Dean's office or ORED).
4. Submit the CEHS Cost Share Request Form (below) to the Dean's office.
5. Work with your department chair and the Dean to request partial cost share from ORED.

CEHS Cost Share Request Form

Investigator Information

Name of PI: _____ PI email address: _____

Department of PI: _____ PI Campus addresses: _____

Name of co-PI: _____ Co-PI email address: _____

Department of co-PI: _____ Co-PI Campus address: _____

Name of CEHS Grant Specialist: _____

Date of Form Completion: _____

Proposal Information

Funding Agency	
URL of RFA/RFP	
Project Title	
Project Start Date & End Date	
Proposal Submittal Deadline <i>(Is it 4 weeks or more from date of submission?)</i>	
Total Amount of Direct Costs (prior to cost share)	
Indirect Cost Rate Applied	
Total Amount of Indirect Costs (prior to cost share)	
Total Amount of Required Cost Share	
Description of Required Cost Share	

CEHS Cost Share Request Form (cont'd)

Request Details

Amount of CEHS Dean's Office Request:	
Other Sources of Cost Share (Itemized; Provide Documentation)	
Description/Source	Amount
Potential <i>impact</i> the initiative will have on CEHS as a whole (see CEHS definition of impact). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include alignment with CEHS grand visions and priorities. • Include impact on the number of students and faculty involvement. 	
"Track record" and evidence of <i>impact</i> on CEHS as a whole (see CEHS definition of impact). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include alignment with CEHS grand visions and priorities. • Include impact on the number of students and faculty involvement. 	

Signatures:

Principal Investigator

Department Chair