

AUBURN UNIVERSITY AT MONTGOMERY

OFFICE OF CONTRACTS AND GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

**PROCEDURAL MANUAL
FOR
SPONSORED PROGRAMS**

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SECTION I

Mission Statement

The Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA) is a service-oriented office prepared to assist faculty and staff in the steps necessary to secure and administer external funding.

The mission of OCGA is to promote external funding at Auburn University at Montgomery and to serve as the coordinating office for all external sponsors funding, exclusive of gifts and donations (coordinated through the University Advancement Office.) This includes all proposal applications, projects, and sub-contracts that involve a grant between an external sponsor and the University. OCGA oversees the implementation of and compliance with sponsored policies as required by federal regulations as a requisite for conducting sponsored projects.

Objectives of the Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA)

The objectives of OCGA are:

1. Ensure Auburn University at Montgomery community understanding and knowledge of services and how external funding can assist them in achieving individual and institutional goals.
2. Ensure OCGA knowledge of Auburn University at Montgomery programs and faculty/staff interest which can benefit from the use of external contract and grant funding.
3. Provide services, which facilitate and expand access to external funding by the University and enhance success in acquiring such resources.
4. Ensure that the terms and conditions of grants and contracts are met and that productive working relations are maintained with sponsoring agencies.
5. Support and assist faculty and staff to effectively carry out the activities supported by grants and contracts within the complex environment of sponsor rules and requirements and university, state, and federal regulations.
6. Contribute to ensuring a university environment that is supportive of research and scholarship and service to the larger community.

Functions of the Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA)

OCGA is a service oriented office prepared to assist faculty and staff in the steps necessary to secure and administer external funding. The office is responsible for the authorization of university commitments to and commitments on all sponsored programs, regardless of the type of sponsor or size of program. This means that all requests, applications, proposals, or other types of solicitations for sponsored programs funding must be coordinated through, and submitted by, the OCGA.

1. **Liaison** – OCGA is the University unit through which local, state, and federal government and other prospective agencies and organizations channel their requests for assistance utilizing grants and contracts. In addition, it is the agent through which faculty and staff coordinate their efforts in the development of research and other sponsored programs. OCGA assists faculty in making contacts with government and private foundation officials; works to stimulate the interests of these agencies in appropriate University programs; and provides a clearinghouse for information on faculty interests and University capabilities.
2. **Information Services** – Through established contacts with governmental agencies, private foundations, professional associations, and special periodicals, OCGA maintains a resource collection of current information about funding sources. Information about sources of program support – both public and private – proposal guidelines, new programs, and funding trends is shared with faculty, staff, administrators, and other persons affiliated with the University. OCGA supports access to Internet and other databases and sources providing online information on funding sources.
3. **Proposal Preparation and Submission** – In most instances faculty members initiate proposals for specific program interests that require outside funding. The initial faculty interest, along with the department and school support, is important to successful proposal development. In order to facilitate the preparation of the proposals, OCGA offers assistance with:
 - Identify potential sources of funding.
 - Disseminate grant information.
 - Secure guidelines.
 - Assist in proposal preparation and editing.
 - Assist in budget formulation.
 - Interpret applicable federal regulations and other sponsor's term and conditions as they apply to carrying out and administering sponsored projects.
 - proposals routing and obtaining signature of authorized University official prior to submission to the external sponsor.

4. **Award Administration** – Once a grant or contract is awarded to the University, OCGA maintains and coordinates review procedures necessary to insure compliance with applicable University, state of Alabama, and grantor policies and guidelines; provides general administrative services to the PI, including institutional support of the program; provides academic and other administrative units with appropriate reports and current status of all sponsored programs and funded research activities; monitors the compliance with both federal and state regulations; working with the principal investigator, conducts all contract negotiations, including revisions, on behalf of the University.

All funding being sought by the University must flow through OCGA.

SECTION II

OCGA supports a variety of administrative functions, both in pre-award and post-award research administration, associated with grants, cooperative agreements and contracts that are awarded to Auburn University at Montgomery.

In this section, the following areas will be covered:

1. Sponsored Programs Definition
2. Types of Funding Sources
3. Types of Sponsored Programs
4. Types of Funding Awards
5. Responsibilities

Section II-1 Sponsored Program Definition

Sponsored Programs are projects supported by non-university (external) funds that are awarded as a result of an application submitted to a potential sponsor by the university on behalf of a faculty or staff member. Sponsored programs usually involve research, training, or service activities and typically include one or more of the following:

- formal sponsor application guidelines.
- restrictions on the use of funds.
- a specific and limited program period.
- specified performance or outcomes.
- specified use of program outcomes or data.
- required fiscal and/or programmatic reports.

Excluded from this definition are:

- direct payments to individuals, such as faculty fellowships and sabbatical support.
- student financial aid.
- gifts and bequests to the university.
- donations of equipment or property.

For all sponsored programs involving University employees or facilities, Auburn University at Montgomery is the official applicant and awardee. The chancellor of Auburn University at Montgomery is the only authorized signatory official. The faculty and staff members who will oversee or undertake the work are the principal investigators or directors of these sponsored programs. University faculty members may also apply for external funding for sabbatical support, fellowships, and similar opportunities. These activities do not fall under the definition of sponsored programs, since such awards are made directly to the individuals involved.

Section II – 2 Types of Funding Sources

1. Government

Federal, state, and local government entities provide support for various sponsored programs. Examples of federal funding sources include the U.S. Department of Education (DOED), National Science Foundation (NSF), Health and Human Services (HHS) including National Institute of Health (NIH), and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Examples of state funding sources include Alabama State Department of Education (SDE), Department of Economics and Community Affairs (ADECA), and the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR).

2. Foundations

According to the Foundation Center, private and community foundations are nonprofit organizations with its own funds (usually from a single source, either an individual, family or corporation) and a program managed by its own trustees and directors that was established to maintain or aid educational, social, charitable or other activities serving the common welfare, primarily by making grants to other non-profit organizations. Foundations are divided into four categories:

Independent Foundation – A fund or endowment designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a private foundation under the law, the primary function of which is the making of grants.

Company-Sponsored Foundation – A private foundation under the tax law deriving its funds from a profit making company or corporation but independently constituted the purpose of which is to make grants, usually on a broad basis although not without regard for the business interest so f the corporation.

Operating Foundation – A fund or endowment designated under the tax law by the Internal Revenue Service as a private operating foundation, the primary purpose of which

is to operate research, social welfare, or other programs determined by its governing body or charter.

Community Foundation – It is much like a private foundation; its funds, however, are derived from many donors rather than a single source.

Section II – 3 Types of sponsored Programs

Sponsored programs fall into several general categories, which could serve as guides for the particular design of proposed projects. The types of sponsored programs include:

Research, involving any activity specifically organized to produce research outcomes.

Education and Training, involving any activity that is part of an institution's formally organized instruction program.

Public Service, involving any activity that provides non-instructional services beneficial to individuals and groups external to the institution.

Scholarships and Fellowships, involving any scholarship or fellowship in the form of grant, trainee stipends, prizes, and awards for individuals enrolled in formal course work.

Other, involving any activity that does not fall into the above categories.

Section II – 4 Types of Funding Awards

Grant – A grant is a pledge of support where the sponsor has little involvement in conducting the project. Grant recipients make no guarantees other than the work will be done as described in the proposal and all relevant policies and procedures will be followed. A funded proposal already incorporates the conditions outlined in the sponsor's guidelines, and the sponsor will typically make no or few further restrictions.

Grants are generally made for a specific period. For multi-year projects, funds may be disbursed on an annual basis by the sponsor. The sponsor expects to receive reports but it does not supervise the project. The PI/PD may be required to submit a continuation application or an annual report as each subsequent grant year approaches in order to report program activity and assure the agency that work is on track with the plan outlined in the original proposal. On the other hand, getting the grant renewed, as opposed to continued, usually requires submission of another proposal that is competitively peer-reviewed.

Contracts - are commonly used by sponsors when they have specific products in mind. A contract is an agreement where the sponsor has more involvement and uses the project to achieve a specific outcome or deliverables. These deliverables are often tangible items and/or services rather than basic research outcomes. Through contracts, a sponsor stipulates its needs, and the PI/PD and the sponsor come to an agreement. The process may involve bidding or competitive negotiations. Contract negotiation may involve discussion of proposed provisions restricting the publication or other use of research data and clauses affecting potential patent rights and licensing agreements. Contracts also

generally require frequent, detailed reporting. In a contract arrangement, the sponsor is actively involved in overseeing the progress and direction of the project.

One type of contract is the **fixed-fee contract**. The sponsor pays a fixed amount regardless of whether the actual costs of the activities involved turn out to be higher or lower. If the project ends up costing more than originally estimated, the university must cover the extra expense.

Another type of contract is the **cost-reimbursement contract**. Under this arrangement, the sponsor reimburses the university for the actual costs of the sponsored program, up to the amount originally awarded.

In both fixed-fee and cost-reimbursement contracts, prior approval from the sponsor is required in order to increase the amount of the award.

Sub-Contract - (also sub-grant, sub-agreement) is a document issued under the authority of and consistent with the terms and conditions of an award that transfers a portion of the research or effort of the project to another institution or organization. Like contracts, sub-contracts may be either fixed-fee or cost-reimbursement arrangements.

Cooperative Agreement - An agreement that combines elements of both grant and contract is known as a **cooperative agreement**. The sponsor has substantial involvement in the project and work together with the grantee to achieve a specific objective. Because the degree of sponsor involvement and the segregation of responsibility require specification, the cooperative agreement usually involves more detail than a grant, though perhaps less than a contract. In *A Guide for Managing Federal Grants for Colleges and Universities*, some federal officials have characterized the distinction between grants and cooperative agreement as follows:

In a grant, the federal role is that of “patron”, while in a cooperative agreement, the federal role is that of “partner.”

Section II – 5 Responsibilities

Each proposal for external funding has the potential to become a legal document binding the University to fulfill the conditions specified in the proposal. When a proposal is submitted to a sponsor, it is submitted by the University, not the author of the proposal. When an award is received, it is received by the University on behalf of the PI/PD and any co-investigators or co-directors.

Thus, the author of a proposal must seek, secure, and substantiate the University’s commitment to issues of compliance, support, and concurrence with fiscal and programmatic statements. To do so, the author must ensure that the proposal conforms to the University’s policies, mission, and obligations; must inform relevant administrators of potential commitments of time and resources and obtain their written consent to these

commitments; and must document the University's compliance with applicable regulations.

Responsibilities associated with proposal development and submission and the conduct of resulting sponsored programs are outlined in the following sections.

Principal Investigator/Project Director - University policy requires that the principal investigator/project director (PI/PD) of external grants and contracts be a permanent employee (faculty member or staff member) of the University at the time of proposal submission. The responsibilities of the PI/PD include the following:

- Develops program plans consistent with mission of submitting department/unit and college/school/division.
- Writes and prepares proposal narrative and budget.
- Transmits proposal, with completed and signed AUM Extramural Cover Sheet, to department head or unit director, college or school dean or division head, and OCGA.
- Sends copy of final proposal (as transmitted to sponsor) to OCGA for official university file.
- Upon award, assumes responsibility for:
 - implementation and management of program consistent with all university and sponsor policies.
 - proper technical, programmatic, procurement, and fiscal management.
 - appropriate maintenance of records.
 - high quality of program performance.
 - preparation of all technical or programmatic reports.
 - reporting of equipment location for inventory purposes, as appropriate.

Department Head/Unit Director - If an academic department is involved, the head is the designated responsible person at the department level. If a non-academic unit is involved, the unit director is the responsible party at this level. The responsibilities of the department head/unit director include the following:

- Reviews proposal for consistency with department/unit and college/school/division missions.
- Reviews planned project to address availability and commitment of human and support resources, including time, space, and finances.
- Assures that all faculty/staff and department/unit proposal obligations will be met.
- Indicates concurrence with proposal by signing the AUM Extramural Cover Sheet (including signing any cost-sharing commitments).

College/School Dean or Division Head - The dean of the PI/PD's college or school (or division head of non-academic unit) is the responsible party at the college/school/division level; or, if co-PIs/PDs are involved from different schools, the respective deans (or division heads) are the responsible parties at this level. Their responsibilities include the following:

- Review proposal for consistency with college/school/division and University missions.
- Review planned project to address availability and commitment of college/school/division support services, including time, space, and finances.
- Assure that all department/unit and college/school/division obligations, as delineated in the proposal, will be met.
- Indicate concurrence with proposal by signing the AUM Intramural Cover Sheet (including signing any cost-sharing commitments).

Office of Contracts and Grants Administration - The Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA) performs a variety of pre-award and post-award sponsored program activities. OCGA responsibilities include the following:

- Reviews proposals for consistency with University mission and policies.
- Reviews budgets and financial commitments.
- Verifies that all required committee reviews have been conducted on proposals that involve research using human subjects; animal subjects; or etc.
- Verifies that all appropriate arrangements have been made and documented for projects involving extra space allocation, or use of major facilities.
- Reviews certifications regarding conflict of interest, lobbying, Debarment and suspension for lower tier transaction, and make sure that all assurances are in Compliance with federal regulations.
- Reviews and confirms cash cost-sharing arrangements as needed.
- Reviews and approves proposal budgets.
- Obtains signature of university's authorizing official (Chancellor) on proposals.
- Maintains official university files for sponsored projects and provides periodic reports to university.
- Transmits award materials to Contracts and Grants Accounting for account set-up.
- Assumes responsibility for oversight of administration of programmatic aspects of grants and contracts.
- Serves as liaison between university and external sponsor on contract, and grant.

SECTION III

Information Resources for Sponsored Programs

The [Office of Contracts and Grant Administrations](#) (OCGA) serves as a resource on campus for information on funding opportunities through external sponsors. Information is collected, maintained, and disseminated to faculty and staff concerning available funding opportunities and a variety of self-help resources is also provided.

Online searching for potential funding sources using various resources is also available via the [OCGA Funding Opportunities](#) Web site pages. One such resource is Info Ed which has SPIN, SMARTS/GENIOUS, to which the OCGA subscribes for campus-wide access. SPIN is a searchable database of federal, non-federal, corporate, and foundation funding opportunities listing thousands of sponsors; researchers may also enter an individual expertise profile in the SMARTS program and register to receive relevant funding opportunities by e-mail. The OCGA Web site provides links to the Foundation Center database of foundations and corporate sponsorship programs, Fedworld, Commerce Business Daily, Federal Information Exchange Database for RFPs, and GrantsNet. In addition, the OCGA directly receives program updates from many federal agencies and bulletin boards, and this information is regularly disseminated to faculty members.

Many federal government agencies provide announcements on their Web sites or via e-mail directly to interested researchers. For example, the National Institutes of Health posts Web site listings of opportunities and deadlines, and it also offers a weekly email digest of new program announcements and related information. The National Science Foundation provides announcements on its Web site and also through an automated email alert system. Links to these and other agencies and resources are available on the OCGA Web site.

SECTION IV

Internal Research Support

To encourage external funding and enhance scholarly efforts, Auburn University at Montgomery, through the Research Council provides institutional support for faculty research. The Research Council promotes research and innovative activity in the arts, science, humanities, business, nursing, and education. The Research Council funds the following research programs annually:

- Regular Faculty Grant-in-Aid
- New Faculty Grant-in-Aid
- Equipment Grant-in-Aid
- Student Research Fellowship
- Distinguished Research Professor Award
- Publication Cost
- Fees to attend and present at Professional Meeting

Proposals received by faculty for any of the above programs will go through internal peer review which is the Research Council committee. The members of this committee are composed of established scholars and researchers chosen from across the University. The Research Council members make funding decisions based on merit of each proposal and availability of funds.

Guidelines for each of these research programs are on the [Research Council](#) Web site.

SECTION V

Proposal Development and Submission

The Office Contracts and Grants Administration provides services and support to assist faculty with the development and submission of proposals for sponsored programs. OCGA director also assists faculty in initiating or participating in collaborative, interdisciplinary, and multi-institutional project development. Whatever the type of project, the procedures for the transmittal of proposals for sponsored programs are established by University policy and coordinated by the OCGA. The AUM Extramural Cover Sheet for Sponsored Projects is the official university form for the documentation of concurrence of University officials with plans and commitments contained in proposals for externally funded projects. The OCGA is responsible for reviewing and processing all proposals submitted to external sources before they are sent off-campus. The chancellor is Auburn University at Montgomery's authorizing official for grants and contracts.

Section V – 1 Types of Proposals

A **proposal** is the document submitted to the prospective funding source outlining the entire program, including goals, objectives, methods, time lines, expertise committed, and program budget. The terms proposal and application are often used synonymously. However, in some cases, an application form is required by the sponsor and is just one part of the entire proposal.

A **solicited proposal** is one that is submitted in response to a specific work statement from the sponsor. A **Request for Proposals (RFP)** or **Request for Applications (RFA)** is sometimes used by sponsors to solicit proposals for specific research, development, or training projects or to provide specific services or goods. The RFP or RFA generally includes standard terms, conditions, and assurances that the institution is asked to accept.

An **unsolicited proposal** is initiated by the applicant and submitted according to the sponsor's broad guidelines. The funding arrangement for unsolicited proposals is usually a grant.

A **pre-proposal** is one requested when a sponsor wishes to minimize an applicant's effort in preparing a full proposal. Pre-proposals are usually in the form of a *letter of intent* or *brief abstract*. After a pre-proposal is reviewed, the sponsor notifies the investigator if a full proposal is warranted.

A **continuation or non-competing** proposal confirms the original proposal and funding of a multi-year project for which the sponsor has already provided funding for an initial period (normally one-year). Continued support is usually contingent on satisfactory work progress and availability of funds.

Renewal of no competing proposal is a request for continued support for an existing program that is about to terminate, and, from the sponsor's viewpoint, generally have the same status as an unsolicited proposal.

Section V – 2 Proposal Development

Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA) director is available to assist with proposal development in whatever manner is appropriate to the proposal: helping with guideline interpretation and proposal organization; assisting with budget development; creating “boilerplate” or standard institutional wording related to campus resources and facilities that might be useful or required in the proposal; and reviewing proposals for readability and compliance with guidelines. Faculty members are encouraged to contact OCGA director, during the early stages of proposal development. OCGA director welcomes the opportunity to review rough drafts of proposals and budgets and to provide guidance on proposal and budget development.

Some terms that are being used in proposal developments are:

Request for proposals or applications (RFPs or RFAs)) are announcements in which potential sponsors predetermine activities to be funded along with methodology and related technical matters. A “statement of work”, guidelines, instructions, agency contact personnel, and submission deadlines are also included in the RFP. Once you receive the RFP, you can begin to write your proposal remembering to follow all work and other guidelines/instructions in the announcement.

When responding to an RFP/RFA with the proposed terms and conditions stated in the solicitation, the investigator should notify and forward a copy of the solicitation to OCGA as soon as possible. Please be sure to discuss and review your proposal concepts with directors, department heads, and/or deans.

Cost-Sharing Procedures

Cost-sharing should be included in the budget accompanying the proposal submission only if such arrangements are required or strongly encouraged by the sponsor's program guidelines. During the early stages of proposal development, prospective Principal Investigators/Project Directors (PIs/PDs) anticipating a need for cost-sharing should work closely with OCGA to identify sources for cost-sharing and should begin the process of securing agreements to cost-share and arrangements for documentation. If the project is funded, the cost-sharing included in the proposed budget must be carefully documented throughout the program period.

University Cost-Sharing

Potential sponsors may require that the expenses of a sponsored program be shared by the University. The University's agreement to any such cost-sharing must be secured by the

prospective PI/PD during the proposal development process. Completion of the AUM Extramural Cover Sheet requires signatures confirming any cost-sharing agreements. Common items for University cost-sharing include major equipment or infrastructure, salaries, fringe benefits, and indirect costs related to AUM direct costs.

Section V – 3 Transmittal Process

The Office of Contracts and Grant Administration is responsible for reviewing all proposals and budgets submitted to external sources. The chancellor is the Auburn University at Montgomery's authorizing official for grants and contracts.

The AUM Extramural Cover Sheet for Sponsored Projects — the official University form for the documentation of plans and commitments contained in proposals for externally funded programs — is the internal mechanism to:

- inform all affected parties of the proposal.
- document their knowledge of and support for the proposal.
- document any needed and committed cost-sharing for the program.
- document other institutional reviews that may be necessary because of the specific nature of the program in particular, use of human subjects, use of animal subjects, and other campus resources.

The AUM Extramural Cover Sheet should be completed for all projects for which external funds are sought or received by the University, excluding gifts to the University.

To begin the transmittal process, the faculty or staff member who will serve as the PI/PD on the project should first complete the AUM Extramural Cover Sheet for Sponsored Projects and obtain the signatures of all co-PIs/co-PDs, their department head(s) or unit director(s), dean(s), and regulatory committee chair(s) as applicable,

The PI/PD should then forward the complete proposal, along with all necessary certifications, to the OCGA for internal review and approval. The PI/PD should allow at least **TEN** working days for this internal review. If this is not feasible, the PI/PD should contact the OCGA immediately to make other arrangements.

The OCGA reviews proposals for completeness compliance with Auburn University at Montgomery and agency/sponsor regulations. Upon approval of the proposal, budget, and cover sheet, OCGA director then routes the proposal and obtains signature of the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, and the vice chancellor for financial and administrative services on the AUM Extramural Cover Sheet and signature of the chancellor — the University's authorizing official for grants and contracts — is then obtained on the appropriate documents as required by University policy and by the potential sponsor.

***Note:** To expedite the review process, PIs/PDs may circulate a draft proposal with the budget.*

After completion of the internal review, the PI/PD is notified that the proposal has been approved and signed, and is ready for pick-up at the OCGA. The duplication and mailing are the responsibility of the PI/PD or the department/unit, and the electronic uploading of proposals is OCGA's responsibility. The PI/PD must send a copy of the proposal (as submitted to the sponsor) to the OCGA for the official University files of applications for and receipt of all sponsored program awards.

Space Requirements

The AUM Extramural Cover Sheet certifies that adequate space is available for the project prior should it be awarded.

Compensation Incentives

Nine-month appointments for faculty members run from August 16 – May 15 of each academic year. Faculty members on such appointments are restricted to earning 2.5 months of additional compensation (up to 20% of their 9-month salary) from contracts and grants that flow through the university, subject to the limitations of the sponsoring agencies.

All other employees are restricted to earning up to 20% of additional compensation from contracts and grants that flow through the University, subject to the limitations of the sponsoring agency.

Section V – 4 Award Notification

OCGA, working with the PI, negotiates the terms and conditions of applicable grants and contracts with granting agencies and organizations. Negotiations of sponsored contracts and grants may be conducted between the agency and OCG staff and the PI at the University. The Director of OCGA is ultimately responsible for University negotiations in all matters affecting the substance of the project to be conducted and associated fiscal matters with the approval of the PI who, in turn, must have departmental and college concurrence.

All potential proposed contracts and grants are examined for appropriateness and legal compliance prior to their execution. Any prospective contract or grant that would unduly obligate the University in any way or which has questionable aspects will be referred to the University legal counsel for review, revision, approval, or further referral if necessary.

Notification of Award

The Office of Contracts and Grants Administration has the responsibility of reviewing award documents and conditions of award. OCGA director makes recommendations for acceptance to the PI, secures appropriate additional signatures if required, and notifies the

appropriate department head, dean of the award. OCGA also notifies contracts and grants accounting of the award so that files may be created and a new account established. When the University receives an award, the award letter must be forwarded to OCGA for processing. When the account has been established by contracts and grants accounting, OCGA forwards an *Award Notification Packet* to the PI. An award notification packet, at a minimum, includes: an announcement of the grant award to campus officials, a notification of account number form; and special instructions applicable to individual awards (such as cost sharing) if necessary.