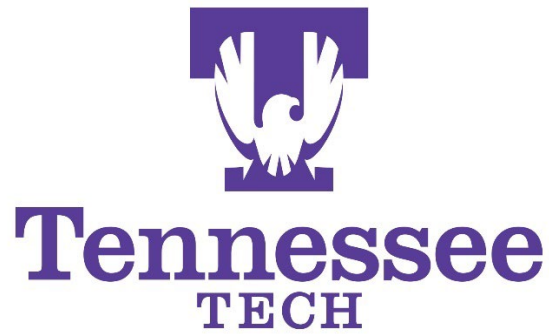




**TENNESSEE TECH
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
HANDBOOK FOR PRE-
AWARD**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION..... 3

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT 5

THE PROPOSAL..... 7

PREAWARD CONSIDERATIONS..... 15

REGULATORY REVIEW 18

APPROVAL AND SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL 20

SUMMARY..... 22

Contact Us..... 22

INTRODUCTION

This handbook will assist faculty and staff with the administrative aspects of sponsored programs.

Sponsors fund projects based on the professional expertise of the Principal Investigators submitting proposals; however, the formal award is granted to Tennessee Tech. When the award is accepted, the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibility for conducting and completing the technical work and for administering the project according to state and federal regulations, policies of the sponsor, and Tennessee Tech. The PI is responsible and accountable for the sponsored project. The University provides the infrastructure within which the investigator conducts the project.

The handbook has three main goals:

- To provide guidance in the development and administration of sponsored projects.
- To inform Principal Investigators/Project Directors (PIs/PDs) of their roles and responsibilities in proposal creation, compliance, and submission, and to indicate the roles of staff in supporting the research effort.
- To organize and present information pertinent to sponsored program's administrative roles into a single source to make the information easily accessible.

Definition of a Sponsored Grant or Contract

Sponsored grants and contracts have a statement of work to be implemented in exchange for something of value, such as data, results, intellectual property, and/or a mandatory report. Criteria, but not limited to:

- Any funding provided by U. S. Government agencies at the federal, state, or local level in support of Tennessee Tech activities is treated as sponsored grant or contract funding. Government funds are not treated as gifts.
- In general, a sponsored grant or contract has one or more of the following characteristics: restrictions on date use imposed by the sponsor; sponsor right to audit the project, program or financial records; and a penalty for non-performance.
- Financial accountability for sponsored projects typically involves detailed line-item expense reporting, effort reports, etc., and the projects are often subject to financial audit.
- Involves a verbal or written agreement specifying terms and conditions, a specific scope of work, and possibly reporting requirements
- Includes release of information restrictions, such as the delay in publishing research results, confidentiality or approval to release information.

Gifts and Charitable Contributions

A written agreement may or may not be entered into by Tennessee Tech and the Donor for a gift. When the gift is in the form of funding, it can either be used freely without restrictions, or it can be restricted to a specific field or purpose. In general, a gift has no deliverables to provide to the donor, a gift is irrevocable; and there is no formal fiscal accountability to the donor. This includes gift reporting that is not required beyond a general periodic progress report and report of expenditures. Gift reports, whether narrative or financial, are rather a result of good stewardship. In general, a gift has no contractual requirements and no expectation of deliverables or rights in property or data. While there may be restrictions or minimal conditions associated with a gift, generally, there should be no specific period for incurring costs, and there should be no requirement to return unexpended funds.

[Tennessee Tech Policy to Identify Gift vs. Sponsored Grants and Contracts](#) provides guidance in determining whether external funding should be classified as a gift or sponsored project. If additional clarification is necessary, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs - (931) 372-3374.

Working with Industries

Tennessee Tech encourages research and education projects that involve PIs collaborating with one or more industrial partners. Proposals may include an additional partner, such as a national laboratory or a nonprofit organization. Extramurally sponsored research and projects are awarded under the guidance of the University.

Awards of funds for sponsored research and projects are to the University and commitments are bonded through the agreements as obligations. Any work performed by a faculty of Tennessee Techy under a project must be considered as work performed for the University.

The private sector has dramatically reduced its fundamental research activity but remains willing to pay for academic expertise.

Definition, Roles, and Responsibilities of a Principal Investigator (PI)

Serving in the role of Principal Investigator on a sponsored project is a privilege granted to certain individuals associated within Tennessee Tech that carries with it important responsibilities. The Principal Investigator is the individual bearing primary responsibility for all essential aspects of the work being carried out, including **technical aspects and completion of programmatic work, compliance with government, sponsor, and university policies and regulations, fiscal stewardship of sponsored funds, and all administrative requirements of the project.**

A full guide to PI roles and responsibilities can be found [here](#).

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Sponsored Programs assists faculty and staff in the broad aspects of proposal development for their research, scholarly, and creative programs.

1. Investigate funding opportunities for faculty to promote research for multiple disciplines.
2. Proposal development services.
3. Faculty engagement so that OSP may better communicate the changing funding climate.

Proposal Development Tools

Proposal building tools and programs can be found on the Office of Research and Development pages on our Tennessee Tech website, along with assistance and guidance from staff in OSP. Grant development solutions include Pre-proposal Support, Proposal Development, and Submission. Details regarding these tools can be found [here](#).

Free Training Resources

Tennessee Tech subscribes to several training modules via the CITI Program website that may be of interest to researchers and research administrators. The Essentials of Grant Proposal Development and Essentials of Research Administration courses are self-paced modules that the learner can access as they have the time and opportunity. Additional information and links to federal training, workshops, and presentations can be found [here](#).

Identifying Sources of Funding using GrantForward

[GrantForward](#) is a search engine to help you find grants to fund research.

- GrantForward provides a comprehensive database of thousands of funding opportunities and pre-solicitations along with a searchable database of funded awards that continue to grow with the most up-to-date information.
- GrantForward researcher profiles allow researchers to highlight their research achievements and interests to receive personalized grant recommendations that match their research needs.

Create Your GrantForward Account and Researcher Profile

- Start moving your research forward by [creating an account](#) (see this [Tutorial demo](#)) to access GrantForward. In order to be able to take advantage of all of the features

that GrantForward offers, you will have to create an account using your institution's email address.

- If you would like to benefit from **receiving grant recommendations**, then you will also need to make sure to create your researcher profile (see this [Tutorial demo](#)).

Useful Resources

[GrantForward Quick Start Guide](#)

Visit the [Research Development](#) page for the complete list of resources.

Online Resources

Grants.gov

Current program announcements for all federal financial assistance opportunities (grants/cooperative agreements) can be found on Grants.gov, the federal government's portal for Electronic Research Administration. Access <http://www.grants.gov> to search for federal funding opportunities. Tennessee Tech is already registered as an institution and manages the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role. Individual faculty and administrators can request a Workspace Manager profile within [Workspace](#) to create proposals.

SAM.gov

Federal Contracting opportunities are available within SAM.gov under the [Contract Opportunities](#) heading. Organizations within the federal government publish notices on proposed contract actions valued at more than \$25,000. These notices, or contract opportunities, cover announcements through official solicitations in the pre-award process. Anyone interested in doing business with the government can use this system to research active opportunities.

THE PROPOSAL

A proposal is a request for financial support for a project. Generally, a proposal consists of a technical section and a budget section.

Types of Proposals

Pre-proposals

A pre-proposal (sometimes called a white paper, letter of proposal, letter of intent, pre-application, or concept paper) is a short (generally 2-5 pages) description of the proposed project, and it does not normally involve a commitment of Tennessee Tech resources. A pre-proposal may include a total cost estimate, but it is not expected to result directly in an award. Usually, the purpose of a pre-proposal is to inform and heighten the interest of a potential sponsor so that the sponsor requests a more detailed formal proposal. All pre-proposal information should be communicated to OSP.

Solicited Proposals

A solicited proposal is a proposal that is created and submitted in response to a formal request, such as an RFP, Request for Applications (RFA), or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). It's designed to address a specific need or problem outlined in the request, providing a tailored solution or project plan.

Researchers responding to the program announcement write the proposal to meet the sponsor's program guidelines. Proposals submitted in response to a request may contain specific submission dates, terms, conditions, and formatting requirements.

Renewal and Continuation Proposals

A competing renewal proposal (also called a competing continuation) is a request for continued funding of a project for which funding is about to terminate. Such proposals are considered "new" proposals and must be routed through Streamlyne and approved by OSP.

Noncompeting continuation proposals, which request the next year's funding within a multi-year grant, generally consist of a progress report, budget, and other relevant materials. They sometimes include a financial status report indicating the unobligated balance for the current year. Read the appropriate guidelines carefully, as federal sponsors are eliminating some requirements in their efforts to reduce paperwork and streamline their processes.

Supplemental Proposals

Supplemental proposals request additional support for a currently funded project.

Unsolicited Proposals

Unsolicited proposals are investigator-initiated projects submitted to a sponsor but not in response to a specific solicitation. The area of activity should be of interest to, and within the mission of, the sponsor.

Joint Proposals and Subawards

These relate to projects involving investigators at collaborating institutions, along with Tennessee Tech. In general, one institution will be designated as the lead at the time of proposal submission. The lead institution accepts full funding and responsibility for the performance of the project from the sponsor. Subaward agreements are then issued to transfer part of the relevant work and appropriate funds to the other participating institutions. Generally, all conditions imposed by the sponsor on the lead institution are also imposed on the sub-awardee. All subawards are negotiated by the Office of Sponsored Programs. When Tennessee Tech is the lead institution, OSP requires a statement from each participating organization that includes a full budget and scope of work, signed by an authorized institutional official. When Tennessee Tech is the sub-awardee, the information (scope of work, budget, etc.) sent to the lead organization must be entered into Streamlyne as a proposal for approval routing prior to submission.

Limited-Submission Proposals

Many funding agencies limit the number of proposals an institution can submit to specific funding programs. Programs that have limited proposal submissions expect institutions to screen proposals to determine which ones will be submitted for competition, based on the criteria established by the funding agency. Information regarding these announcements and Tennessee Tech [Limited Submission Policy and Limited Submission Procedures](#) can be found on the Office of Sponsored Programs web pages..

ALL Solicited proposals must be routed through Streamlyne for approval before submission of the proposal to the sponsor.

Proposal Preparation

The format or presentation of a particular proposal will depend on the requirements of the sponsor. Most sponsors have developed policies and procedures for the submission of proposals and may require the use of specific application forms or electronic web-based systems. Many also have page limitations, particularly on the narrative portion. It is crucial to meet all requirements. Principal Investigators should obtain the most recent version of the sponsor's application guidelines and should follow the required proposal format. Guidelines or URLs should be forwarded to the Office of Sponsored Programs, along with application for review well in advance of the due date of the proposal to facilitate timely internal review and processing. Successful proposal development is a team effort that involves cooperation among Faculty colleagues and the administrative staff of the University. [The OSP team will provide assistance](#) in proposal budget development and

interpretation of guidelines from numerous funding agencies. The OSP team can assist in drafting or editing portions of the proposal text related to administrative or institutional issues as requested. In addition, the OSP team can assist in the completion of sponsor and institutional forms and provide guidance on budgetary issues.

When you have identified an opportunity that you intend to pursue, it is important to create the proposal in [Streamlyne](#) and communicate with OSP at that time. Proposal development is time and informational intensive and requires sufficient lead-time to meet an expected due date. Revised applications and renewals usually take less time but are still a major effort and should not be underestimated.

Note: OSP cannot guarantee submission of a proposal by a deadline unless sufficient time is provided for the internal review and approval process.

The Components of a Proposal

The applicable federal NOFO/FOA and agency proposal guidelines control the submission requirements. This checklist is a general planning and quality-control tool and should be supplemented with any agency-, program-, or institution-specific requirements.

When building a proposal, you will need access to Tennessee Tech [institutional essential information](#). Use [Login.Gov](#) to access agency portals. To better understand proposal requirements, here's a general checklist for your grant proposal. To ensure you have all required sections before submission, check guidelines for the specific grant submission.

Proposal Development Checklist

1. Funding Opportunity

- ☐ Correct federal agency and opportunity number
- ☐ Current NOFO/FOA reviewed
- ☐ Eligibility confirmed
- ☐ Submission deadline and time zone confirmed

2. Proposal Strategy

- ☐ Project aligns with funding priorities
- ☐ Objectives and expected outcomes clearly defined
- ☐ Scope of work is realistic
- ☐ Project timeline established

3. Principal Investigator & Key Personnel

- ☐ PI eligibility confirmed
- ☐ PI and key personnel information completed
- ☐ Other investigators/key personnel identified

4. Project Narrative

- ☐ Statement of need/problem
- ☐ Research/project objectives
- ☐ Methodology/approach

- ☐ Expected results/outcomes
- ☐ Evaluation plan
- ☐ Dissemination/impact, if required
- ☐ Sustainability, if required

5. Budget

- ☐ Personnel
- ☐ Fringe benefits
- ☐ Equipment
- ☐ Travel
- ☐ Participant support, if applicable
- ☐ Materials/supplies
- ☐ Contractual/subawards
- ☐ Other direct costs
- ☐ Indirect/F&A costs
- ☐ Cost share/matching requirements, if applicable

6. Budget Justification

- ☐ Major costs explained
- ☐ Costs tied to project activities
- ☐ Rates and calculations accurate
- ☐ Costs comply with applicable federal requirements
- ☐ Unallowable costs excluded

7. Subawards & Consultants

- ☐ Subaward determination completed
- ☐ Scope of work included
- ☐ Subaward budget included
- ☐ Budget justification included
- ☐ Required institutional documentation included
- ☐ Letters of commitment included, if required

8. Required Attachments

- ☐ Biographical sketches/CVs
- ☐ Current & pending/other support, as required
- ☐ Facilities & resources
- ☐ Data management plan, if required
- ☐ Mentoring plan, if applicable
- ☐ Letters of support/commitment
- ☐ Agency-specific forms and attachments

9. Compliance

- ☐ Human subjects, if applicable
- ☐ Animal subjects, if applicable
- ☐ Conflict of interest requirements addressed
- ☐ Responsible conduct of research requirements addressed
- ☐ Environmental/regulatory requirements, if applicable
- ☐ Export control/security considerations, if applicable

10. Institutional Approvals

- ☐ Department approval
- ☐ College/unit approval
- ☐ Sponsored Programs/Pre-Award review
- ☐ Authorized institutional official approval
- ☐ Cost share commitments approved, if applicable

11. Submission System

- ☐ Correct submission portal identified
- ☐ Applicant organization registration/profile current
- ☐ PI registration/profile complete
- ☐ All required forms completed
- ☐ File formats and page limits verified

12. Final Review

- ☐ Proposal follows NOFO/FOA instructions
- ☐ Page limits met
- ☐ Font, margins, and formatting compliant
- ☐ All required sections included
- ☐ Budget matches narrative
- ☐ Names, dates, and dollar amounts are consistent
- ☐ No missing attachments

13. Submission

- ☐ Internal deadline met
- ☐ Proposal submitted before federal deadline
- ☐ Submission confirmation received
- ☐ Tracking/application number retained

14. After Submission

- ☐ Submission record retained
- ☐ Agency communications monitored
- ☐ Award/declination status monitored
- ☐ Post-submission communications documented

Abstract

The abstract serves as a concise summary highlighting the core elements of the proposal, written in a non-technical language, usually less than 250 words. It should state the significance of the project, what will be accomplished, how it will be accomplished, and the proposed period of performance. The abstract is written to create a favorable first impression.

Introduction or Background

Some RFP's may request a [general description](#) of the University. The Tennessee Tech web site provides a brief description and other general information.

Technical Description

The most important element in the proposal is the definition of the objectives and scope of the project. It outlines the project's technical approach, methodology, and feasibility, demonstrating the organization's expertise and ability to achieve the proposed goals.

Narrow and balance the focus of proposed goals. The scope must be clear enough to define the responsibilities of the Investigator(s) and the funding obligations of the sponsor. Defining the scope and objectives too broadly suggests the submission may not be able to complete the project at the awarded level of funding. But, if the scope and objectives are defined too narrowly, the investigator runs the risk of project activities being deemed "outside of the proposed scope."

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals **only** when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project.

Current and Pending Support

Most sponsors (especially Federal) are interested in an investigator's current and pending support (sometimes referred to as "other support") for related projects, as well as evidence of an investigator's current commitments. NSF requires information on all current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals:

- The capacity of the individual to carry out the proposed research.
- Any potential scientific and budgetary overlap or duplication across projects.
- The potential the PI is overcommitting themselves with the proposed project.

[Tennessee Tech Current and Pending Forms](#) have been approved for use by the National Science Foundation for both the Current and Pending (Other) Support Information and Biographical Sketch. It is intended that all federal agencies will implement these forms within the next few months.

Facilities and Equipment

A description of the facilities available for use on the project should be included in the Facilities section. Major items for use on the project should be included in the Facilities section. Major items of equipment (in excess of \$10,000) should be described, and special technical support facilities, such as computing equipment and electronic/machine shops should be mentioned. This information will assist the evaluators in determining the capabilities of the organization to perform the scope of the project.

Budget

The proposed budget is the Principal Investigator's educated estimate of the financial support needed to perform the technical goals and activities of the proposed project. Careful preparation is important, as the proposal budget may become the award budget and be binding on the institution. [Streamlyne](#) is a valuable tool for creating the budget.

The budget and budget justification should reflect the methodology described within the proposal narrative. Accuracy and detail are essential in this section. Principal Investigators are encouraged to follow the sponsor's guidelines exactly and provide information in the format as specified in the proposal guidelines. The Office of Sponsored Programs staff is available to assist investigators in developing budgets that are consistent with Tennessee Tech policy and agency requirements. Underestimated budgets are one of the primary causes of cost overruns. These become the responsibility of the Principal Investigator and department head.

A detailed budget through Streamlyne must accompany each proposal submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs for review and approval.

The Budget Justification

Agencies nearly always require a budget justification to accompany the budget, but even when they don't, the Office of Research will still require it for its internal records. A carefully prepared budget and justification at the proposal stage can make implementation much easier when the award comes in. The proposal budget and budget justification should, as accurately as possible, represent a financial narrative of the project and align with the statement of work (SOW) outlined in the project narrative.

The research process must be very clearly articulated to the reviewer in the SOW. The budget and budget justification should be methodical in enumerating and explaining all reasonable, allowable and allocable project expenses.

It is important to remember that a budget isn't just a collection of numbers on a page. Should a proposal be awarded, the budget and budget justification will be used and referred to for the length of the award.

Salary Cap

Federal awards from the Department of Health and Human Services impose amount restrictions for direct salary paid on their grants. This restriction is commonly known as the salary cap and is a legislative mandate imposed by Congress. Other sponsors also implement salary caps, and investigators should be cognizant of these requirements. In order to assist faculty in developing proposals with a salary cap, [guidance](#) has been developed.

Modular Budgets

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) maintains [modular budgeting guidelines](#) for many

of its applications. Under these guidelines for application under \$250,000, no detailed budgets are provided to NIH, although details on personnel and subcontracts are provided in a budget justification. Amounts requested per year cannot (currently) exceed \$250,000 in direct costs and funding must be requested in \$25,000 increments.

Please note that while NIH does not require submission of a detailed budget when submitting a modular budget, a detailed internal budget captured in a Streamlyne proposal is required for institutional review and informational purposes.

Data Management Plan

Federal agencies are increasingly requiring development and/or submission of a data management plan with submitted proposals. The Tennessee Tech [Data Security and Handling Policy](#) provides specific guidance regarding the requirements and responsibilities essential to data management. Please also refer to the [ICPSR](#) information for additional information and guidance regarding project data management.

PREAWARD CONSIDERATIONS

Cost Sharing and Matching

In some cases, Tennessee Technological University (Tech) is required either by Federal statute or program guidelines to share in the total cost of conducting a research project or otherwise performing or participating on a contract or grant. The portion of the project or program cost not borne by the sponsor is cost share. The cost share commitment may be either a specified level of personnel effort, equipment, facilities, services, or a fixed amount of money, depending on the particular funding agency, and whether the project is solicited or unsolicited. For Federal grants, the terms cost sharing and matching are used interchangeably and are subject to the same federal regulations. *Reference: Code of Federal Regulations: Title 2: Part 200 – [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).*

The term "cost matching" often refers to cost sharing where the amount required as cost share is equal to the amount received from the sponsor. This is also known as dollar-for-dollar cost sharing or matching. Cost sharing or matching is either mandatory (involuntary) or voluntary (optional).

Mandatory Cost Sharing (involuntary)

Cost sharing is mandated by the funding agency as a requirement for the consideration of an award.

Voluntary Committed Cost Sharing (optional)

Cost sharing is not explicitly stated or required in the proposal solicitation but described as a quantifiable amount of contribution to the project by Tennessee Tech. Voluntary cost sharing can be either committed or uncommitted.

Cost sharing specifically pledged on a voluntary basis in the proposal's budget/budget justification or the federal award on the part of Tennessee Tech that becomes a binding agreement of the award. Therefore, it must be documented, tracked and reported. Under federal research proposals, voluntary committed cost sharing is not expected. It cannot be used as a factor during the merit review of applications or proposals but may be considered if it is both in accordance with federal awarding agency regulations and specified in a notice of funding opportunity (2 CFR 200.306).

Any effort or resources contributed to a project beyond what is committed and budgeted for in a sponsored agreement. Voluntary uncommitted cost sharing is not included in the budget or proposal narrative.

Voluntary cost sharing must satisfy all the conditions detailed below and must be kept to a minimum if used.

The following conditions must be satisfied for either mandatory or voluntary cost sharing:

- Persuasive evidence that cost share is mandatory or necessary.
- Cost share is reasonable (2 CFR 200.404) and allocable (2 CFR 200.405) to the project.
- Source of cost share is allowable (2 CFR 200.403) under funding agency policies and guidelines.
- Cost share can be verified from Tennessee Tech's records.
- Cost share is not paid by the federal government under another award, without authorization from the federal agency and the flow-through entity.
- Cost share will occur during the period of performance of the project or program.
- Cost share has been approved by the federal awarding agency or individuals and units contributing to it.
- Third-party contributions have been documented and approved by each organization's authorized representative.

For more information and guidance, please refer to the Research webpage for [Cost Sharing and Matching Guidelines](#).

In-kind/Matching

This is the requirement, by some sponsors, that grant funds be matched in some proportion with funds from another party, either from Tennessee Tech or another sponsor. Matching may be in the form of actual cash expenditure of funds or may be an "in-kind" match, which is the value of non-cash contributions to the project. In-kind or matching contributions made by a party other than Tennessee Tech require documentation from that third party that supports the use of the funds as in-kind/matching and may require a certification of fair market value from the party providing the match.

Program Income

Income generated by activities of a project, where part or all of the cost of the activity is either borne as a direct cost of the grant or counted as a direct cost towards meeting a cost sharing or matching requirement of a grant. Examples of program income include: collection of fees for services performed during the grant, proceeds from sale of property (e.g., instructional materials), usage or rental fees, and conference registrations. The award document will identify if this applies to your project. [Section 200.307](#) of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards provides administrative guidance regarding program income.

Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment

Tennessee Tech supports and encourages its faculty and other employees to engage in a wide variety of relationships and external activities that are in the public interest and also of benefit to the University and the individuals concerned. On occasion this may give rise to conflicts of interest, whether potential or actual, perceived or alleged.

Personnel are required to recognize and disclose significant financial interests that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts and to ensure that such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided, with the goal of ensuring, to the extent possible, institutional responsibilities are free from bias and inappropriate influence. It is the intent of Tennessee Tech to manage financial conflicts of interest of its employees as part of ongoing efforts to prevent outcomes that may be harmful to, sponsored activities, operation of regulatory compliance committees, technology transfer efforts, or the university at large. Employees responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of sponsored research, engaging in technology commercialization, and/or related activities (affected employees) must report Significant Financial Interests to OSP Compliance, Charmian Leong at cleong@tntech.edu, to develop a plan to Manage Financial Conflicts of Interest as necessary.

Resources to help recognize when a conflict might exist and how to manage it appropriately can be found on the [Research Compliance](#) webpage.

International Relationships / Collaborations in Research Activities

Undue Foreign Influence in Research

The benefits of international research collaborations in university research are numerous. Among many other things, collaborations that bring together researchers from different countries enable the sharing of diverse knowledge and experience and make it possible for our scientists to gain access to a wider pool of resources. These advantages accelerate progress in many fields and often lead to innovative solutions that benefit not just the faculty, students, and universities involved, but the world. Therefore, Tennessee Tech University supports international collaborations as deemed appropriate and necessary by our faculty members.

Governmental and Research Funding Agencies' Concerns

Tennessee Tech follows a tradition of integrity, openness, transparency, honesty, respect, and accountability in its conduct of research activities. However, the research community faces a rising threat from foreign governments that seek to exploit U.S. research and intellectual capital, which can undermine our national security and economic competitiveness.

Governments and agencies at both federal and state levels in the U.S. have expressed serious concerns regarding inappropriate influences on research by foreign entities. Foreign governments' recruitment of scholars into MFTRPs, and their efforts to influence nationals of their country (and sometimes of other countries) to misappropriate federally funded research results and intellectual property from U.S. institutions of higher education are of particular concern. The NIH, NSF, DOE, and other agencies are increasingly warning U.S. higher education institutions of faculty or researchers who are not in compliance with grant funding regulations and other laws by failing to disclose their foreign associations.

Further guidance can be found on the [Undue Foreign Influence](#) webpage on the TENNESSEE TECH research site.

REGULATORY REVIEW

Export Control

Federal regulations and sanctions promulgated and enforced by various federal agencies including the **Department of Commerce** - Export Administration Regulations (**EAR**), the **Department of State** - International Traffic in Arms Regulations (**ITAR**) and the Department of Treasury - Office of Foreign Assets Control (**OFAC**) prohibit the unlicensed export of specific technologies and items and payments to certain entities and individuals for reasons of national security or protection of trade.

While most research conducted on U.S. college and university campuses is excluded from these regulations under the Fundamental Research Exclusion, if university research involves specified technologies, the EAR and/or ITAR may require the University to obtain prior approval in the form of a license from the appropriate agency before allowing foreign nationals to participate in the research, partnering with a foreign company and/or sharing research - verbally or in writing - with persons who are not United States citizens or permanent residents. The consequences of violating these regulations can be quite severe, ranging from loss of research contracts to monetary and criminal penalties for the individual and/or organization violating these regulations. Please note that export control regulations may also apply to projects that are non-research in nature.

Additional information concerning export controls can be found on the OSP [Export Controls and Trade Sanctions](#) webpage or by contacting Charmian Leong at cleong@tnitech.edu, Director of Research Integrity and Compliance. Charmian may also be reached at (931) 372-3938.

Hazardous Materials/Hazardous Chemicals/Biohazards

Hazardous materials are any chemical or biological agent that may cause a physical or health hazard to persons exposed to them. Use and disposal of hazardous materials are governed by many Federal, State and local agencies. **Hazardous chemicals** are defined as any chemicals that exhibit a physical or health hazard. Examples of such chemicals are flammable liquids and solids, corrosives, oxidizers, and any chemicals that are considered toxic such as heavy metals. The term "**biohazards**" generally refers to carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, all microbiological agents and radiological hazards. Examples of materials that fall into the biohazard classification are viral, bacterial, and fungal agents, and chemical toxins. This [OSP Compliance](#) webpage provides detailed information regarding these issues.

Animal Subjects

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversees campus-wide animal care and use (research, testing, or educational) to ensure adherence to humane and ethical principles. Investigators who plan to use animal subjects as part of their research should become familiar with these laws and policies, copies of which are available from the [OSP Compliance](#). Federal laws and regulations define and prescribe rules for obtaining, maintaining, transporting, and using animals for research purposes.

If laboratory animals are to be used in any type of research performance/ training (sponsored or non-sponsored), activities must be in compliance with federal and University policies. The stepwise procedure is as follows:

1. Obtain an application from your departmental office or the Office of Research. Read it carefully and fill it out. (Please type or print.) Applications are also available here.
2. The completed application for approval to use laboratory animals in experimentation is to be submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) or Activity Director (AD) to the Office of Research, Derryberry Hall, Room 306. The original and seven (7) copies are to be submitted.
3. A quorum of committee members will be notified and allowed seven (7) working days after notification to inspect the application and act upon it, either in the Office of Research or via mail.
4. The action of the committee will be sent in writing to the PI or AD.
5. If the application is given unconditional approval, in addition to the committee notifying the PI or AD in writing, a memorandum will be sent to the funding agency, if appropriate, letting them know of the approval.
6. If an application is given conditional approval, the committee will notify the PI or AD in writing stating clearly what the conditions are. The PI or AD will be given a time limit for meeting or removing the conditions and returning written verification that the conditions have been met or removed.
7. If conditions required for approval necessitate full committee review, the chair will call a special meeting to resolve the issue unless it coincides with a regular meeting of the committee. This process will extend the time required for approval by at least five (5) working days. The committee will then send notification as described in Items 4, 5, and 6.
8. Full approval of the committee must be obtained before the proposed use of animals is permitted to begin.
9. Applicants should allow ten (10) working days for the process of application review to take place and be notified.
10. It is the prerogative of the committee to (a) approve the application as presented or unconditionally, (b) approve the application with stipulations or conditionally, or (c) disapprove the application completely.

Human Subjects

All studies involving human subjects require IRB approval. Researchers must complete an Application for Research Involving Human Subjects (Revised 01/24/2024).

Applications for Research Involving Human Subjects may be either delivered to Derryberry Hall, Room 432, Mailed to Box 5164, or scanned and emailed to irb@tnitech.edu. All IRB-related forms can also be accessed [here](#). The [Human Subjects Research](#) webpage is also available for information and guidance.

Approval by the IRB must be obtained before a sponsored project including human subjects can be conducted at Tennessee Tech. Most granting agencies do not require IRB approval for submission of proposals; however, approval is required prior to their funding of a project.

Responsible Conduct of Research

Research & Economic Development Integrity under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and in accordance with the America COMPETES Act, requires individuals submitting proposals or applications for federal funds to have training in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), which is verified when faculty respond to the items in the Intent to Submit form. Completion of this training will satisfy the broad requirements for RCR and should foster development of appropriate programming in this area.

Tennessee Tech subscribes to the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#) (CITI) as a means of providing training in RCR. This training is applicable to the University's core mission of teaching and learning, and it is consistent with the University's commitment to the life-long learning of its students by providing a resource that fosters high standards of ethical conduct. For more information, reference the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) webpage

APPROVAL AND SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Routing the Proposal for Approval in Streamlyne

By approving the Streamlyne proposal, the department head, direct supervisor, and department approval chain certifies that the Principal Investigator, to the best of the department's knowledge, is competent and capable of carrying out the proposed project. If awarded the project, the Principal Investigator's responsibilities within the department will be adjusted so that the investigator can commit the required effort to the project. The department head will determine whether the project is consistent with the mission of the department, the School/College, and Tennessee Tech.

All department approval faculty involved in a proposed project must approve through Streamlyne.

Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator

When submitting the proposal to OSP (5 days prior to deadline) the Principal Investigator and co-investigators confirm that the information on all forms and associated application are accurate, factual, and follow all proposal guidelines. Submission further certifies that neither the Principal Investigator, nor anyone involved in the proposed project, is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency. The Principal Investigator will indicate whether the project does or does not involve an actual or potential conflict of interest or commitment, based on Tennessee Tech policy.

Office of Sponsored Programs

Approval by the Office of Sponsored Programs (or College-level designee) on behalf of the Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development indicates that the pending submission is within compliance regulations and follows proposal guidelines. Successful proposals will then be submitted to sponsor through OSP and that TENNESSEE TECH will assume institutional responsibility for the project.

IMPORTANT NOTE: When Tennessee Tech is proposing to serve as a sub-awardee or subcontractor on a proposal being submitted by another institution, routing through Streamlyne is still required. In many cases, the institution submitting the proposal will request a letter of intent/collaboration. This document should be signed by the Office of Sponsored Programs on behalf of the Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

Mailing the Proposal

While most proposals are now submitted electronically, for those that require a hard copy submission, the Principal Investigator is responsible for duplicating required number of copies and delivering the proposal to OSP for review. Be sure to note whether the due date for your proposal is the *date of postmark or date received* at the sponsoring agency.

SUMMARY

This principal investigator handbook for pre-award activities is meant as a guide for submitting a proposal. It is not all encompassing. There are many aspects and scenarios that will need further guidance, and the Office of Sponsored programs can assist.

Contact Us

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Email: research@tnitech.edu

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