

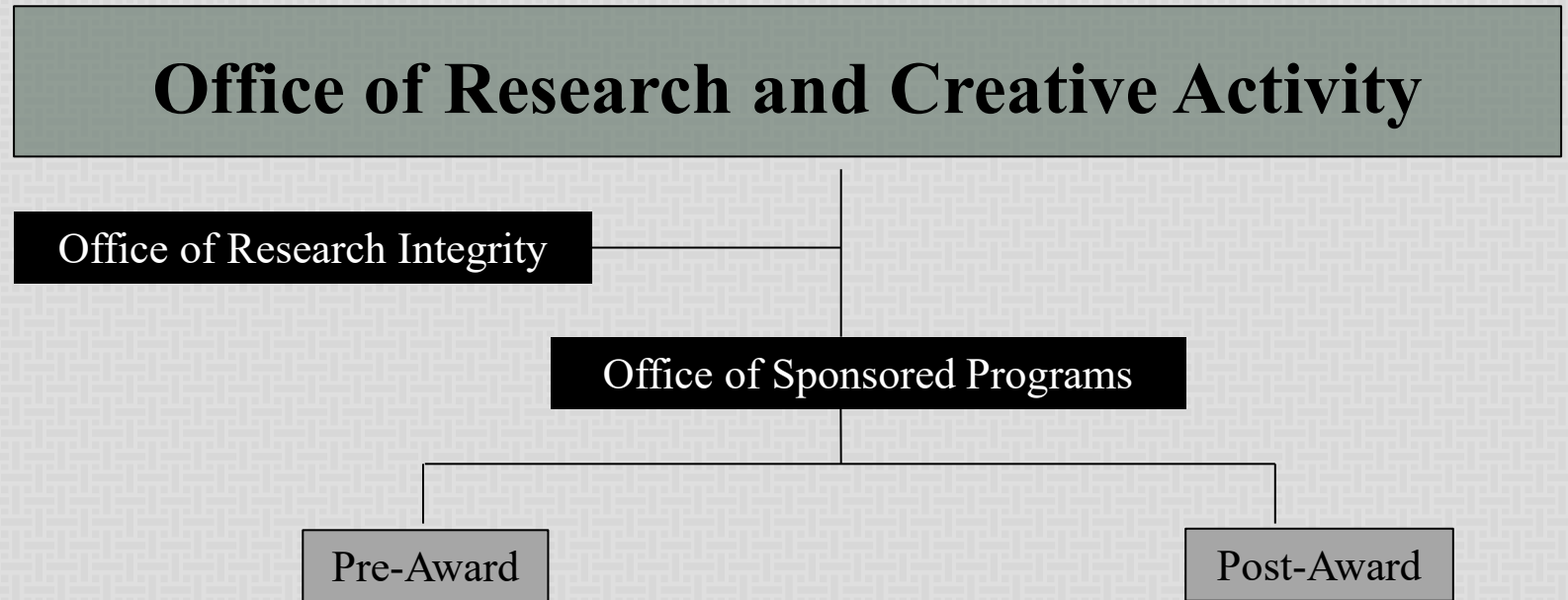


SPONSORED PROJECTS AT WKU: NAVIGATING YOUR APPROVER ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Friday, May 2, 2025

OFFICE OF RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The mission of the Office of Research & Creative Activity is to provide outstanding support for the research, service, creative, and scholarly endeavors of our faculty, staff, and students. Our staff is dedicated to partnering with the university community to increase external support for these activities, while ensuring compliance with federal, state, and institutional regulations.



OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS

PRE-AWARD STAFF

Katie Muchmore

Pre-Award Research Administrator

- 12 yrs. in Higher Ed Research Administration
- 2 yrs. in state government grant writing and management
- Process Improvement
- Data Management
- Pre-Award
- NSF

Kimberly Olin-Blue

Pre-Award Research Administrator

- 13 yrs. in Higher Ed Research Administration
- 6 yrs. in local/state government grant writing and management
- Worked at R1 & R2 institutions
- Research Development
- Pre-Award
- NIH

Von Abrego Natoli

Asst. Director, Pre-Award

- 23 yrs. in Higher Ed
- 14+ yrs. in Research Admin.
- Worked at R1 & R2 institutions
- Process Improvement
- Research Development
- Team Science
- Pre-Award
- NIH

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES IN SPONSORED PROGRAMS



WKU is the official applicant, meaning the external funds are entrusted to WKU for financial and regulatory administration. Proposals must be submitted by WKU's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). Only OSP staff have been assigned the AOR role.



The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) assists the faculty and staff at WKU in obtaining external funds. OSP offers assistance across the entire spectrum of sponsored programs activities.



The PI is responsible for technical and fiscal management of the sponsored project, while also complying with the sponsor's rules and regulations.



Approvers are responsible for reviewing proposal content and budget content to ensure all university resources, time/effort, and budget implications are appropriate.

WHO IS AN APPROVER?

Types of Approvers

Approvers in Academic Colleges are typically the **Department Chair** (or School Director), and **College Approver** (usually the college's RCAC representative).

Approvers not in academic colleges are typically the **first-line** and **next-line supervisor** for the employee.

**For the purposes of this discussion, Department Chair/College Approver will be used, but is representative of all types of approvers.*

APPROVER COMMUNICATION

PI's Intent to Submit a Proposal

Form Responses Completed by the PI

- Proposal Deadline
- Sponsor Name
- RFP/Solicitation/Contract Info
- Internal/External Collaborators
- Inform Approvers

OSP's Checklist and Internal Timeline

OSP Reviews the Sponsor Guidelines

- Required Proposal Documents
- Special Considerations and Instructions
- Internal Timeline for Draft/Final Versions for OSP Review

Proposal Management System Approval

Proposal Review

- May include PI, Co-PI, and/or WKU Personnel
- Proposal Documents
- Proposal Budget (effort and/or cost share)
- Approval

PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Four Weeks or More	Sixteen Business Days	Ten Business Days	Six Business Days	Three Business Days Before DEADLINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If your proposal includes a subaward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide sub Co-PI contact info ○ Provide OSP (or similar) contact info for sub institution ○ Begin working with OSP on WKU's budget immediately as it may impact subaward amounts <p><i>*Subaward institutions often require their own internal approval process; early communication is imperative</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide contact information for all internal and external collaborators (that are not subawards), if applicable ▪ Begin budget development (work with OSP) ▪ Start preparing secondary proposal pieces (biosketch, facilities, references, letters of commitment, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal Budget FINALIZED (including cost share and subaward budgets, if applicable) ▪ DRAFTS of all proposal pieces submitted to OSP for review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FINAL draft of all proposal materials submitted to OSP for final application ▪ Institutional approval routing underway via SPIRIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8:00 a.m. Final <u>MINOR</u> edits due to OSP ▪ ALL institutional approvals completed ▪ Following verification of approvals and final review, OSP will submit the proposal before or on the sponsor's due date <p><u><i>Proposals not adhering to these guidelines are at risk of not being submitted to the sponsor.</i></u></p>

https://www.wku.edu/sponsoredprograms/documents/proposal_submission_guidelines_2024.pdf

Proposal Review Timeline for Approvers

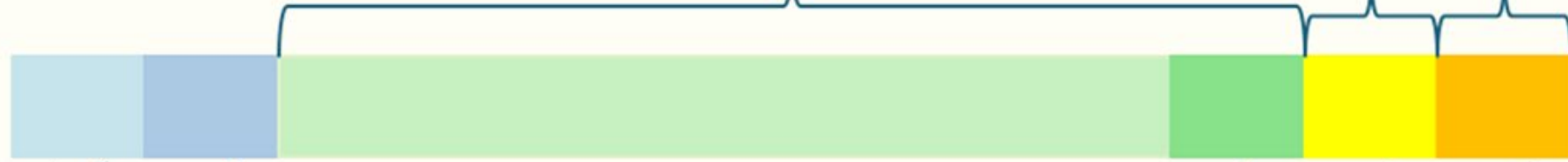
Approvers can check in with PI at anytime to discuss proposal preparation, communicate any department/college review deadlines, discuss effort and commitments, and begin reviewing budget and other documents – significant feedback can be provided during this time

PI notifies OSP of intent to submit
OSP sends checklist & internal timeline

PI works with OSP on budget and PI starts drafting proposal documents

10 Days Out: Drafts due to OSP
6 Days Out: Final drafts due to OSP
3 Days Out: OSP prepares for submission

SPIRIT approvals underway, minor feedback provided by approvers
Only feedback that would significantly impact review / no budget changes



PROPOSAL REVIEW & APPROVAL

-STEP BY STEP-



**1. PROPOSAL
CONTENT
REVIEW**



**2. PROPOSAL
BUDGET
REVIEW**



**3. PROPOSAL
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM**



Step 1 - Proposal Content Review

Existing Resource Considerations

- Appropriate Resources
- Facilities/Space
- Equipment/Instruments
- Personnel, services, etc.

Feasibility Considerations

- PI and/or project team expertise
- Infrastructure and policies
- Sustainability of the project

Other Considerations

- Institutional support and commitment
- Impact to WKU's reputation, any incorrect data



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Budget Components

- Direct Costs
- Indirect Costs

Personnel

- Types of Personnel
- Fringe
- Appointments/effort
- Effort Reassignment
- Summer Effort

Non-Personnel Costs

- Equipment
- Travel
- Tuition
- Participant Support
- Other Direct Costs

Cost Share

- Types of Cost Share
- Support -vs- Commitment



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Budget Components

Direct Costs are costs that can be specifically and easily identified as necessary for a particular project and are allowable under the sponsoring organization's guidelines. Line items include Personnel, Fringe, Travel, Equipment, Materials, Supplies, Tuition, Consultants, and Subawards.

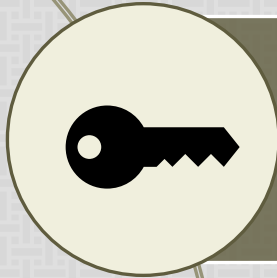
Indirect Costs (also known as Facilities and Administration (F&A)) are real costs that the institution incurs in support of extramural activities, but which cannot be readily identified with a particular sponsored project or institutional activity. Facilities are defined as depreciation on buildings and equipment, operations, and maintenance. Administration is defined as general administrative personnel costs, i.e. centralized units, accounting, department/unit staff, etc. There are different types of Indirect Cost rates, which are applied as allowed by the sponsor. (MTDC, TDC, Other)



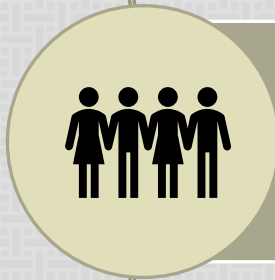
Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Personnel

Types of Personnel



Senior/Key Personnel provide a significant contribution to the proposed project and commonly include the roles of PI, PD, Co-I, Co-PI, and other non-PI Senior Personnel



Other Personnel include Research Associates, Post Docs, Graduate and Undergraduate Students who will be working on the proposed project and can be identified by name or “to be announced”.



Consultants are external (non-WKU employees) who are subject matter experts.

*WKU Employees are allowed to be Independent Consultants however are not allowed to use WKU resources.



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Personnel cont.

Types of Appointments	Fringe
Faculty (AY) 9, 10, or 11 month	39.00%
Faculty (SM) 3, 2, or 1 month	24.17%
Professional Non-Faculty -inc. postdocs (CY) 12 months	48.00%
Graduate Assistant (Fall/Spring) Semester	0.50%
Part-Time Staff/Students (CY) Hourly	8.15%



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Personnel cont.



Effort Reassignment

During the **Academic Year**, faculty effort, can include the **effort reassignment** of teaching (“Course Buy-out”), research, and/or service effort. Effort reassignment refers to a percentage of the faculty effort that would have been devoted to WKU-activities/responsibilities that are reassigned to grant-activities/responsibilities. If a course buy-out is supported with grant funds, often the “salary savings” can be used to support part-time faculty to cover the course.

Professional Staff can also have their calendar year effort reassigned to a grant.

Approvers should ensure that effort reassignment is feasible for the individual and department when approving the proposal. For example, how does this impact required course offerings, and how will other non-teaching activities be completed?

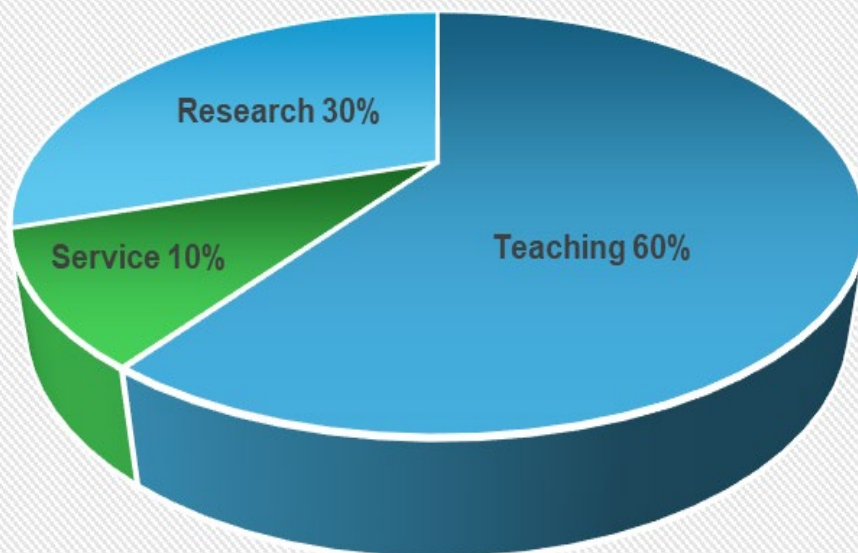


Step 2 - Budget Content Review

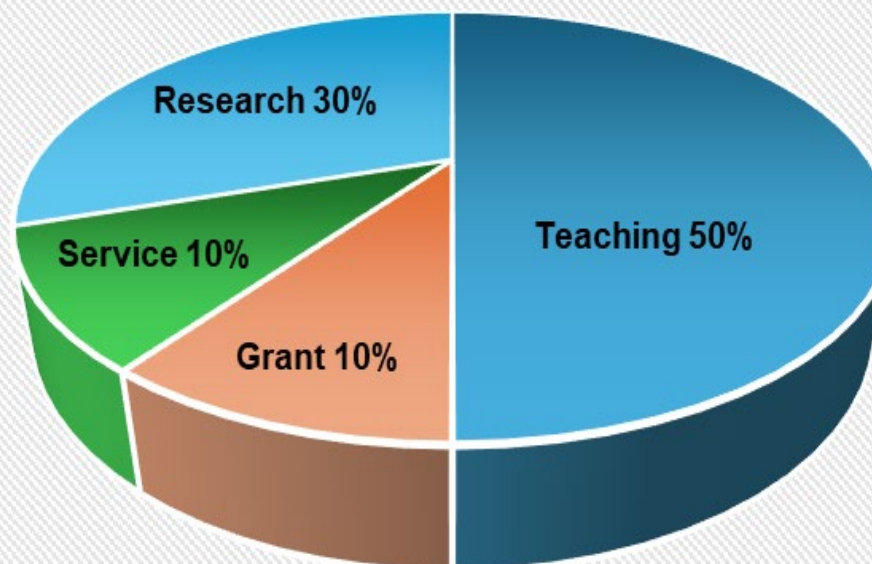
Personnel cont.

Federal guidance indicates that the institution must use the institutional base salary (IBS) provided in the financial system of record (Banner) when developing budgets and cannot compensate personnel beyond the IBS in the financial system of record.

100% AY Effort - WKU Only



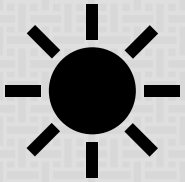
100% AY Effort - WKU & Grant





Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Personnel cont.



Summer Effort

Available **summer** effort depends on the duration of their academic year appointment. Since effort in the summer is off-contract, faculty are eligible to receive additional compensation for effort, using the institutional base salary rate.

AY Appointment (Contract Year Reassigned or Course Buy-out)	Available Summer Effort (Off-Contract)
9 months	3 months
10 months	2 months
11 months	1 month

Approvers should ensure that summer effort proposed is otherwise uncommitted.



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Non-Personnel

Travel

Equipment

Subawards

Material
&
Supplies

Tuition

Consultants



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Cost Share

Project Costs not provided by the sponsor, quantified to the sponsor in the budget and budget justification. Upon acceptance of award, all proposed cost share becomes committed and auditable.

Types of Cost Share

Mandatory Cost Share are costs required by the sponsor in proportion to the total project budget. The sponsor details the required mandatory cost share in detail within the RFP.

Voluntary Cost Share are costs necessary to complete the project but not required, nor requested by the sponsor. Voluntary cost share is prohibited by some sponsors and is discouraged by WKU.

Approvers should ensure that any cost share committed in the proposal will be available to the project prior to approving the proposal.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT/COMMITMENT

Letters of Support should not include monetary amounts when addressing support or resources. These letters are typically from the organization supporting the PI and the project in which resources will be available, without providing quantified dollar amounts.

Letters of Commitment are financial commitments from the organization for a specified amount and duration. Once cost share is proposed and accepted in an award, the cost share is committed and there is an obligation to meet the proposed cost share. It is customary to use this style when the sponsor DOES require cost share (Mandatory Cost Share).

Letter of Support with cost share implications.

The Department of Biology supports Dr. Abrego's project entitled "The best project ever" with dedicated lab space and will commit \$60,000 to the purchase of two sub-zero freezers to complete tasks associated with the proposed project.

Letter of Support of project, no cost share implications.

The Department of Biology supports Dr. Abrego's project entitled "The best project ever" with dedicated lab space and access to specialized equipment necessary to undertake project deliverables.



Step 2 - Budget Content Review

Sample Internal Budget

Step 3 – Proposal Management System

SPIRIT Record Review

SPIRIT

The **S**ponsored **P**rograms **I**nternal **R**ecord **I**nformation **T**erminal (**SPIRIT**) is a web-based record management system designed to house records for all sponsored projects administered through the Office of Sponsored Programs. SPIRIT allows users to view project data, run reports, and receive automated reminders.

SPIRIT allows approvers to review and approve proposals.

<https://app.wku.edu/spirit/index.php>

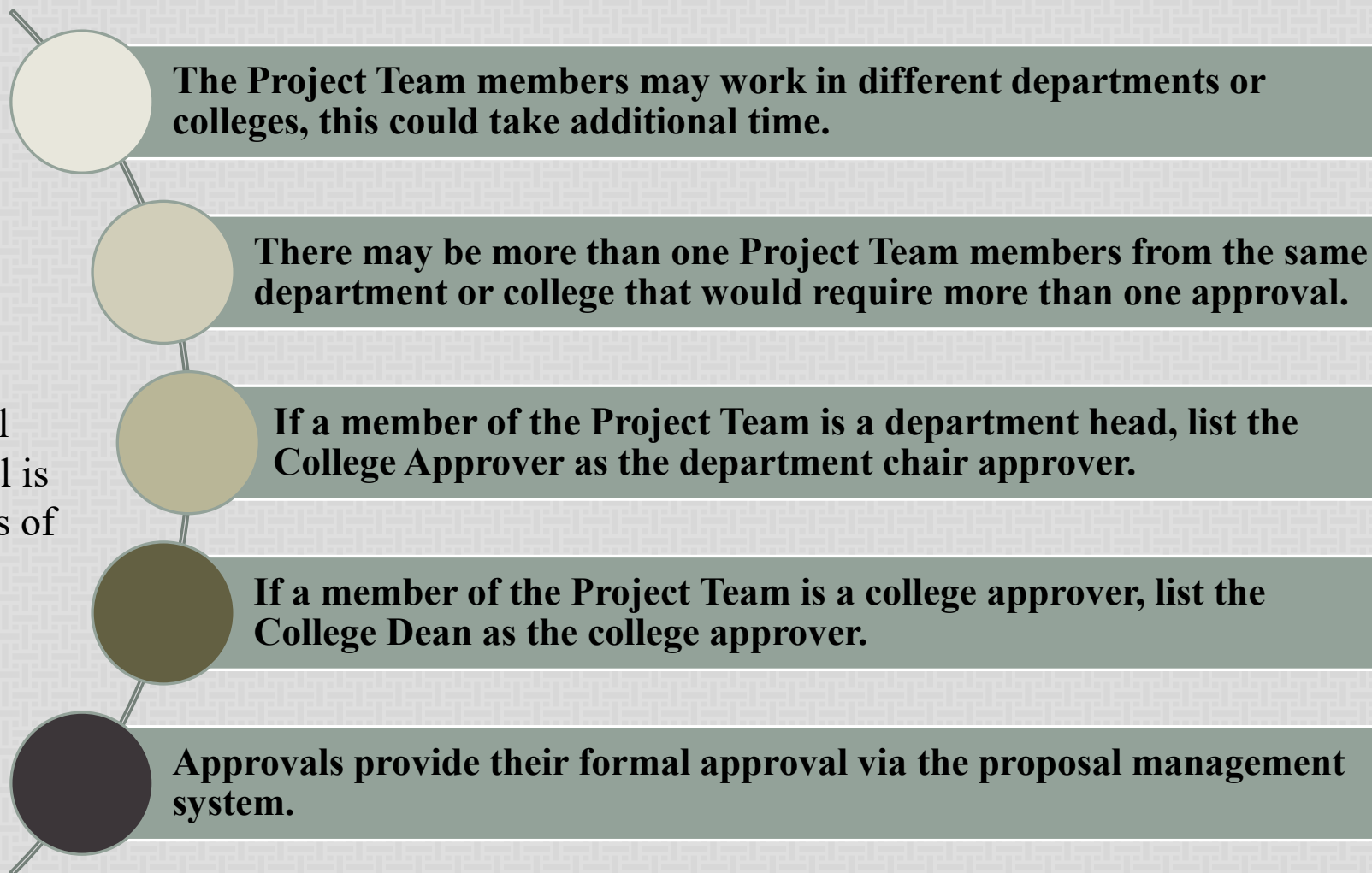


Step 3 – Proposal Management System

Formal Approvals

Department/College Formal Approvals

While approvers are encouraged to be involved in review during the proposal development process, formal approval is obtained once a final budget and drafts of pertinent proposal pieces have been received by OSP.



New

WKU APPROVERS' GUIDE

