OSP Proposal Approval Form (PAF)

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Overview
As of August 15, 2025, the OSP Proposal Approval Form (PAF) replaces the OSP Internal Routing and Review (IRR) Form as the internal document that summarizes a sponsored project proposal, including period of performance, effort commitments of key personnel, budget, cost share, related certifications, and other pertinent information.

The PI or Departmental Research Administrator (DRA) enters proposal data via a Qualtrics form (link above) to create the PAF, reviews for accuracy, and then routes for requisite approvals as determined by the nature of the proposed project. Approvals are obtained via email. Once all approvals are obtained, the PI or DRA sends the PAF with the proposal documents to the OSP Research Administrator (RA) for review and submission of the proposal to the sponsor.

The PAF is due on or before the proposal submission deadline.

While the PAF is an internal document and not a sponsor requirement, it is important to obtain appropriate approvals of commitments of effort, cost share, and other resources prior to proposal submission. The PAF is the document of record should questions arise at award or during the project's period of performance.

Process
Frequently Asked Questions and corresponding answers are provided in Appendix 1 below.

1. The **Principal Investigator (PI)** determines the resources required for a sponsored project proposal, including senior/key personnel effort, estimated budget, cost share (if required), and intellectual credit (if applicable).

2. The PI, or **Departmental Research Administrator (DRA)** on their behalf, enters the proposal data via a Qualtrics form (link above), receives the resulting Proposal Approval Form (PAF) by email.

3. The **PI**, or **DRA** on their behalf, forwards the PAF, a project summary, the internal budget (using the [OSP Budget Template](#)), and any other pertinent documentation for review and approval. Depending on the nature of the project, approvals may be required from ADR(s),

department chair(s), center/institute director(s), and/or the Vice President for Research (see FAQ 3).

    3.1. If the PI is in the department of **Biology**, **Chemistry**, **Communication Sciences and Disorders**, **Earth and Environmental Sciences**, **Physics**, **Psychology**, **Biomedical and Chemical Engineering**, **Civil and Environmental Engineering**, **Electrical Engineering and Computer Science**, or **Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering**:

        3.1.1. Email the PAF to the PI's **Department Chair** for approval. The PI's Department Chair is responsible for coordinating additional reviews and approvals, as applicable, including from (but not limited to) the Department Chair(s) and/or ADR(s) in collaborating School/College/Department(s).

        3.1.2. Once requisite approvals are obtained, the PI's **Department Chair** sends the PAF to the PI's **ADR** for approval. The PI's ADR is responsible for coordinating review and approval from the Vice President for Research (VPR), if required.

        3.1.3. To indicate final approval, the PI's **ADR** responds to the PI's **Department Chair** stating that the proposal associated with the PAF is approved for submission by OSP.

        3.1.4. The PI's **Department Chair** relays the approvals to the **PI**.

    3.2. In **all other departments/schools/colleges**:

        3.2.1. Email the PAF to the PI's **Associate Dean for Research** (ADR; or equivalent) for approval. The PI's ADR is responsible for coordinating additional reviews and approvals, as applicable, including from (but not limited to) the ADR(s) and/or Department Chair(s) in collaborating School/College/Department(s) and/or the VPR.

        3.2.2. To indicate final approval once requisite approvals are obtained, the PI's **ADR** responds to the **PI** stating that the proposal associated with the PAF is approved for submission by OSP.

4. The **PI,** or **DRA** on their behalf, sends the PAF and approvals with the proposal documents to the OSP Research Administrator (RA) for review and submission of the proposal to the sponsor.

5. Reviewers indicate approval by email using the following verbiage: *I have read, acknowledge and approve all items presented in the PAF in my role as [Department Chair, ADR, etc.] at the time of submission.*

6. If a reviewer does not approve, the **PI** works with the reviewer to address concerns and revises and resubmits the PAF for review and approval (see FAQ 7).

7. The **PI** and all other **SU Senior/Key Personnel** identified in the PAF will receive by email a unique survey link that must be completed prior to proposal submission: **SU Investigator Proposal Assurances and Certifications (PAC)**.

8. If applicable, the PI will receive by email a unique survey link that must be completed prior to award acceptance: **EHS Grant Proposal Hazard Screening**.

9. The **OSP RA** ensures all PAF approvals and PAC assurances are obtained and reviews and submits the proposal.

10. The **Research Services Team** assists with training on the form and process and assists with any technical issues.

Responsibilities

Below is an outline of responsibilities as they relate to this process.

PI:

- Works with the DRA, if available, to complete internal documents and proposal application materials.
- Determines the resources required for a sponsored project proposal, including senior/key personnel effort, estimated budget, cost share (if required), and intellectual credit (if applicable),
- Creates the PAF via the Qualtrics form (link above) and reviews for accuracy. If the PI delegates entering the proposal data to the DRA, the PI reviews the PAF (email) to confirm completeness and accuracy.
- Routes by email the PAF, a project summary, the internal (OSP) budget, and any other pertinent documentation for review and approval. Depending on the nature of the project, approvals may be required from ADR(s), department chair(s), center/institute director(s), associate dean(s) for research, and/or the Vice President for Research (see FAQ 3).
- Sends the PAF and approvals with the proposal documents to the OSP Research Administrator (RA) for review and submission of the proposal to the sponsor.
- Completes the SU Investigator Proposal and Assurances (PAC) form survey and, if applicable, the EHS Grant Proposal Hazard Screening form survey received via email.

Departmental Research Administrator (DRA):

- Serves as liaison between the PI and OSP RA to complete internal documents and proposal application materials, as described above.
- Creates the PAF via the Qualtrics form (link above), reviews the PAF (email) for accuracy, and forwards to the PI for review and approval.
- Facilitates collecting additional approvals as determined by the nature of the project (see FAQ 3).

Collaborator(s), Department Chair(s), Center/Institute Director(s), Associate Dean(s) for Research, Vice President for Research, and/or other stakeholders, as applicable (see FAQ 3):

- Reviews the PAF.
- Coordinates with other stakeholders, as applicable.
- Indicates approval or disapproval.

Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP):

- Ensures all necessary PAF approvals and PAC assurances are obtained prior to proposal submission.

Research Services:

- Assists PI/Department with technical issues.

Need Help?

If you have questions about this procedure or the required form, contact Jill Ferguson at jsfergus@syr.edu or (315) 443-5012.

Related Topics

SU Investigator Proposal Assurances and Certifications (PAC)
EHS Grant Proposal Hazard Screening

Creation Date

08/15/2025

Latest Revision Date

11/11/2025

APPENDIX 1. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What does the PAF cover?

2. What is the deadline policy for PAF and proposal submission?

3. How do I know whether I need prior approvals before sending my PAF for ADR approval?

4. Can I start filling out the survey form and come back to it later?

5. How do I clear my browser cache and cookies if I'm having trouble with the form?

6. I am working on two (or more) proposals. How should I manage the PAF process for multiple submissions?

7. I submitted a response but need to make changes. What should I do?

1. **What does the PAF cover?**

You may need to know the following for your PAF (see also Form Preview):
- Proposal Type
- Sponsor Information, including submission deadline date, sponsor and (if applicable) prime sponsor, program identifier or name, and solicitation URL
- Project Title
- SU Research Team, including Investigator Roles
- Intellectual Credit
- Center/Institute Credit
- Project Type
- Project Location
- Sponsor Budget, including proposed start and end dates; estimated total direct costs; whether the sponsor limits or disallows indirect costs; and whether the award will include subcontracts, payments issued directly to project personnel, or program income
- Cost Sharing
- Effort Commitment Outside Regular Duties, including course release not funded by the sponsor (including research leave), teaching buyout, and/or extra service

Proposal Type
Select the most appropriate proposal type from the following options:

- **New** – A new proposal being submitted for the first time to this sponsor
- **Resubmission** – A revised version of a previously submitted proposal that was not funded by this sponsor
- **Competitive Renewal** – A proposal to continue a funded project beyond its approved project period that will compete with all new applications in the same funding cycle (sometimes called a competitive continuation)
- **Supplement** – A request for additional funding for an existing award to expand its scope, add new components, or address unexpected circumstances

- **Pre-proposal** – A condensed preliminary proposal (sometimes called a letter of intent, concept paper, or white paper)
- **Incoming transfer** – An award transferring to Syracuse University from another institution accompanying a new faculty appointment

Sponsor

The Sponsor is the organization from which Syracuse University will receive funding. Often, there is just one sponsor entity. In these situations, this entity is both the Sponsor and Prime Sponsor. However, some sponsors received their funding from another upstream entity. This is the prime (or originating) source of the funds. For example, for a grant funded by the NIH to University of X, which leads the award and subawards to Syracuse University, University of X is Syracuse University's Sponsor and NIH is the Prime Sponsor.

Prime Sponsor

The prime (or originating) source of funds, which may or may not be Syracuse University's Sponsor. For example, for a grant funded by the NIH to University of X, which leads the award and subawards to Syracuse University, University of X is Syracuse University's Sponsor and NIH is the Prime Sponsor.

Investigator Roles

Syracuse University recognizes the following investigator roles:

- **Principal Investigator (PI)** – Identifies the individual responsible for activities on a research project or activity, particularly those funded by a grant, a cooperative agreement, a training or public service project, a contract, or other sponsored mechanism. Responsibilities include the intellectual conduct of the project, fiscal accountability, administration, and compliance, including the submission of all required reports. For the purposes of this definition, when used throughout, the term Principal Investigator also includes Project Director (PD), and the term co-PI also includes co-PD. Note: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) allows two or more individuals to share responsibility for the conduct of the project. These individuals are referred to by NIH as Multiple Principal Investigators (MPI). For MPI proposals, select PI for each MPI. The first PI listed will serve as the Contact PI and must be affiliated with the submitting institution.
- **Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)** – A senior member of the key personnel team whose role is similar to that of the PI in determining the intellectual content, direction, and conduct of the research or program activities. A Co-PI may share equal responsibility with the PI for project oversight, budget management, and reporting as part of a multi-investigator team or may direct a particular portion of the project and retain limited administrative oversight over the award. NIH does not recognize Co-PI as a role.
- **Co-Investigator (Co-I)** – An individual the PI relies on to assume responsibilities above those of other personnel who make significant contributions to the sponsored project or program. A Co-I does not have overall responsibility and authority for the sponsored project or program which lies with the PI (or PIs on a NIH MPI project). Co-Is can be named in the proposal provided the sponsor accepts the role.

- **Other Senior/Key Personnel** – Identifies a senior/key member of the project team who is named in the proposal and shares administrative, fiscal, and scientific conduct with the PI on research projects, but does not have a specific sponsor defined role designation as referenced above.

Intellectual Credit

The PAF collects information for situations where faculty from several units have participated in the development of the proposal and will collaborate in the conduct of the project. The percentage distribution does not necessarily have to reflect anticipated dollars to be expended or percentage of effort in terms of project appointments. The intent is to reflect the agreement among the project participants as to how they wish the "credit" for the project to be interpreted.

Intellectual Credit % is <u>required for ECS proposal</u> and optional all other proposals. Assigned by the PI, Intellectual Credit represents the percentage of intellectual contribution to the proposal for each investigator and must equal 100%.

Project Type

The "project type" selection will determine how the project will be classified for reporting purposes and helps determine the correct facilities and administrative (F&A) rate (sometimes referred to as "indirect cost rate" or "IDC rate") on sponsor projects. Project types are mandatory for the University's financial system to classify all expenditures appropriately.

- **Research & Development (R&D)** (also known as "Sponsored Research" or "Organized Research")
  - All separately budgeted and accounted for R&D activities that are sponsored by Federal and non-Federal agencies and organizations ([2 CFR 200 Appdx III](#)).
  - R&D is creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge—including knowledge of humankind, culture, and society—and to devise new applications of available knowledge (see [NSF NCSES – IV. US Higher Education R&D](#)).
    - "Research" is the systematic study directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied ([2 CFR 200.1](#)).
    - "Development" is the systematic use of knowledge and understanding gained from research to produce useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including designing and developing prototypes and processes ([2 CFR 200.1](#)).
  - Research Training: The term "research" also includes activities involving the training of individuals in research techniques where such activities utilize the same facilities as other research and development activities and where such activities are not included in the instruction function ([2 CFR 200 Appdx III](#)).
- **Instruction** (also known as "Training")
  - Specific instructional or training activity established by a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement ([2 CFR 200 Appdx III](#)).

- o Includes the teaching and training activities of an institution. Except for research training (as defined in "Sponsored Research"), this term includes all teaching and training activities […] (2 CFR 200 Appdx III).
- o Examples of sponsored instruction projects include those for teaching, curriculum development, and non-research training.
- **Other Sponsored Activity** (also known as "Other")
  - o Programs and projects financed by Federal and non-Federal agencies and organizations which involve the performance of work other than instruction and organized research (2 CFR 200 Appdx III).
  - o Examples of such programs and projects are health service projects and community service programs (2 CFR 200 Appdx III).

If the project type is R&D, the PI must identify the project's primary type of research as defined below. In this instance, "primary" means that over 50% of the project's proposed effort and associated expenditures are related to one of the three types of research.

- **Basic Research** – Experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. Creative and scholarly activities are included in the definition of "Basic Research."
- **Applied Research** – Original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective.
- **Experimental Development** – Systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, which is directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products or processes.

2. What is the deadline policy for PAF and proposal submission?

The PAF is due on or before the proposal submission deadline. For additional guidance, review the OSP Service Guidelines.

3. How do I know whether I need additional approvals before sending my PAF for final approval from the ADR?

The PAF survey form will prompt you to obtain prior approvals depending on your responses, as follows:

- **Off-campus F&A rate**: Requires approval of the Vice President for Research (VPR).
- **Cost sharing**: Requires documentation of commitments from all sources, including from third-party partners for cash or in-kind cost share, Department Chair for department-level resources, Center/Institute Director for center/institute resources, ADR for school/college-level resources, and/or VPR for University-level resources.
- **Effort commitment outside regular duties**, including **course release**, **teaching buyout**, and/or **extra service**: The PI and/or other project personnel, as applicable, must secure approval from their Department Chair.

- **University resources**: PIs should discuss with ADRs the impact of the proposed project on institutional resources and any long-term needs that may extend beyond the life of the award.

4. Can I start filling out the survey form and come back to it later?

You can leave the survey form at any time and return later to finish. Your responses will be saved automatically. To continue where you left off, simply reopen the survey link on the same device and browser. If you experience any issues, please ensure cookies are enabled in your browser.

5. How do I clear my browser cache and cookies if I'm having trouble with the form?

Why do this? Old browser data can cause issues like pages not loading, buttons not working, or incorrect info showing. Clearing your cache and cookies often fixes this.

How to clear cache and cookies <u>for just the Qualtrics site</u>:

1. Go to the Qualtrics site at https://syracuseuniversity.qualtrics.com.
2. Click the lock icon next to the URL in your browser's address bar.
3. Open site settings or cookies and site data.
4. Choose the option to clear or remove site data.
5. Refresh the page.

6. I am working on two (or more) proposals. How should I manage the PAF process for multiple submissions?

You must complete and submit one PAF survey form response before starting another one. As an interim step, utilize the Form Preview to draft responses and note where additional approvals may be required in addition to ADR approval.

7. I submitted a response but need to make changes. What should I do?

If you've already submitted the survey and need to update your answers, email ospoff@syr.edu to request a Retake Response link. This allows you to reopen your previous submission and make changes. Once you resubmit, your changes will replace the original submission.