Grant Application Pre-Approval Policy
ADM 42.0
Office of University Advancement

Policy Type: Administrative
Applies to: Faculty, Staff

POLICY DATES

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Introduction

Any University of Mount Union faculty or staff member may initiate a grant application, but they must do so following the grant pre-approval policy and process outlined here.

This policy has been developed to ensure proposed projects align with institutional priorities, can be implemented with current campus resources (in addition to the grant funding), and demonstrate sustainability, as needed, beyond the grant cycle. Only those grant applications that receive pre-approval through the procedure detailed below can be submitted to a funding entity.

All funded grant projects are governed by all relevant University policies.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Direct costs	Costs that are clearly identified as a grant expenditure (e.g., employee compensation, materials, equipment).
Funding Entity	Provider of the grant funding can be public or private.
Indirect costs (IDCs)	Costs that contribute to the work of the grant but cannot be specifically associated with the grant project itself (e.g., general office supplies, library resources, maintenance expenses). Different funding entities will have different indirect cost percentages.
In-Kind Contribution	A non-cash item that can be assigned a cash value (e.g., donated materials, use of a physical space without payment).
Letter of Intent (LOI)	Typically a one-page executive summary of the proposed project. Often submitted prior to an invitation to submit a complete grant application.
Matching Funds	Funds that the University must commit to providing. Matching funds are typically 1:1 but not always.
Principal Investigator (PI)	Person(s) who serves as the project leader for the grant. PI(s) must be a University faculty or staff member and be current with all mandatory compliance training. Some funding entities will use program director or project manager in place of principal investigator.
Subcontractor or Sub-awardee	A non-University entity responsible for elements of the grant project. Subcontractors/sub-awardees typically receive part of the grant funding for their work. Contracts for subcontractors/sub-awardees must adhere to the Contract Review Policy (link shared in the Resources section below).

Policy Details

When a Principal Investigator(s) has a grant project in mind, they should schedule an initial meeting with the Director of Grants and Principal Investigator's VP. During this meeting, the Director of Grants will help brainstorm the project, provide information on the grant pre-approval process, assist with developing an application submission timeline, and, if needed,

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aid in finding an appropriate funding entity. The Director of Grants will also make sure that a similar project is not already underway and that the proposed project aligns with the University's mission and/or strategic plan.

Some projects may require additional support from other campus offices. For example, new equipment may need to be purchased and space for that equipment may need to be found. The Principal Investigator(s) should not assume that support from other campus offices is readily available for their project and should collaborate with those offices on resource allocation prior to the grant application pre-approval process.

The Director of Grants provides support through the grant lifecycle: proposal development, proposal submission, project implementation and conduct, grant compliance, fund management, and grant close-out. However, the University's strategic needs may require the Director to prioritize some projects over others. The Director will work closely with the Principal Investigator(s) to identify the roles and responsibilities of those involved in a project, so the Principal Investigator(s) understands the support they can expect from the project's initial stage through completion.

If the grant is funded, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator(s) to understand and adhere to all of the funding entity's grant requirements and expectations.

Approval Process
Grant applications that do not go through the appropriate pre-approval process below cannot be submitted to the granting entity. Because the pre-approval process requires specific information about the grant project, it is highly recommended that the Principal Investigator(s) has a strong draft of the grant application completed prior to initiating the pre-approval process.

There are two different grant approval processes, depending on the type of grant:
I.   **Abbreviated Pre-Approval:** Grants that meet **all** of the following parameters are approved via a short preapproval process. (See Procedure section for more specific information.)
   a.   Seek $0-$3,000 in funding.
   b.   Do not require a match or in-kind contribution.
   c.   Do not require a commitment to institutionalize the project and/or staff at the end of the grant period.
   d.   Do not involve partnerships with non-University entities and/or subcontractors.

II. **Standard Pre-Approval:** Grants that meet **one or more** of the following parameters must complete the standard pre-approval process. (See Procedure section for more specific information.) a. Seek at least $3,001 in funding.
   a.   May require a match or in-kind contribution.
   b.   May involve partnerships with non-University entities and/or subcontractors.
   c.   May require a commitment to institutionalize the project and/or staff at the end of the grant period.

Unless the Principal Investigator(s) and Director of Grants determine otherwise, LOIs must go through the abbreviated pre-approval process.

The following questions are often taken into consideration when reviewing a project's pre-approval paperwork:
   •   Does the project fit within the mission and/or strategic plan of the University?
   •   Will the project negatively impact current effort(s) and/or responsibilities of those involved in the project?
   •   Does the University have the resources required to take on the project, both during the lifecycle of the proposed project and beyond, as needed?

Given the complexity of most grant projects, many different University offices are involved in the pre-approval process.

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These offices are part of the process not to complicate it but to ensure that, if funded, the grant project's implementation goes smoothly. The Director of Grants will help usher the application through the pre-approval process to keep the process moving as swiftly and as efficiently as possible.

If project proposal revisions are needed after the Principal Investigator(s) has initiated the pre-approval process, the Principal Investigator(s) must notify the Director of Grants immediately. The Director of Grants will communicate these revisions to the appropriate offices.

Budget
No matter which pre-approval process is required, a budget with justification must be submitted by the Principal Investigator(s). Pre-approval will not be given to projects that lack a budget. While budget changes may occur after pre-approval, as noted above, the expectation is that the anticipated budget submitted in the pre-approval process will be very close to the final budget submitted to the funding entity.

Principal Investigators may find the following guidelines helpful:
- The University uses a standard 25% to determine fringe benefits for salaries.
- The University uses a standard 10% indirect cost rate for government grants, although some government funding entities use a different indirect cost rate (which is typically provided in the grant application guidelines).
- If faculty stipends are part of the budget application, that stipend compensation should be based on the current faculty summer/winter pay rates for a course of 6-15 students and/or a prorated rate of the faculty member's annual salary, whichever option better meets the project's work commitment.
- If staff compensation is part of the budget application, staff compensation should be based on either the current adjunct summer/winter pay rates for a course of 6-15 students, a prorated rate of the staff member's annual salary, or the staff member's hourly rate, whichever option better meets the project's work commitment.
- Course release time is based on the current faculty summer/winter pay rates for a course of 6-15 students.

If a subcontractor is required for the project, the Principal Investigator(s) will work with the Director of Grants to negotiate the terms of the subcontractor's work and complete the appropriate Business Office paperwork. All contracts involving outside vendors must follow the Contract Review Policy (link provided below in the Resources section).

Pre-Approval Process Timeline
When possible, it is **highly recommended** that the initial meeting with the Director of Grants occurs at least eight weeks prior to the application deadline, that the pre-approval process concludes at least two weeks prior to the application deadline, and that the Director of Grants receives the final grant application at least one week prior to the application deadline. However, not all grant funding opportunities are posted with such a generous turnaround time. In those cases, the Principal Investigators(s) and Director of Grants will work together to determine the most effective timeline for the pre-approval and submission process.

Federal grant applications are extensive. Principal Investigators who wish to pursue a federal grant should have their initial meeting with the Director of Grants at least three months prior to the application deadline.

Grant applications involving matching funds can require extra time to ensure the matching funds are available. Principal Investigators who wish to pursue a matching-fund grant should have their initial meeting with the Director of Grants at least two months prior to the application deadline.

The recommended pre-approval process timeline is below. Grant applications that do not adhere to the recommended timeline may not be reviewed in time to meet the grant application deadline.

Initial meeting with the Director of Grants	At least eight weeks prior to application deadline
Submission of pre-approval application via Softdocs	At least three weeks prior to the application deadline

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Completion of pre-approval process	At least two weeks prior to the application deadline
Submission of final grant application to the Director of Grants	At least one week prior to the application deadline

There may be times when a grant application's approval must be accelerated through the pre-approval process; these exceptions are made at the discretion of the Director of Grants and the Principal Investigator's VP.

Application Submission and Award Receipt
The Director of Grants is the designated liaison for grant applications. For those funding entities that utilize an online application portal with a single institutional account, the Director of Grants will be the one to submit the application on behalf of the Principal Investigator(s). The Principal Investigator(s) is not considered an institutional official, even if the grant document is preprinted indicating so.

When a grant contract is received, the Director of Grants reviews the contract and facilitates any final negotiations between the funding entity and the Principal Investigator(s). Once the negotiations are complete, those documents requiring formal University acceptance will receive the appropriate signature(s) and will be forwarded to the funding entity for final signature. The finalized document(s) must be forwarded to the Director of Grants, who will notify the University Controller to open an account; the Director of Grants will also notify other relevant offices and departments of the award and its stipulations.

Grant Project Modifications
There are times when a funded grant project must be modified after the project start date (e.g., timeline extensions, Principal Investigator changes). All modification requests to a funded grant project must be submitted to the Director of Grants as soon as they are identified. The Director of Grants will initiate the formal requests for modification with the funding entity. Written approval of the modifications must be received by the Director of Grants from the funding entity prior to the Principal Investigator(s) implementing the requested modification.

PROCEDURE

Grant proposals that do not adhere to the appropriate pre-approval process and timeline noted below cannot be submitted to a funding entity. If the Principal Investigator(s) believes that their proposal cannot go through the appropriate pre-approval process, they must reach out to the Director of Grants immediately to discuss pre-approval options.

Once the Principal Investigator(s) submits the pre-approval form, the Director of Grants will move the form through the remainder of the preapproval process and will notify the Principal Investigator(s) of the approval decision.

Abbreviated Pre-Approval Process
The pre-approval process must be completed **no less than two weeks** prior to the grant application's submission deadline.
I.   Complete the Quick Pre-Approval form found here.
II.   Obtain signature from the Principal Investigator's VP (if two or more Principal Investigators, then signatures are required from all relevant VPs).
III. Obtain signature from the University Controller and the Director of Grants.

Standard Pre-Approval Process
The pre-approval process must be completed **no less than two weeks** prior to the grant application's submission deadline.
I.   Complete the Pre-Approval form found here.

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II.   Obtain signature from the Principal Investigator's VP (if two or more Principal Investigators, then signatures are required from all relevant VPs).
III.   Obtain signature(s) from University offices that will be supporting and/or collaborating on the project. These offices include:
   a.   Director of Human Resources (for grants with significant personnel needs)
   b.   Director of Information Technology (for grants with technology purchases).
   c.   Director of Physical Plant (for grants with significant facility and/or equipment needs).
   d.   Director of Institutional Effectiveness (for grants with significant institutional data needs).
IV.   Obtain signature from the University Controller and the Director of Grants.
V.   Obtain signature from VP of Business Affairs and VP of Advancement.

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Director of Grants	Brainstorm projects, assist with finding funding sources, answer questions related to the grant application process, provide resources to help with writing the grant application and developing the budget, track grant applications from initial meetings through the grant lifecycle (if awarded), work with the Principal Investigator(s) on grant implementation, assist with post-grant reporting
Principal Investigator (PI)	Serve as project lead, initiate the project, submit the proper pre-approval form(s), write the grant application, implement the grant project, complete all required reports, facilitate the purchase of materials and/or equipment, submit necessary personnel compensation paperwork
University Controller	Create the account number, ensure accuracy with accountability, may be involved in fund allocation, provide financial documents as needed

Resources

Contract Review Policy

Facility Usage and Fee Policy

Gift and Gift Cards

Human Subject Voucher

Information Security Policy

Marketing Release Form (for marketing and/or documentation purposes)

Grant Pre-Approval Form

Purchasing Procedure Policy

Technology Resources Acceptable Use Policy

Travel and Miscellaneous Expense Reimbursement Form

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Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
All inquiries related to the grant submission process.	Director of Grants	330-829-6127	dudahe@mountunion.edu

History

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.
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