

Tuskegee University's Pre-Award Business Process

Tuskegee University's current Pre-Award research business process is primarily manual and semi-centralized, managed by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and coordinated across academic departments, compliance offices, finance, legal, and institutional leadership. The process is currently supported by a combination of internal forms, email routing, sponsor portals, spreadsheets, and institutional systems, with plans underway to modernize and automate workflows through the implementation of systems such as Cayuse.

Current Tuskegee University Pre-Award Business Process

1. Funding Opportunity Identification & PI Engagement

- Principal Investigators (PIs) identify funding opportunities.
- PIs notify OSP of intent to submit proposals.
- OSP assists with:
 - Sponsor guideline interpretation
 - Eligibility review
 - Deadline management
 - Proposal planning timelines

2. Proposal Intake & Internal Notification

- PI submits preliminary proposal information to OSP
- Internal intake generally includes:
 - Funding opportunity announcement (FOA/NOFO)
 - Project summary/scope
 - Estimated budget
 - Submission deadline
 - List of collaborators/subrecipients
 - Compliance considerations (IRB, IACUC, Export Control, etc.)

3. Budget Development & Compliance Review

OSP works collaboratively with the PI to develop:

- Detailed proposal budgets
- Budget justifications
- IDC/F&A calculations

Current reviews include:

- IDC/F&A verification
- Fringe validation
- Allowability review
- Sponsor cap review
- Salary compliance
- Subrecipient review and documentation

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Subrecipient requirements currently include:

- SAM.gov verification
- Subrecipient Commitment Forms
- Scope of Work
- Budget & budget justification
- Institutional contact verification

4. Internal Routing & Approval Chain

Tuskegee currently uses an Internal Routing Form (IRF)/Proposal Approval process.

Routing sequence generally follows:

1. Principal Investigator (PI)
2. Co-PI(s), if applicable
3. Department Chair
4. Dean
5. OSP Grants Specialist/Director
6. Vice President for Research
7. Finance/CFO review (when applicable)
8. Legal review (contracts/subawards/agreements)
9. Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

Key institutional constraints:

- Only authorized officials may legally bind the university.
- Deans and faculty cannot sign agreements on behalf of the university.
- Current authorized officials include:
 - Dr. Timothy Turner (AOR)
 - Wendell Lopez (financial signatory)

5. Compliance Verification

Before submission, OSP verifies:

- IRB/IACUC status (if applicable)
- Data management requirements

Compliance is currently tracked manually or through decentralized systems, though Tuskegee is actively pursuing centralized compliance tracking through Cayuse/workflow systems.

6. Proposal Review & Submission Readiness

OSP conducts administrative review for:

- Completeness
- Sponsor formatting

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- Budget accuracy
- Institutional approvals
- Compliance documentation
- Subrecipient documentation

Current operational expectations:

- Proposals should arrive sufficiently in advance for review.
- OSP strongly discourages last-minute submissions.
- Proposals received within approximately 2 hours of sponsor deadlines may:
 - receive limited review, or
 - be submitted without full institutional quality control acknowledgment.

7. Proposal Submission

Final submissions are currently completed through sponsor systems such as:

- [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov)
- [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- Sponsor-specific portals

OSP/AOR performs the official submission.

Current submission environment is heavily email-driven and portal-driven with limited workflow automation.

8. Award Negotiation & Transition to Post-Award

After sponsor notification:

- OSP coordinates:
 - award review, ○ agreement negotiation,
 - legal review, ○ signature routing

Once fully executed:

- Award information transitions to Grants & Contracts Accounting for account setup and financial management.
- Systems such as TigerWeb are used for financial visibility and budget monitoring.