OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

POLICY ON SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSALS

All research grant proposals submitted to external funding sources by Maine Medical Center Principal Investigators must be reviewed, routed, approved and submitted through MMCRI's Office of Grants and Contracts. Each proposal is reviewed to ensure that it adheres to both Institutional policy and funder guidelines, and is accurate and error-free. Grants and Contracts staff work with Principal Investigators to provide guidance and assistance with funder policies, budget development, templates for grant sections, editing services, and advice regarding human subjects designations. The office will guide the Investigator regarding needed institutional approvals, and will work with collaborating institutions to ensure required documentation is received on time.

DEADLINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

It is MMCRI policy to submit proposals 1-2 days prior to sponsor deadlines. This policy is especially important in the case of electronic submissions, as it allows time to solve any technical difficulties prior to the due date. We are following the recommendation of NIH, which strongly encourages early submission to allow time for fixing errors prior to deadline. This policy applies to all funding sources.

Thus, final deadlines for submission to Grants and Contracts are as follows:

TWELVE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO DEADLINE: Start-up Form; Department Chair approval; budget drafted; collaborative budget amounts defined and communicated to collaborating institutions.

SEVEN WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO DEADLINE: All final grant documents (specific aims and research strategy may be in "near final" form but also must be submitted); collaborator documentation approvals and budgets; MMC budget finalized; cost-sharing approval (if applicable).

FOUR WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO DEADLINE: Final specific aims and research strategy.

THREE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO DEADLINE: Grants and Contracts generates a pdf of entire application; PI and Grant Administrator review/approve. Any changes must be made on this day.

ONE TO TWO WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO DEADLINE: Application submitted.

Investigators who do not meet these deadlines will need to wait until the next cycle to submit their proposal.

While the above are the **final** deadlines, the Grants and Contracts staff prefers to work with PIs over an approximate one month period to assemble the application in a more thoughtful and timely manner that helps ensure a better proposal. In this way we can work with Investigators to develop accurate and appropriate budgets, review and edit documents to ensure they are error-free and well-written, provide templates and samples as needed, address issues around human subjects' designations (consulting with compliance if needed), and work with collaborators to receive institutional documents on time. The following deadlines are based on an NIH R01 application; components of the application are revised as needed for other funding sources. Once an investigator sends us the "Start-Up Questionnaire" we will create a customized timeline/checklist for the proposal. By reviewing documents over this period, the office can trouble-shoot issues that may arise and avoid last minute problems.

PREFFERED PROCESS FOR RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Deadline	Task/Document	Notes
4 weeks prior to deadline	Pre-submission form signed by Department Chair (approval of cost-share included) Start-Up Proposal questions due	Dept. Chairs must sign, and provider of any cost-sharing must approve. Grants and Contracts staff will review start-up questions and discuss issues with PI such as collaborating institutions, budget allocation, and human subjects requirements.
3 weeks prior to deadline	Facilities, Equipment, Resource Sharing, Authentication	The Grants Office provides templates and editing services
3 weeks prior to deadline	Collaborators are contacted; budget caps for Subawards are identified	Grants Administrator will work on this with PI.
2 weeks prior to deadline	Budget and justification, human subjects or vertebrate animals (if applicable), Biosketches for senior/key personnel	Grants admin will work with you to develop the budget and justification
7 working days prior to deadline	Finals of abstract, narrative, and letters of support; final documents from collaborators are due; near final draft of Introduction, Aims and Research Strategy	Near final means there will be no further changes that affect budget, status of vertebrate animals or human subjects, or change collaborators or subawards
4 working days prior to deadlline	Final Aims, Strategy, References	
3 working day prior to deadline	PI and Grants Administrator review final pdf	Changes made if needed
1-2 days prior to deadline	Grants Administrator submits	PI reviews on era commons (if NIH)

Principal Investigators should also be aware of noteworthy issues that often occur in the grant submission. These are described below.

Large program or collaborative applications: These applications require more time to prepare, given budget complexities and the need for budget agreement among collaborators, the requirement that all collaborating institutions submit documents that have been approved by their institutional official, and the need for letters and documents from many sources. Each institution has its own process and often needs 2-3 weeks before they can sign off. This must be factored into our timeline and therefore we must begin earlier on a collaborative proposal.

Applications that involve human subjects: The NIH has revised its human subjects section of the application effective 1/25/18, and the requirements are quite detailed now. The Grants Administrator can work with you regarding the correct human subjects designation for your project, and provide guidance on what needs to be written, consulting with the compliance department as needed. This should be done early in the process in case the project is complex and requires research to identify the correct designation. The Grants and Contracts office has prepared an updated application instruction booklet for NIH including its human subjects section. Additionally, if your application involves lab tests or other clinical procedures, Grants and Contracts will consult with the Clinical Trials Office/Project Management to ensure we are budgeting for these procedures correctly.

Fellowship, Career Development and Junior Investigator Applications: These applications will involve a different set of documents and requirements, and will often require reference letters and/or institutional commitment letters. Such letters must be requested in advance to allow the references enough time to meet the deadline. Junior investigators should meet with Grants and Contracts staff at least one month prior to submission to begin this process.

When MMC is a subawardee on another Institution's proposal: If an MMC investigator is asked to participate in a collaborator's grant proposal as a subawardee, the following timeline and process applies. As described below, we expect the Prime Institution to provide at least two weeks for our institution to assemble required documents.

DEADLINE (GIVEN BY PRIME INSTITUTION)	TASK
2 weeks (10 working days) prior to deadline	Prime institution supplies the following information: Title, Dates of Support, funder guidelines (including indirect rate, salary caps, etc.), aims or abstract of project, and list of required documents, including budget caps for MMC, and gives deadline.
5 working days prior to deadline	Budget and budget justification Scope of Work for MMC site Biosketch and Facilities PI letter of support Department Chair approval (presubmission form)
1 working day prior to deadline	Grants and Contracts will send package including: Institutional Letter of Intent Budget and Justification Biosketch, Facilities, Letter of support Other required documents

NOTE: if the subaward participation involves human subjects research, cost-sharing, or in-kind support, more time may be required. Notify grants and contracts as soon as you are aware of the proposal and no later than two weeks prior to deadline.

Cost Sharing: The pre-submission form signed by the Department Chair or Chief will ask you to state whether you are requesting any cost share or in-kind support. This means you are committing Institutional resources to the project, such as salary support. You will also be asked if your department has enough equipment and space to perform the project. If additional resources or cost-share are requested, the department chair who is providing the resources will need to submit written approval.

Scientific Peer Review of Research Applications: MMCRI requires that all research applications be reviewed scientifically before submission. The required pre-submission form asks th PI to name who will be scientifically reviewing the application. If a PI would like assistance in identifying appropriate reviewers, he/she may contact any of MMCRI center directors, as appropriate for the proposal. These are: Tom Gridley (Center for Molecular Medicine); Clifford Rosen (Clinical and Translational Research Center); Paul Han (Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation); Susan Santangelo (Center for Psychiatric Research); and Lucy Liaw (Director of Research Training Programs) for trainees or research fellows.   Tom Gridley also chairs MMCRI's Grant Review Group, an internal study section group. If you would like your proposal reviewed by the Grant Review Group, please contact Tom.

Resources Available to Investigators: The Grants and Contracts Office has developed an instruction guide for NIH proposals that includes all updated requirements as of January 25, 2018. There is a separate instruction guide for the Human Subjects section. These guides, as well as forms needed for submission, NIH templates, information on the NIH review process and study sections, writing tips, and funding opportunities are available on http://mmcri.org/ns/?page_id=1672. Additionally, Grants and Contracts Office staff provide templates for grant sections, and assistance in writing, editing and proofing grant documents.

For more information about research grant proposal submission, please contact:

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