



A. JAMES CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH

ENGR Proposal Submission Deadlines

*Implementation of
Proposal Submission Deadlines and Internal Routing Requirements*

Document status	Draft - October 2026
Full implementation	January 27, 2027
Applies to	Principal Investigators (PIs), Department Business Administrators (DBAs), and the Office of Research Administration (ORA)
Questions	engradr@umd.edu

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Executive Summary

Key Policy Points at a Glance



1. Purpose and Background

The University of Maryland (UMD) requires all sponsored program proposals to undergo a formal internal review and endorsement process through the Kuali Research system before submission to ensure compliance with sponsor, university, and state requirements. The Office of Research Administration (ORA), as the sole authorized body to submit proposals on behalf of UMD, must be given adequate time to verify budgets, cost-share commitments, and required certifications; address technical issues with submission systems; coordinate with compliance offices on regulatory matters; and communicate with sponsors as needed.

Proposals submitted at the last hour significantly increase the risk of errors, missed deadlines, and non-compliance, while also straining our research administration resources and delaying other submissions. Our existing guidance establishes internal routing deadlines to protect the research mission of the Clark School of Engineering and the integrity of UMD's relationships with federal and non-federal sponsors. This document establishes the [implementation procedures](#) of the proposal submission policy.

2. Mandatory Routing Deadlines for PIs, DBAs and ORA

To ensure adequate time for review, resolution of issues, and timely submission, the following [minimum internal deadlines](#) are established and are mandatory for all proposals covered by this policy. These deadlines are measured backward from the sponsor-stated deadline.

Existing Guidance: University of Maryland ORA's (Office of Research Administration) current guidance calls for a minimum of [6 business days](#) before the sponsor's deadline to review a proposal and provide feedback to the Principal Investigators (PIs) / Department Business Administrators (DBA), if needed.

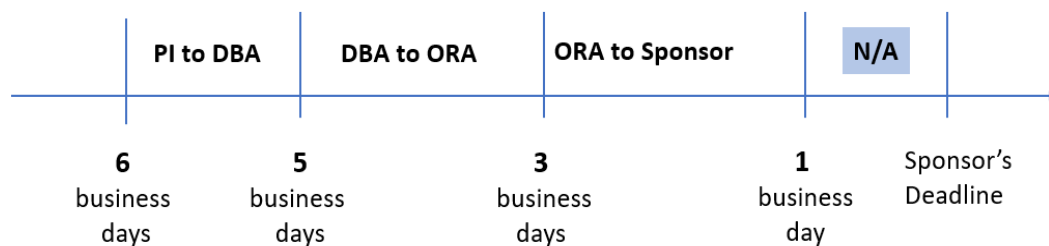
Under this new guidance for the A. James Clark School of Engineering, our PIs must provide the **complete version** of their proposal to DBA **5 business days** before the sponsor's deadline. Our DBA has 2 business days to conduct the final review and iterate with PI, if necessary, and provides the complete / reviewed version of the proposal to ORA no later than **3 business days** before the sponsor's deadline. Finally, ORA has 2 business days to conduct the final review and iterate with PI and DBA as needed to submit the proposal to a sponsor **1 business day** before the sponsor's deadline. PIs and DBA are strongly encouraged to plan proposal timelines accordingly.

Before a proposal reaches the "Complete" stage described above, PIs should also plan around earlier internal checkpoints, starting as early as 8–12 business weeks out when a solicitation is identified, and continuing through interim submissions of the budget, supporting documents, and technical write-up. These "Draft" phase milestones, detailed in the table below, are designed to surface problems early enough that they don't cascade into a missed 5-business-day deadline.

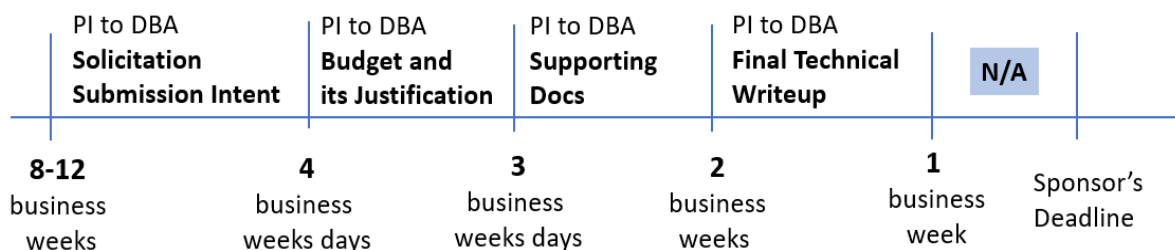
Proposal Phase	Required Action	Time Before Sponsor Due Date
Draft	PI notifies DBA of solicitation and submission intent	8–12 business weeks
Draft	PI provides budget and its justification to DBA	4 business weeks
Draft	PI provides supporting documents to DBA and removal of noncompliant key personnel	3 business weeks
Draft	PI provides final technical write-up to DBA	2 business weeks
Draft	If the proposal remains incomplete by this time, it will not be submitted to ORA	1 business week
Complete	PI to begin final uploads for submission of the complete proposal to DBA	6 business days
Complete	PI provides the complete version of the proposal to DBA	5 business days
Complete	DBA conducts final review, iterates with PI as needed, provides complete/reviewed proposal to ORA	3 business days
Complete	ORA conducts final review, iterates with PI/DBA as needed, submits to sponsor	1 business day

* Please refer to Section 2.1 to see what Constitutes a Complete Proposal

Complete Proposal Submission Timeline



Draft Proposal Submission Timeline



Note 1: All deadlines in this table are expressed in business weeks/ days and exclude weekends and University-recognized holidays and closures. Deadlines are calculated by counting backward from the sponsor deadline, skipping Saturdays, Sundays, and University holidays. If the sponsor deadline itself falls on a weekend or holiday, all upstream deadlines are calculated backward from the last preceding business day.

Note 2: PIs must remain reachable via communication platforms, such as email, during the submission window. PI travel is not grounds for a deadline extension.

Note 3: DBA will need to record the sponsor deadline in Kuali as one day ahead of the published sponsor's deadline. It should be entered as a "receipt" in Kuali.

Note 4: These guidelines do not apply to non-monetary agreements.

Note 5: Please, note proposals that violate this timeline without a formal exception approval are non-compliant.

2.1 What Constitutes a “Complete” Proposal

A proposal is considered complete for purposes of the 5-business-day PI deadline only when ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The Kuali Research proposal record is fully populated with accurate project information (title, period, budget, personnel, compliance questions, etc.);
- All proposal documents required for electronic submission are ready, including those for federal agencies submitting via Grants.gov, ASSIST, or other sponsor portals;
- The final technical narrative/research plan is uploaded;
- The final budget and budget justification are uploaded and reconciled;
- All required sponsor forms and institutional certifications are uploaded;
- Any subcontract documents (scope, budget, LOI) from collaborating institutions are uploaded; and
- Compliance questions in Kuali Research (human subjects, biosafety, export controls, etc.) have been answered.

Proposals that are incomplete in any of these respects at the time of routing to the DBA will NOT satisfy the 5-business-day department requirement and may NOT be submitted.

2.2 Complex Proposals

For proposals (including RFPs and RFIs) involving subawards, indirect cost waivers, significant project designations, external organizations, cost share, conflict of interest (COI), small business subcontracting plans, FAR or agency supplement clauses, IP negotiations, or multi-institution arrangements, and new sponsor submission systems the 6-business-day engagement window is the minimum standard. These complex proposals require substantially earlier engagement often months in advance based on mutual understanding between the PI, Department Business Administrator, and ORA. PIs anticipating complex proposal elements should contact their DBAs in advance, and the DBA or PI should send a courtesy email to their ORA CA for their awareness.

Importantly, PI needs to provide the final budget distribution plan of the entire team, including the **complete list of key personnel** and **cost share distribution plan** to meet the minimum requirement, by the 4th business week prior to the due date. PI needs to assist DBA in reaching out to the key personnel who have not completed the routing certificate and/or provided the required signed certification/key personnel documents. The PI must decide whether to remove **non-compliant key personnel** by the **second business week** prior to the due date because the PI who decides to wait further will assume a risk of non-compliance for the entire proposal.

3. Consequences of Non-Compliance for PIs

Adherence to the deadlines in Section 2 is mandatory. The following consequences apply when a proposal is not routed to DBA with at least 5 business days remaining before the sponsor's deadline:

- The DBA and the Dean's Office will decline to submit the proposal to ORA. No informal exceptions will be made by the DBA and the Dean's Office.
- The PI will be notified immediately by the DBA of the missed internal deadline and the resulting inability to submit.
- The PI may invoke the formal exception process described in Section 4. Submission will not be attempted unless and until the Dean's Office grants an exception.

- Recurrent non-compliance, including recurrent exception requests from the same PI, will not be entertained. A PI who has received two or more exceptions within a 6-month period will be required to meet with the Associate Dean for Research to develop a mandatory proposal timeline plan for all future submissions. Continued non-compliance may result in additional administrative measures.

Please, note that all proposals from the UMD faculty have to be routed through DBAs and ORA, therefore self-submitted proposals are non-complaint by default.

4. Formal Exception Process for PIs

The University recognizes that genuinely unforeseen circumstances may occasionally prevent compliance with the internal deadlines established in Section 2. A formal exception process is therefore available. Exceptions are discretionary and are not guaranteed.

4.1 PI Requesting an Exception

To request an exception, the PI must:

1. **Submit a written request to the Dean's Office (via email to engradr@umd.edu) as soon as the delay is identified and in no case later than 6 business days before the sponsor deadline.**
2. The subject line of request should read **"Proposal Submission Exception Request – [PI Name / Proposal Title]"**. Please, **include** in the request:

- (a) the proposal title and sponsor deadline;
 - (b) a clear and specific justification of the circumstances that caused the delay; that was beyond PI's reasonable control
 - (c) intended timeline for the delayed submission of the complete proposal including both technical and administrative documents
3. Copy the DBA. Please, note that **DBA cannot submit** the request for an exemption.

4.2 Dean's Office Review of Exception Requests (response within 8 hours)

Upon receipt of a written exception request, the Dean's Office will render a decision as quickly as circumstances allow, usually within 8 business hours of a normal working day. The outcomes of the review are:

- (a) Approved
- (b) Approved with revisions to the timeline
- (c) Denied

4.3 Approved Exceptions

If the Dean's Office approves an exception, the DBA should upload a copy of the approved email chain to Kuali Research as an attachment to the proposal development record.

ORA will make a reasonable effort to review and submit the proposal but cannot guarantee a successful submission if insufficient time remains to complete a proper review.

4.3.1 Examples of Circumstances That Constitute Grounds for an Exception

1. **Fast Paced Submissions (less than a business week)**
A fast paced submission is grounds for making a formal exception request under Section 4.1. A submission is considered fast paced when a sponsor requires a rapid response (i.e. deadline is less than a business week). It is the PI's responsibility to bring these needs to the research administrator's attention as soon as possible. PI will receive a prompt response from DBA administrators, if PI has a fast-paced submission. These are unusual circumstances, but both DBAs and ORA administrators will work with PI to accommodate

such requests whenever possible. Because a fast-paced timeline does not allow for the standard 6-business-day filing window, the PI must submit the formal exception request as soon as the fast-paced deadline is identified, rather than waiting for the standard filing deadline. These submissions will require formal approval, and PI will need to provide justification for the formal exception request. This approval will be available within 8 hours (1 workday) of the request submission.

4.4 Denied Exceptions

If the exception is denied, the PI and DBA will receive a denial email from the Dean's Office, and the DBA must cancel the Proposal Development record in Quali Research. The PI may contact the Dean's Office if further discussion is needed.

4.4.1 Examples of Circumstances That Do NOT Constitute Grounds for an Exception

The following circumstances will generally not be considered valid grounds for an exception to established deadlines:

1. **Workload and Scheduling Conflicts**
Requests based on competing deadlines, general workload pressures, or late receipt of materials from co-investigators are not considered valid grounds for an exception when these circumstances were foreseeable in advance and could reasonably have been planned around.
2. **Electronic Submission or Sponsor Portal Issues**
Technical issues with a sponsor's electronic submission portal or system that arise within the 2 business days immediately preceding the deadline will not generally be considered grounds for an exception. PI is responsible for managing his or her account and providing login access to ORA if the application must be submitted through the PI's account. PIs are expected to anticipate potential electronic submission delays and plan accordingly, per ORA guidance.
3. **Delayed Engagement with Sponsors or Program Officers**
Failure to begin proposal preparation with sufficient lead time including delays in initiating contact with the sponsor or program officer does not constitute grounds for an exception.
4. **Administrative Oversights**
Administrative errors or oversights by the PI or department staff (e.g., missed internal steps, incomplete routing, or clerical errors) are not considered valid grounds for an exception.

5. ORA's Responsibility to Notify PIs and DBAs

1. **Approved Exception but Non-Compliant Proposal**
If a proposal submitted under an approved exception is later found to be non-compliant with university policies and procedures, ORA reserves the right to withdraw it. Before doing so, ORA will contact the PI and DBA to explain which specific policy or regulation the proposal does not meet, and the PI and DBA must acknowledge that communication. In exceptional circumstances, the PI may choose to accept the risk of proceeding without withdrawal, provided this decision is documented with a written approval by the Department Chair and DBA will forward that approval to the Dean's Office at engradr@umd.edu.
2. **Complete Proposal Submitted on Time but Delayed by ORA**
ORA will provide best efforts to submit a complete proposal that PI and DBA submitted on time by the 1-business-day ahead of the sponsor's deadline, ORA will, if able to, notify the PI and DBA. The DBA will then forward that notification to the Dean's Office at engradr@umd.edu.

Appendix A: Proposal Readiness Checklist

PIs should tick off each milestone as they prepare their proposal. Deadlines are counted backward from the sponsor's due date.

☐	Notify DBA of solicitation and submission intent	8–12 bus. weeks
☐	Provide budget and its justification to DBA	4 bus. weeks
☐	Provide supporting documents to DBA; remove any noncompliant key personnel	3 bus. weeks
☐	Provide final technical write-up to DBA	2 bus. weeks
☐	Proposal must be complete by this point — incomplete proposals will not be submitted to ORA	1 bus. week
☐	Begin final uploads for submission of the complete proposal to DBA	6 bus. days
☐	Provide the complete version of the proposal to DBA	5 bus. days
☐	DBA completes final review, iterates with PI as needed, sends to ORA	3 bus. days
☐	ORA completes final review, iterates with PI/DBA as needed, submits to sponsor	1 bus. day

Appendix B: What Counts as a “Complete” Proposal

A proposal only satisfies the 5-business-day deadline once ALL of the following are checked off:

☐	Kuali record complete Title, period, budget, personnel, compliance questions
☐	Submission documents ready Incl. Grants.gov, ASSIST, or other sponsor portal materials
☐	Technical narrative uploaded Final research plan / write-up
☐	Budget finalized Final budget and justification uploaded and reconciled
☐	Forms & certifications uploaded All required sponsor forms and institutional certifications
☐	Subcontract documents uploaded Scope, budget, LOI from partner institutions, if applicable
☐	Compliance questions answered Human subjects, biosafety, export controls, etc.

Incomplete in any respect at the time of routing = the 5-business-day requirement is not met, the proposal may not be submitted.

Appendix C: Exception Request Checklist

If PI know they will miss the deadline, they should request a formal exception by completing every item below:

☐	Email the Dean's Office Send a written request to engradr@umd.edu as soon as the delay is identified, no later than 6 business days before the sponsor deadline.
☐	Use the required subject line "Proposal Submission Exception Request - [PI Name / Proposal Title]"
Include all of the following in your request:	
☐	(a) the proposal title and sponsor deadline
☐	(b) a clear, specific justification for the delay that was beyond your reasonable control
☐	(c) your intended timeline for submitting the complete proposal, including both technical and administrative documents

⚠ Important: PI should copy DBA on this email. A DBA cannot submit the exception request on the PI's behalf, it must come from the PI.

Expect a decision from the Dean's Office within about 8 business hours of a normal working day. The earlier you loop in your DBA, the more options we have.

Appendix D: Strategy and Timeline of Implementation

The main intention of this policy implementation document is to outline a strategy that allows all involved parties in the proposal submission process to participate in a coordinated team effort with well-defined timeline and responsibilities in the proposal submission process.

We will involve all relevant stakeholders, including [research administrators](#) (ORA, ENGR, DBA) and [faculty](#), into several rounds of discussions and associated edits of this policy implementation document during the month of October 2026. As a follow up, we will have a [trial period](#) of policy implementation during the three follow up months, including November and December 2026 as well as January 2027. Finally, the policy implementation will take [full effect](#) on [January 27, 2027](#). Here is a table identifying the implementation timeline:

Date	TERP Implementation Process Description
9/25/26, Friday	TERP policy final discussion, and implementation strategy discussion; among ENGR directors and ORA directors
9/28/26 - 10/4/26	Finalize TERP policy and prepare to release to ENGR faculty, and all ORA contracting officers
10/5/26 - 10/11/26	Release TERP policy to all stakeholders (ENGR faculty, DBAs, and ORA CAs) to collect faculty feedback
10/12/26 - 10/18/26	ENGR internal consultation with faculty feedback, comments, and solution, etc.
10/23/26, Friday	Implementation discussion after ENGR faculty feedback, among ENGR directors and ORA directors
11/2/26 - 1/26/27	TERP trial and improvement period (with some degree tolerance, reminders, warnings; document all the non-compliant cases)
1/27/27 Wednesday	Full implementation (without non-compliant tolerance)
Starting on 01/29/27 Friday and thereafter every last Friday of the month	Continued monitoring, and problem solving among ENGR directors and ORA directors to improve the implementation proposal policy