

# Getting Started with Research at the University of Louisville Speed School of Engineering

Authors

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In Collaboration with

JB Speed School of Engineering Office of Research and The Speed Business Center

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## Contacts

### Individuals

- Associate Dean of Research, Facilities and Graduate Studies
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  - Location: JB Speed 221E
  - Email: [kevin.walsh@louisville.edu](mailto:kevin.walsh@louisville.edu)
- Coordinator Research Administration
  - Advertise grant opportunities, organize workshops, coordinate grant writing support, compile research productivity
    - Jacqui Smith
    - Location: JB Speed 221D
    - Email: [jacqui.smith@louisville.edu](mailto:jacqui.smith@louisville.edu)
- Business Partner - Research Speed Business Center (SBC)
  - Research Administration Specialist (RAS)
  - Manages Speed School Research team, oversees grants management for: Bioengineering, Civil & Environmental Engineering, and Electrical & Computer Engineering
    - Kelly Jackson
    - Location: Vogt 203
    - Email: [kelly.jackson.1@louisville.edu](mailto:kelly.jackson.1@louisville.edu)
- Research Grants Coordinator Speed Business Center (SBC)
  - Research Administration Specialist (RAS)
  - Oversees grants management, reconciliations, procard transactions, and travel for Chemical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, Engineering Fundamentals, Industrial Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering
    - Amy Mock
    - Location Vogt 203
    - Email: [akkinb01@louisville.edu](mailto:akkinb01@louisville.edu)
- Business Center Assistant Senior
  - Oversees reconciliations, procard transactions and travel for Bioengineering, Civil & Environmental Engineering, and Electrical Engineering
    - Rosie Hance
    - Location Vogt 203
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- Facilities Coordinator
  - Manager of Engineering Garage and oversees facilities such as labs
    - Mike Miller
    - Location Engineering Garage
    - Email: [mike.miller@louisville.edu](mailto:mike.miller@louisville.edu)

## Offices

- Speed Business Center
  - Provides grant proposal preparation support, post award management, HR, and purchasing
  - Email: [spdbusns@louisville.edu](mailto:spdbusns@louisville.edu)
- Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (OSPA)
  - All research proposals go through OSPA for compliance with University and funding source guidelines
  - Email: [ospa@louisville.edu](mailto:ospa@louisville.edu)
- Office of the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation
  - Oversees all research at the University, runs internal grant opportunities
  - Email: [evpri@louisville.edu](mailto:evpri@louisville.edu)

## Before You Start Writing Your First Proposal

Below are a handful of actions you will need to complete when submitting your first proposal. Some of these items may be completed as part of your On Boarding.

1. Set up your identity with the funding agency, if needed.
  - a. Work with your Research Administration Specialist (RAS) to complete this process.
2. Share needed credentials with your RAS so they may upload documents and submit data on your behalf.
3. Contact your assigned RAS with a copy of the solicitation and any other documents already prepared.

## Administrative Steps for Submitting a Proposal

While the majority of labor in developing a proposal is with the primary investigator and their collaborators, starting conversations and working with the administrative support staff early in proposal development will make the process easier and reduce the risk of not getting the proposal submitted properly and on time. Below covers the internal documents you will need to complete to satisfy all University related policies and procedures and to successfully submit your proposal.

### 1. Complete Proposal Notice - <https://engineering.louisville.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ProposalNotice.pdf>

*The proposal notice should be emailed to the Research Administration Specialist (RAS) responsible for your area ([refer to contacts list](#)). You should complete it as soon as you know you intend to submit a proposal. This will give the RAS time to familiarize themselves with the solicitation and its requirements as well as giving them the opportunity to anticipate their workload. The RAS can assist in budget preparation, signatures and uploading required documents to the funding agency.*

- a. Complete this at least 8 business days in advance of proposal deadline.
- b. Needed information:
  - i. Investigator information (your information)
  - ii. Co-PI names
  - iii. Sponsor and contact if it is an Industry proposal
  - iv. Link to the solicitation
  - v. Deadline
  - vi. Tentative title for your project
  - vii. Tentative period of performance
  - viii. Tentative total budget: a general figure is OK here. The specialists are simply looking for a ballpark idea.
- c. Requested information (if you do not have this information, you may leave blank.)
  - i. Name of program
  - ii. Program number

### 2. Complete Budget

*Your Research Administration Specialist (RAS) will be in contact with you after you complete the Proposal Notice to discuss the budget. While a template is available under the Speed Business Center Tab on the [Speed Proposal Support](#) page, it is best to work directly with your RAS to prepare the budget for your first proposals. While you are responsible for creating the budget justification, your RAS can assist in ensuring numbers are accurate and can upload both the budget and the budget justification into the system.*

### 3. Complete Proposal Clearance Form (PCF)

*The Proposal Clearance Form (PCF) is the official internal university agreement document for all parties involved in a proposal. Your RAS will prepare the PCF based on the information you provide and distribute it out to those required signatures. You will want to follow up with those who need to sign to ensure they complete their portion in a timely manner. Waiting for signatures can often cause unnecessary delays in the proposal submission process.*

*Pay special attention to section 17. Anything checked Yes here requires approval from your chair.*

*If you are a CO-I on a grant, double check your % RIF before signing. Do not sign a PCF if you are listed as a CO-I with 0% RIF without talking to your chair. [More information on RIF can be found later in this document.](#)*

### 4. Start Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process If Your Research Includes Human Subjects

*The majority of Speed research does not include human subjects so you may never need to complete the IRB process during your entire tenure here. Activities with human subjects that generally require an IRB are the following:*

- *Thesis or dissertation projects conducted to meet the requirements of a degree*
- *Projects conducted in response to an RFP (Request for Proposal) issued by a federal agency*
- *Clinical trials*
- *Behavioral studies*
- *Projects initiated by Sponsor-investigators and involving FDA test articles*

*We strongly recommend that you start the process as you are developing your proposal and ask frequent questions so you do not delay or lose an award.*

- a. Visit the IRB Submission Life Cycle site which will include training modules that must be completed: <https://louisville.edu/research/humansubjects/lifecycle/initial-submissions>
- b. Contact the Speed IRB Analyst Sherry Block (852-2163) [slbloc04@louisville.edu](mailto:slbloc04@louisville.edu) for expertise and guidance through the process.

### 5. Submit Completed Proposal Clearance Form (PCF) to Sponsored Programs (OSPA)

*The goal should be to have the PCF submitted to OSPA **5 business days** before the solicitation due date. Submitting it any later risks the proposal not making it through the University internal review process by the deadline.*

- a. OSPA Reviews the following:
  - i. Does the proposal satisfy all University rules and regulations?
  - ii. Does the proposal satisfy the requirements of the funding agency?

### 6. Confirm Successful Submission

- a. You will receive an email from Judy Bristow or Ryann Gilmore confirming that your proposal has been submitted and accepted by the funding agency.

## Award Management

Proper management of an externally funded grant is necessary from a financial and legal standpoint. You, as the PI (Principle Investigator) are ultimately responsible for the management of the award. This includes such things as: verifying your monthly budget and expenditures, arranging and assuring that students and post docs have completed ethics training, completing all necessary internal paperwork, and submitting all external reports. Our people are here to assist with all of these items, but it is important for you to not delay in responding to requests and to notify your RAS of any changes in the award process.

### Individual Research Infrastructure Funds (RIF)

#### NOTE:

*Currently % RIF is used in reporting to credit each PI for their research efforts to agencies such as NSF, ASEE, and US New and World Report. The university is working to move away from using % RIF in this manner and add % Project Contribution to the PCF. % Project Contribution will not be tied to RIF monies with the intent to show a more true picture of the contribution of each PI on a project. The university is at the very beginning stages of this transition and we do not anticipate that research reports will start using % Project Contribution until summer 2021 at the earliest.*

#### **“UNDERSTANDING RIF (RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS) AND ITS IMPACT”**

Individual Research Infrastructure Funds (RIF) are funds provided to invest in the infrastructure that supports efforts to maintain and grow extramurally funded research activities, projects, and programs. In general, for each external award, 10% of the facilities and administrative costs (F&A, i.e. overhead or indirects) that are expended are returned back to the PI and co-PIs in their individual RIF account speedtypes at the close of the month in which the grant expenditures are made. Distribution is limited to Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators. The percentage distributed between PI and co-PIs is determined based on the % COLLAB/RIF listed on the PCF.

It is critical to know that this percentage is also used to determine the amount of “credit” each PI and co-PI receive for a project. **Therefore, ZERO COLLAB/RIF also means ZERO credit for participation.** If a PI wishes that their individual RIF funds generated on that award be distributed otherwise, that can also be arranged. For example, the PI and co-PIs may decide that all their individual RIF funds should be returned back to the project to be used as costshare or to cover any costs not allowed on a project. In that case, a separate RIF speedtype will be generated and listed at the time of award. However, you must still indicate your proper percentage of credit on the PCF by filling out the % COLLAB/RIF appropriately. The Dean’s Office will not sign off on any PCFs with 0% COLLAB/RIF for Speed School personnel.



Individual RIF funds may be used for any expenditure related to the pursuit of research and scholarship, except for faculty and staff salaries derived from "hard money." Examples of appropriate expenditures include the following:

- Items not covered as direct costs on grants and contracts
- "Soft money" salaries for research personnel
- Research administrative support
- Supplies, materials
- Travel
- Costs for equipment and maintenance.
- Summer salary for the recipient may be paid from these funds if approved, in advance, by the recipient's departmental chair and unit dean, and if all three parties agree to the research or scholarly product from the recipient's summer activities.

Expenditure of funds must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, statutes and University policies.

Upon departure from the university, all remaining RIF funds associated with an individual will be returned to the University central administration. If the account is determined to have a deficit balance, that balance will be transferred to the associated department RIF account.

## Monthly Budget (Spending Plan) Reconciliation

On a monthly basis you will receive a budget report, which can also be called a "Spending Plan", for all your research programs from a designee from the Speed Business Center (SBC). You will be responsible for reviewing all expenditures and income. If all is accurate, you will reply by email confirming that you agree with all transactions. If you discover any discrepancies, report them immediately to ensure a prompt resolution and to avoid any compliance concerns from the funding agency.

Pay special attention to the payroll area and make sure that only those who should be getting paid are. It is a frequent issue that a student has graduated or moved to a different project but are still being paid from the grant because the administrators were not notified.

Treat these monthly budget reconciliations as an opportunity to make sure any changes you requested have been made.

## 6/12 Month Effort Reports

6/12 month Effort Certification Reports must be completed in a timely manner by the PI for all federally funded grants. These reports will be distributed out to the department or center staff along with instructions for review and completion. You will confirm that the percent effort listed on your effort report for each project is correct for the time period. These reports mostly mirror the monthly budget reconciliations and should be easy to review and complete as long as you have been paying proper attention to the Monthly Budget Reconciliations.

These effort reports are reported to the funding agency, and it is very important that they be accurate or the University and you could be held liable for any inaccuracies.

## Travel

An important rule with travel is to ask early and ask often. Due to Uniform Guidance, federal grant funded travel is scrutinized. Therefore, please be sure that the travel meets the listed criteria below. If you have any questions regarding allowability, please contact your RAS.

- Participation of the individual is necessary to the Federal award
- Costs are reasonable and consistent with the non-Federal entity's established travel policy.

## Supplies Purchases

Supplies purchased with grant funds must be used exclusively for the purpose of the grant. If an item(s) will be used for multiple projects, the cost should be shared according to the percent of usage. You must show how you arrived at the distribution in case of an audit. Large purchases are generally not allowed in the last few days of the award because it is difficult to justify how they benefitted the project. In general computing devices are not allowed under most grants as that is considered a part of overhead. However, in some special cases you can charge computing devices as a direct cost to the award. Exceptions usually fall under the following circumstances:

1. The computing device must be justified as being essential for the conduct of the project.
1. You do not have access to other devices or equipment that can achieve the same purpose.
2. Purchases cannot be made based on preference or convenience.

Keep in mind that PIs are responsible for documenting why the purchase is considered essential.

For purchases made using your procard (credit card issued to you by the University), you can order the supplies yourself, have a member of your lab make the purchase, or a department staff member if your department has designated one who can assist. For a purchase order (PO) you will need to contact your designated department staff member to set it up.

Larger purchases that require bidding, sole sourcing, etc. can prove to be complicated. The University has very specific policies and forms that must be completed for such purchases. You will want to start this process by contacting your designated department staff member and discussing what your needs are.

## Changes to the Award

If you have a change such as a Co-PI leaving the project, change in % RIF, or change in budget and/or end date (including no cost extensions), you should notify your RAS immediately. The RAS will confirm

that you can make these changes based on the requirements of the funding agency and will have you complete the required paperwork for the University and the funding agency. It is extremely important that you notify your RAS immediately of any changes that affect the award structure and especially the budget.

More information regarding change in status or effort can be found on the OSPA website:

[http://louisville.edu/research/spa/lifecycle/managing-an-award/change-in-status?\\_ga=2.158322494.520062567.1591016186-410684636.1582935746](http://louisville.edu/research/spa/lifecycle/managing-an-award/change-in-status?_ga=2.158322494.520062567.1591016186-410684636.1582935746)

## Closing an Award

The Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (OSPA) will assist PIs/PDs with closing sponsored projects by ensuring the timely submission of required final reports. Sponsors require different reports at closeout. As a rule, federal sponsors require financial, invention, and technical reports. Property reports may also be required. Generally, reports are due 30 to 90 days from the expiration date of the sponsored agreement.

## Grant Support Provided by the Associate Dean of Research

### Notifications

The Coordinator of Research Administration at Speed School sends out frequent notices for research opportunities from federal funding agencies as well as forwarding internal and limited submission opportunities from the UofL EVPRI office. You are welcome to contact the coordinator if you are looking for specific opportunities and they can look for current opportunities in that area. You are encouraged to search for opportunities as well, since you are most familiar with your research interests.

If you are a tenure track/early career faculty member, you will also receive notification of opportunities targeted specifically for early career faculty (such as NSF CAREER, DOD Young Investigator, etc.)

### Grant Writing Support

To facilitate the success of our faculty and research staff, the Speed School ADR Office provides funding and will help arrange professional grant writing support to our faculty. We currently use an external grant review agency who has been well reviewed by our current faculty. If you would like to request this service, you will want to complete the form located on Speed Engineering Research page on the Engineering Hub. <https://cardmailloisville.sharepoint.com/sites/SpeedResearch>, preferably three months before the due date of the proposal.

If you have difficulties in connecting to this page, contact Jacqui Smith ([jacqui.smith@louisville.edu](mailto:jacqui.smith@louisville.edu)) to request access.

The Speed ADR Office will also cover some travel to grant writing workshops. Contact Jacqui Smith ([jacqui.smith@louisville.edu](mailto:jacqui.smith@louisville.edu)) directly for this request.

### Collaborative Connections

If you are interested in collaborating with another Speed faculty member but do not know who may be doing research in the field you need, you can contact Jacqui Smith ([jacqui.smith@louisville.edu](mailto:jacqui.smith@louisville.edu)) to identify if there is anyone currently doing research in that field.

### Grants Assistance

At any time, if you are unsure of who to contact or how to navigate a situation, you are welcome to contact the ADR office and we will work to connect you to the right department and people.

## Glossary of Terms

- **ADF** – Attestation and Disclosure Form
- **ADR** – Speed School Associate Dean of Research, Facilities and Graduate Studies
- **COI** – Conflict of Interest Form
- **CO-I/CO-PI** - Coinvestigator
- **Cost share** – amount of money some grants requires that the University provides if awarded
- **EVPRI** – University Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation
- **RAS** – Speed School Research Administration Specialist
- **OSPA/SPA** – Office of Sponsored Programs Administration
- **PCF** – Proposal Clearance Form
- **PI** – Principle Investigator
- **PO** – Purchase Order
- **Project Contribution** – Amount of work each PI will contribute on a research project, must equal 100%. Will eventually replace RIF as credit to faculty for research.
- **RIF** – Research Infrastructure Funds (also used to give credit to faculty for research)
- **SBC** – Speed Business Center