Policy on the Development of Competitive Institutional Training Grant Proposals

Questions: Contact Pre-Award Services at preaward@nd.edu.

Audience: This policy applies to Principal Investigators seeking to submit a Training Grant Proposal to the National Institutes of Health (NIH T32), National Science Foundation (NSF NRT), or any other proposal submission requesting Institutional Research Training Grant funds.

Purpose: Training Grants are a priority for the University of Notre Dame due to their prestige and value to our graduate students. This policy was created to improve Training Grant success rates by ensuring competitiveness and improving proposal scores. Significant effort is required to populate accurate Data Tables and prepare compliant proposal documents. The staff assigned to assist with these tasks have many competing priorities; to ensure the necessary resources are available, and ensure quality submissions, appropriate lead time is required.

Policy Scope: This policy defines a submission approval process, establishes proposal team responsibilities, and identifies required task timelines. This policy is necessary to allow the University of Notre Dame to submit competitive proposals each proposal cycle and avoid submission of multiple UND proposals to the same sponsor/institute/center. The complexity of the required data tables and personnel documents for each of the numerous faculty mentors and students is labor-intensive, requiring significant staff resources. Established due dates will allow the responsible team members adequate time to prepare the required documentation.

Definitions:
Principal Investigator (PI) - Principal Investigators have primary Institutional responsibility for providing scientific/technical/scholarly leadership and administrative and financial management of sponsored projects.

Institutional Training Grant - A training grant is funding awarded to an institution to develop or enhance programs that train individuals for careers in specific fields, covering costs like stipends, tuition, fees, and program expenses to build a skilled workforce. These grants support research training, job skills, and professional development through coordinated efforts, ensuring expertise in vital areas.

NIH T32 - National Institutes of Health Institutional National Research Service Award (T32). The purpose of this Kirschstein-NRSA training program is to enable institutions to recruit individuals for predoctoral and postdoctoral research training in specified shortage areas. The goal of this program is to prepare qualified predoctoral and/or postdoctoral trainees for careers that have a significant impact on the health-related research needs of the Nation.

NIH T32 Proposal Cycle - Refers to the 3 annual NIH application due dates for the T32 program: January 25, May 25, and September 25.

NSF NRT - National Science Foundation Research Traineeship Program. The NSF NRT program seeks proposals that explore ways for graduate students in research-based master's and doctoral degree programs to develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to pursue a range of STEM careers.

Internal Application - a formal submission to Notre Dame Research Limited Submissions to indicate the PI(s)'s intent to apply for a training grant. Internal Applications must be submitted at least **7 months** prior to the application due date via email to limited@nd.edu.

> The internal application will consist of the provision of project information, including the following: Sponsor, Funding Opportunity, New or Renewal, Research Area, NIH Center or Institute (if applicable), Names of Faculty Participants (if available), Number of Faculty expected to participate, Number of Students supported. If the proposal or a similar one has been submitted to the named federal sponsor previously, written review feedback and a summary of communications with the program office/directorate/representative of the agency will also be required.

Data Tables - The content and requirements for the Data Tables will be included in the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). The data in these tables help present a detailed documentation of the proposed training program and are dependent on the type of trainees involved in the training program.

Personnel Documents - Biosketch Common Form - The biographical sketch (also referred to as biosketch) documents an individual's qualifications and experience for a specific role in a project. Sponsors require submission of a biosketch for each proposed senior/key personnel and other significant contributors on a grant application. Some funding opportunities or programs may also request biosketches for additional personnel. For NIH and NSF proposals, applicants must use SciENcv, a tool used to develop and automatically format biosketches according to sponsor requirements.

Proposal Team - The team of individuals responsible for development of the proposal. The team will consist of a Lead PI, Co-Investigators, Faculty Mentors, Proposal Development Specialist and/or independent consultants (from Research Development), Data Analyst (staff assigned to data table completion), and a Pre-award Program Manager (Pre-Award).

Policy: An Internal Application must be submitted to limited@nd.edu at least 7 months prior to the submission deadline. Development of the proposal will begin no less than 6 months in advance and all proposal task due dates must be met throughout the development period.

Submission Approval Process: The PI will submit an Internal Application via email to limited@nd.edu. No internal application will be reviewed if it is submitted fewer than 7 months from the published agency due date. The Internal Applications will undergo a confidential merit review process in order to be considered as institutional nominations.

Submission Scheduling: Internal Applications will undergo internal application and review processes as supported by the NDR Limited Submissions Team that is advisory to the Vice

President for Research. Through this process, a submission schedule will be established to ensure the most competitive submissions.

In order to support submissions of the highest quality, only 2 submissions will be approved per proposal cycle to ensure staffing resources are available. Renewal proposals will be given priority over new submissions. The PI, Data Analyst and Pre-Award will be notified of the approved schedule a minimum of 6 months prior to the deadline.

Proposal Team Collaboration: Training grants involve extensive documentation that demands a unified team effort. Once a proposal is scheduled, the Data Analyst and Pre-Award team will analyze the solicitation to develop a comprehensive checklist and a detailed roadmap of required tasks. The Proposal Team will hold an initial meeting to assign task responsibility and establish a firm timeline. To ensure accountability, all team members must review and approve their assigned responsibilities and due dates during this session. The Data Analyst and Pre-Award will communicate directly with the faculty mentors for information and clarifications as needed.

Responsibilities & Timelines: Training Grants require substantial documentation prepared collaboratively. An initial proposal team meeting will be held to establish the schedule, and all responsible parties will approve the responsibility assignments and task due dates. Failure to meet these dates will require that continued work on the proposal be approved by the Director of Pre-Award Services.

Deadline (Prior to Submission Date)	Task / Milestone	Responsible Party
7 Months	Submit Internal Application to limited@nd.edu Internal deadlines for published NIH deadlines: June 25 NDR internal for January 25 NIH October 25 NDR internal for May 25 NIH February 25 NDR internal for September 25 NIH Internal deadline for NSF NRT:	Principal Investigator (PI)

	February 1 NDR Internal for a predicted September 1 NSF due date	
6 Months	**Internal Application** Reviews complete and schedule set	NDR Limited Submissions
	Proposal Kick-off. Proposal checklist and task list established	Pre-Award/Data Analyst
	Faculty Intake. Identify mentors and distribute Faculty Intake Data Form.	PI/Data Analyst
	Data Setup. Develop Master Database; Collaborate with Grad School on student data.	Data Analyst/Grad School
5 Months	**Document writing.** Begin writing narrative/documents.	PI
	Budget Prep. Begin budget preparation and cost share discussions (if applicable). Including Budget Justification	PI/Pre-Award
	Proposal Development. Support PI in improving the quality of the narrative and overall proposal.	NDR Proposal Development
3 Months	**Data Entry.** Input all data into xTRACT (if applicable)	Data Analyst
	Budget Development. Full budget will be near final and cost share negotiations begin (if applicable).	PI/Pre-Award
2 Months	**Support Letters.** Request required support letters.	PI
	Budget Final. Final budget and budget justification complete. Cost Share approvals secured (if applicable).	PI/Pre-Award

	Compliance. Begin review of documents for sponsor compliance.	Pre-Award
1 Month	**Begin Final Review.** Final review of submission package as documents are finalized. Upload to submission package.	PI/Pre-Award
2 Days	**Submission.** Prepare and submit application package in the sponsor submission system.	Pre-Award

Consequences of Missing the Task Due Dates: The task due dates will be established and approved by all proposal team members. If a due date is missed, approval will be required from the Director of Pre-Award Services to continue work on the application. Missing deadlines may result in discontinued support from the Data Analyst and Pre-Award or determination that a competitive proposal submission is not possible. If proposal work is stopped, the NDR Limited Submissions Team will communicate the next available submission date to the next internal competition as the institutional nomination will be re-competed.

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