Mercer University
Policy and Procedures for Proposal Submissions for Sponsored Programs
Effective April 1, 2008

Purpose
The purpose of this policy statement is to set forth the University’s policy and procedures (excluding MERC) with regard to proposal submissions for sponsored programs.

Definitions
A proposal submission is an application to or an agreement with any external agency for funding of a sponsored program. A sponsored program is related to an exchange transaction and has one or more of the following general characteristics:

- Scholarly terms or a statement of work
- Formal deliverables such as progress reports or performance objective
- Specific terms regarding fiduciary responsibility or payment contingencies
- Specified terms regarding disposition for property upon conclusion of the project
- Proposal submission required by the sponsoring agency

Sponsored programs differ from gifts and follow different policies and procedures. If a faculty member is unsure about the nature of the award, he/she should contact the Grants and Contracts Office for additional clarification.

Policy
All proposal submissions must be reviewed and approved prior to submission to the funding agency. Institutional approvals and official signatures will be obtained by the Grants and Contracts Office. The Senior Vice Provost for Research (or one of his delegates) or the Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance are the only individuals authorized to sign agency forms, representations, certifications or other grant or contract documents requiring signatures of an authorized representative and/or institutional official. The University reserves the right to withdraw an application or to reject an agreement that was not reviewed and approved prior to its submission.

In order to preserve the quality of the internal review and approval process as well as the integrity of the institution, complete proposals must be submitted to the Grants and Contracts Office no later than five full business days prior to the agency’s deadline. Proposals submitted after this time will not be reviewed.

Procedures
It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to prepare a complete proposal which must include the following information:

- Request for Proposal, Program Announcement or other agency guidelines for proposal submission
- Proposal Transmittal Form (PTF)
- Program/Project narrative

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• Budget and budget justification
• Other documentation required by University or sponsor
• Electronic file (if sponsor requires an electronic submission)

The PI must obtain the signatures of his/her Departmental Chair, Dean and Financial Officer of the School (if applicable) before submitting the proposal to the Grants and Contracts. Based on the information included in the proposal, the Grants and Contracts Office will obtain all other required institutional approvals and signatures which may include:

Grants and Contracts Office (budgets)
Director of Mercer Medicine (MUSM Clinical Trials)
Legal Counsel (contract/agreement)
Compliance Office (animal or human subjects)
Health & Safety Office (biohazardous and/or radioactive material)
Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance (cash match)
Advancement (foundation awards/agreements)
Authorizing Official

Once all necessary approvals have been obtained, the Grants and Contracts Office will return the signed proposal to the PI, or the Grants and Contracts Office will submit the proposal on the PI’s behalf when requested or when required by the agency.

Complete proposals must be submitted five full business days before the agency deadline. PIs are encouraged to begin working with the Grants and Contracts Office weeks in advance of their deadline, and while it is highly recommended that the PI submit his/her complete proposal several days before the agency’s deadline, the five business day minimum deadline will be enforced. Due to the high volume of last minute proposal submissions, it has become necessary to incorporate this deadline into the policy. This requirement is beneficial to the PI and the University as it will allow ample time to ensure the proposal is submitted in accordance with guidelines (federal, sponsor and institutional), the budget is accurate, contractual language is acceptable, time is available for necessary revisions, all approvals have been obtained, etc. Without this review, the quality of the proposal is significantly diminished which impacts the PI’s success rate as well as the University’s reputation.

In addition to these requirements, the PI should notify the Grants and Contracts Office if the agency requires an electronic submission to ensure any required agency specific accounts are established prior to submission. This should be done well in advance in order to meet the agency deadline. The sponsor may not accept the application if this is not completed in a timely manner.