3rd Annual Symposium for Research Administrators

Critical Thinking through the Life Cycle of a Sponsored Project
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Critical Thinking…

Much of our thinking, if left to itself, will be biased, distorted, partial and prejudiced.

Because in reality we are emotional beings who think...
...when we receive a proposal from a PI and it’s due in two days...or we receive an email from OSR asking for clarification for some piece of information.
Perhaps it is anxiety that two days isn’t enough time or anger that we are being questioned on whether or not information is correct.

**BUT…** a Critical Thinker will intentionally set aside their emotional response, start gathering and assessing information, be open-minded and communicate with purpose to achieve the goal.
The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking defines critical thinking:

“…as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.”

https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766
Think of the research process not as one giant, impossibly complicated task, but a series of smaller, interconnected steps.
PRE-AWARD
Step 1: Conceptualize the Process

- Read RFA/Funding Notice
- Assemble Proposal Documents
- Build Budget
- Contact Sub sites
- Ramses/Cayuse/Proposal
- Central/eRA Commons/FastLane, etc.
Step 2: Define what Information is Needed

- What is the Sponsor’s due date?
- What are the Sponsor’s budget requirements?
- What documents will the PI provide?
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- What are the PI’s budget requirements?
- What is the Sponsor’s due date?
- What documents do I need to create?
- When do I need to submit the eIPF?
- What kind of proposal is this: new, competing, etc.?
- Will other departments be involved?
- Export Controls?
- Will hazardous materials be needed?
- Will research subjects be involved? IRB/IACUC approvals?
- Will research subjects be involved? IRB/IACUC approvals?
- Intellectual property?
- Etc....
## Step 3: Gather Information, Analyze & Synthesize

### Read RFA/Sponsor Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Sponsor’s Documentation Requirements</th>
<th>Sponsor’s Budget Requirements</th>
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### Communicate with the PI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eIPF Routing Date</th>
<th>PI Provided vs. RA Provided Documents</th>
<th>Project Budget Requirements</th>
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### Proposal Submission

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<tr>
<th>Meet Institutional &amp; Sponsor Deadlines</th>
<th>Assemble Required Documents</th>
<th>Meet PI’s &amp; Sponsor’s Budget Requirements</th>
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BETWEEN PRE- & POST-AWARD
Although tempting, the period between proposal submission and award receipt is not for catching up on lost sleep.

Take this opportunity to think ahead and plan!
Think Ahead and Plan…Some Examples

- This is a NIH submission and JIT is likely…
  - Update Other Support

- The PI has received other sources of funding and may be over funded…
  - Strategize how to manage effort

- The project will be awarded, but the award document is delayed…
  - Submit a Letter of Guarantee

- The project will be awarded, but there is a gap between budget periods…
  - Determine if Pre-Award spending is allowable; submit an IPAS form
Step 1: Conceptualize the Process

- Expenses: Reasonable, Allocable, Allowable
- Reporting: Invoicing, Progress Reports, Close-Out
- Personnel: Effort Reporting
- Compliance: Uniform Guidance/Sponsor Policy, Institutional Policy
- Sub-Awards: Monitoring
Step 2: Define what Information is Needed

- Is carry-over allowed?
- What are the Project Dates?
- Who is working on the project?
- Will purchase orders be needed?
- Does the PI have IRB/IACUC approval?
- Will a budget revision be needed?
- Are there any special terms and conditions?
- Will a NCE be needed?
- Will independent contractors work on the project?
- When are progress reports due?
- What expenses should be charged to the project?
- Have there been changes to proposed personnel?
- Has there been a reduction in the budget?
- Does the Sponsor require cost-sharing?
- Etc....
Step 3: Gather Information, Analyze & Synthesize

**Award Receipt**
- Review Award Document
- Review Awarded Budget vs. Proposed Budget
- Discuss Changes with PI
- Confirm Compliance: COI/IRB/IACUC

**Award Set-Up**
- Revise Budget
- Add Personnel
- Create Purchase Orders
- Submit IDC Approvals, etc.
- Confirm Sub-Awards
Step 3 continued…

**Award Management**
- Reconcile Expenses Regularly
- Review Effort Regularly
- Communicate with the PI!
- Budget Revisions, Prior-Approval Requests
- Progress Reports, Project Extension

**Award Close-Out**
- Finalize Expenses
- Remove Personnel Promptly
- Submit NOTR
- Verify the Balance is Zero
In Closing…

Critical Thinking is crucial in grants management. No two grants will be alike. Each proposal and award will require an assessment of how to meet the Sponsor’s needs and the Institution’s needs while helping the PI accomplish the aims of their research.
Thank you!
We hope you enjoy the rest of the Symposium.