

University Policy: Limited/Restricted Proposal Submissions

Policy Category: Grants and Contracts Policies

Subject: Limited/restricted proposal submissions to sponsor agencies.

Responsible Executive: Provost

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Vice Provost for Research

Procedures: TBD

Related University Policies: Proposal Submission Policy for Sponsored Projects; OSP Principal Investigator's Handbook (PDF)

I. SCOPE

This policy specifies the University's process to determine which proposal(s) will be submitted to a sponsor agency when the sponsor limits or restricts the number of proposals or applications it will accept from American University for funding consideration.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure transparency, objectivity, fairness, and appropriate consideration of all proposals or applications intended to be submitted to a sponsor that restricts or limits the number of proposals or applications it will accept from American University for funding consideration.

III. DEFINITIONS

Limited/Restricted Proposal Competition:

A limited/restricted proposal competition is where an extramural funding source specifies a limited or maximum number of proposals or applications that it will accept for funding consideration from a single entity. The funding opportunity outlining this requirement may be called a request for proposals (RFP), request for applications (RFA), or something similar. Such solicitations require AU to have a process in place to select the most competitive application(s) for submission to the sponsor.

IV. POLICY

Some federal and private sponsoring agencies limit the number of proposals or applications an institution (or components of the institution) may submit for funding consideration. Therefore, it is necessary for American University to have a limited submission policy to establish an appropriate process for determining which proposal(s) is/are the most competitive with regard to the agency's call. Sponsors vary on how they impose such a limitation, for example, limiting an institution to 1-3 applications for the entire institution, only allowing 1-3 applications per major unit or school within the institution, or by limiting the number of applications a department within the institution may submit. Due to the variations in sponsors' specification of limited submission requirements, the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) coordinates all limited/restricted submissions processes for AU academic units.

Limited Submission Process and Guiding Considerations

- Prior to the sponsor's program deadline, OSP will provide an announcement via its limited submission listserv. The announcement will outline the procedures by which interested applicants can apply, including an internal deadline for submission of required materials for the preliminary evaluation of applicants. OSP will do its best to give potential applicants enough time to provide submissions for opportunities of interest.
- Unless otherwise advised, interested faculty or staff will be required to submit of an abstract (often limited to 1-2 pages) of the proposal, a biographical sketch, preliminary budget, and a brief statement of how their proposal/application contributes to (a) the mission of the program sponsor and (b) the academic mission of American University.
- As soon as the internal deadline has passed, OSP will provide all submitted materials to the Vice Provost for Research (VPR). The VPR will convene an internal review group based on the content of the restricted/limited program to select the proposal(s) to be submitted to the sponsor. Members of the internal review group provide feedback and recommendations to the VPR, but the VPR is empowered to make the final decision regarding the application(s) to be submitted to the sponsor.
- Members of the internal review group will review the submitted materials and rate them using criteria including: fit with the call for proposals, fit with the research mission of the University, overall quality and feasibility of the proposal, innovation, likelihood of selection by the sponsor, and potential to leverage additional external funding. The VPR will also consider applicants' histories of past proposal submissions and awards in making the final selections.
- Once final selections are made, OSP notifies all candidates of the outcome of the internal review process. Applicants should note that written feedback or summary statements are not available from such reviews.

For programs which are limited to a specific school or department, OSP works with appropriate administrative contacts in those units on the coordination of the limited submission preliminary review process.

While OSP makes every effort to identify proactively all restricted/limited programs well in advance of their published deadlines, many new programs are added by sponsor agencies each year. In addition, OSP actively maintains a limited submission archive on its website, containing consistent limited submission opportunities from specific sponsors:
<http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Limited-Submission-Opportunities.cfm>

Faculty and staff who identify such programs directly should immediately contact the Director of OSP so that the appropriate internal review process can occur. Approval for submission to such programs is not granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the VPR.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective as of September 27, 2012.

Revised: July 18, 2016

Revised: May 17, 2022