

PI ARTICLE: Research Proposal Submissions – Don't Needlessly Miss Your Flight

Imagine you are taking a family vacation that you have planned for months....maybe even years. In heading to Atlanta's Airport, you have to account for (1) Atlanta traffic, (2) airport construction, (3) shuttle delays at the drop off, (4) parking/Marta delays, (5) security lines that snake into the baggage area, (6) getting to distant concourses, etc. The real success becomes less about making it to your destination and more about making it onto the plane in the first place! So, this begs the question....why risk missing your flight when you can get there early and relax?

Much like how you should consider all the factors above in your travel plans, you should plan for the expected and unexpected to meet a proposal deadline. You may have spent months or longer preparing your proposal for submission. The amount of energy, time, and effort to prepare your best possible submission is too difficult to quantify, so do not risk giving your proposal too little time to get through the final steps.

Some things to consider in planning your proposal preparation and submission timeline include:

- A component of the proposal may be missing or not the final version. A required supporting document from an outside source may take longer to acquire than expected.
- A document required for the proposal may be corrupted during download or upload and include an unacceptable title or characters.
- Formatting can change when converting from Word or Excel to .pdf for uploading - particularly for figures and tables.
- The proposal may not be due until 11:59 pm but sponsor help desks often close at 5:00 pm. Unit and OSP staff are not required to be available outside of Institute business hours.
- Some proposals must be "error checked" and their documents "verified" before acceptance. Cayuse and some other systems will do this validation, even in advance of proposal completion, but identifying the cause of errors and resolving them can take longer than you might think.
- The unexpected can happen: research administration staff can become ill or have an emergency that can take them out of work near or at the submission deadline.
- Collaborative proposals require coordination with several partners, which takes time, particularly when GT is the lead, including when we have multiple subawards.
- Mandatory and Voluntary cost share commitment funding identification and approval can take time, particularly for cash and/or when multiple Units or third-party partners are funding.
- Proposals that require acceptance of and objection to terms and conditions as a part of the proposal submission require thorough OSP review.
- Sponsor required Conflict of Interest reviews, non-standard Representations and Certifications, unusual institutional information forms, etc. take additional time and typically involve additional GT offices.
- Electronic submission can give a false sense of security if you assume "the button" can be pressed at the last minute. The submission process often requires that multiple systems communicate with each other. If any of those systems is not working properly and/or the internet stops functioning, the proposal may not meet the deadline. If that happens, it most likely will not be accepted by the sponsor.

OSP Timeline Guidance This reflects updated guidance that OSP hopes to finalize within the next several weeks. **It does not include time for your Unit to assist or review.** Proposals should reach OSP before the sponsor deadline, completed and approved, no later than:

- **3 business days** for a simple/routine proposal. It is one of many on any given day.
- **5 business days** for complex proposals (see factors listed above.).

Please provide your Unit and OSP sufficient time to submit your proposal. The deadlines provided by sponsors tend to be unforgiving, and even being late by a few seconds can negate all of your hard work and effort. If you have any questions, please contact Josh Rosenberg at josh.rosenberg@business.gatech.edu.