The Pennsylvania State University

Process for Obtaining Delegated Signature Authority on behalf of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)

Policy:

Authorization to Submit (RA20): states Principal Investigators do not have the authority to submit proposals on their own. Investigators should contact their college/unit Research Administrator as soon as they learn of a funding opportunity. This is to ensure sufficient time to develop an appropriate cost proposal, complete all sponsor-required forms and certifications, and secure all required approvals. Approval is evidenced by signatures on the proposal and on the University’s Internal Approval Form (IAF). After the Principal Investigator (PI) and any co-investigators have signed the IAF, the proposal must be signed by all designated approvers, which may include the investigators’ Department Heads, Associate Deans, Campus Chancellors, and/or Campus Directors of Academic Affairs. The Associate Vice President for Research/Director of Sponsored Programs (AVPR/DSP) and his or her authorized delegates serve as the final approver.

Delegated Signature Authority (DSA):

The AVPR/DSP enters into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with certain college-level research administrators, granting them the authority to sign his or her name on proposals, counter-signature letters, and certain technical reports. Individuals may be granted limited DSA when they have demonstrated mastery of certain sponsors or sponsor types. (Such authority may be granted after a few years of extensive experience working with one or more sponsors.) Individuals may be granted full DSA once they have demonstrated a breadth of competencies across a majority of sponsor types. (Individuals working in large, complex colleges are more likely to gain the breadth of experience necessary to qualify for full DSA.)

All MOUs are subject to certain restrictions. Proposals subject to any of the following should be reviewed in OSP prior to submission:

- Contractual terms and conditions
- Non-standard certifications and representations
- Organizational Conflict of Interest requirements
- Institutional cost-sharing (including waiver of F&A) beyond established policy levels
- Budgets in which more than 50% of the funds will be subcontracted
- Limited Submissions

Proposal documents may include representations and certifications, assurances, and other standard attachments and cover pages. If noted in the MOU, delegates also may be authorized to sign the AVPR/DSP's name on letters to sponsors requesting no-cost extensions, changes of personnel, changes of scope, and budget realignments. Delegates may also be authorized to sign the AVPR/DSP's name on technical reports that require the signature of an authorized organizational official. All documents signed under the authority of a DSA (including proposals, countersignature letters, and technical reports) must be forwarded to OSP for inclusion in the contract file. OSP reserves the right to perform quality control on the proper use of DSA.

Requirements for Consideration:

1.) Completion of the ACES program or comparable experience and education
2.) Minimum 2 years of proposal preparation or relevant research administration experience
3.) Concurrence/Support from the College Research Dean
4.) Concurrence/Support from the College Research Office Grants Manager/Supervisor