

The following Q&A are provided for clarification only and do not replace the University Policy effective as of February 5, 2015. This informational document does not represent all possible scenarios that may arise.

What do you mean by “complete” proposal?

A complete proposal means all of the pieces are present and from the PI/Administrator’s perspective it can be submitted to the sponsor. A “complete” proposal does NOT mean a “perfect” proposal. OSR’s role is to review the proposal in accordance with sponsor and university requirements, and if we get it within ≥ 5 days of the deadline we’ll give it a Full Review and do our best to catch any errors or omissions. For proposals submitted to OSR with ≥ 5 days, the technical/science section of the proposal can be a draft, however all other portions of the proposal must be complete and final.

A complete proposal includes:

- All required components of the sponsor application package (released in web-based portal if applicable)
- Internal budget and budget justification (required by Stanford for every proposal, regardless of whether the sponsor requires them)
- Relevant waivers and approvals as applicable
- Subaward documentation (if applicable) including, but not limited to: Subrecipient Commitment Form (OSR Form 33), scope of work, budget and budget justification and any other documents required by the sponsor

If any of the required documents above are missing or incomplete, the PDRF will be returned to the department administrator without further review. The PDRF should be re-routed to OSR once the missing components are in place and will be considered “Received in OSR” at that time.

When a proposal is submitted to OSR for review, it should be “push-button ready”, meaning that the PI/Administrator consider it ready for submission to the sponsor as-is except for the PI’s final edits to the technical portions.

What do you mean by “Full Review”?

A Full Review means that we will review the complete proposal relative to the sponsor’s guidelines and university policies, and provide feedback to the PI and Administrator to get the proposal in the best shape possible for submission to the sponsor. Feedback might include any noticeable errors, elements that may not comply with sponsor requirements, etc.

In contrast, a Limited Review, which is conducted for proposals Received in OSR < 5 full business days but > 2 full business days, does not receive the same level of review. OSR will look at the proposal for compliance with university policies but will not be reviewed relative to the detailed sponsor guidelines. If the proposal meets all of the university requirements, then it will be submitted “as-is”. Please note that these proposals will not be allowed to cut in front of other proposals already received and will be reviewed only as time permits. Limited Review proposals will not be prioritized ahead of Full Review

proposals. There is no guarantee that Limited Review proposals will be submitted in time to meet the sponsor's deadline.

Per university policy, proposals that would be Received in OSR with <2 full business days in advance of the sponsor's due date should not be forwarded to OSR. In these instances, we suggest that the PI contact the sponsor to see if an extension to the Sponsor's deadline can be granted in order to allow sufficient time for Stanford review and submission.

What does "Received in OSR" mean? Is it when the proposal is released in Fastlane?

The proposal is considered Received in OSR once (a) the Proposal Development & Routing Form (PDRF) in the SeRA system has been routed to OSR and is in Institutional Review status, and (b) the complete proposal is both attached to the PDRF and released for review in the relevant sponsor portal (e.g. Fastlane, NSPIRES). Please do not assume that OSR will review a proposal based on receipt of the automated system emails sent by many sponsor portals. Reviews are conducted based on PDRF receipt only.

What are considered the "technical" sections of a proposal?

Technical sections include the proposed scope of work or research plan. If the proposal includes a section to list the references cited in the research plan, then that section could be considered technical. Pages that require target study subject data such as the NIH's Planned Enrollment Report could also be considered technical. Please see examples of technical vs. administrative sections in a sample [NSF Fastlane Table of Contents](#).

I used to get the PDRF into OSR with 5 days to go, even though the proposal wasn't quite ready, just so I wouldn't have to request a waiver. Can I still do this?

Please do not route the PDRF to OSR if the proposal is knowingly incomplete or unfinished. Proposals that are not complete will be returned to the department administrator via the Return for Minor Edits/Incomplete feature in SeRA so approvals will not need to be secured again. Please note, there is no waiver process for the university's proposal policy.

Should I reassign the PDRF directly to a CGA or CGO once it is ready for review?

No. Please always route your PDRF using the "Submit to OSR" button rather than directly reassigning to a specific individual. It will be received in our central intake queue and assigned to the appropriate CGA or CGO.

The Other Stanford Faculty (OSF) haven't yet approved their form in the PDRF. If I route it to OSR with their approvals pending, is the proposal considered complete?

The SeRA workflow requires all OSFs to have approved the PDRF before it will route to OSR. All OSFs must approve the PDRF before it can be considered complete.

If the complete and final submission-ready proposal and PDRF are received in OSR 4 days prior to the sponsor's due date, will it be submitted?

Though we will do our best to review and submit, any proposals Received in OSR 4 days prior to the sponsor's due date will fall under the Limited Review criteria and be reviewed and submitted as time permits, regardless of the sponsor deadline.

How is "5 Full Business Days in Advance of the Sponsor's Due Date" calculated?

Days in Advance of the Due Date excludes the actual Sponsor deadline date and is calculated by factoring in the number of days prior to the sponsor's deadline date. Therefore, the date the proposal is due is not included when counting the 5 full business days. Please keep in mind that Stanford holidays do not count as business days.

What happens if a complete proposal package is Received in OSR in advance of the 5-day deadline, but the PI would like to submit the final technical the day before the deadline - how do I advise my PI?

If the complete proposal is Received in OSR ≥ 5 full business days, the final technical sections must be received 3 full business days in advance of the sponsor's due date.

Do I have to get the proposal in to OSR with ≥ 5 full business days if I want the extra time to work on my technical sections?

The policy allows for PIs to submit the final technical sections 3 full business days in advance of the sponsor's due date if the complete proposal is received in OSR ≥ 5 full business days in advance of the sponsor's due date and is under Full Review.

Does this policy also apply for proposals where we will be included as a subcontractor on someone else's proposal?

Yes, this policy applies to all proposals for sponsored projects, including those where Stanford is part of a proposal to be submitted by a collaborating institution. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that PIs and/or their administrators coordinate early with the collaborating institution and have a clear deadline as to when Stanford needs to submit its proposal. In these instances, Stanford's proposal due date is the date the collaborating institution requires Stanford's proposal; not the deadline/due date of the collaborating institution's submission to the prime sponsor.

The collaborating institution accelerated the timeline for our submission. What do I do?

Inform the collaborating institution of Stanford's proposal policy and request the additional time needed. Simultaneously, reach out to your CGO to discuss and coordinate internally.

Our proposal has subawards included. I may not secure the required subaward documents in time to meet the 5-day deadline. What should I do?

If a subrecipient is included in a proposal, all subaward documentation (e.g. a signed Subrecipient Commitment Form with all applicable attachments) is required for a proposal package to be considered complete. Keep in mind that most universities have an internal deadline policy, so they will need adequate lead time in advance of Stanford's 5-day deadline to secure their institution's endorsement of their participation in Stanford's proposal. Stanford should not include a subaward in its proposal if it does not have that subrecipient's institutional endorsement (via the Subrecipient Commitment Form) to participate in our project.

Does the policy allow for any exceptions or waivers?

No. There is no waiver or exception process to this policy.

What if the sponsor's due date is drawing near and it looks like I will not be able to submit my proposal to OSR in time?

In such instances, we recommend that you contact the sponsor to see if they are willing to extend their deadline. In those instances where the proposal will not reach OSR with at least 2 full business days before the sponsor's due date, the proposal should not be routed to OSR.

One of my PIs decided to submit his proposal directly to the sponsor since he was not going to make the 5-day deadline and didn't want to take the chance of it not being submitted. Should I recommend this approach to other faculty?

In accordance with Stanford University policy (Research Policy Handbook 14.1), only designated institutional representatives are authorized to endorse sponsored project activities that commit the use of Stanford resources. In instances where a proposal was submitted without institutional endorsement, senior administrators in the department, School or University will be consulted. The University may elect to contact the sponsor to withdraw the proposal or decline any resulting award.

My PI already sent their biosketch, current and pending, and facilities documentation to the sponsor; do I still have to submit these to OSR?

Yes. Any documentation that is required by the sponsor, or prime sponsor, must be provided to OSR for the proposal to be considered complete and subsequently endorsed on behalf of Stanford.