Proposal Submission Process

All proposals for sponsored research funding regardless of whether submitted in hard copy form or electronically, must be routed through the Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG) for approval before submission. Only DCG administrators are recognized as authorized organizational representatives to approve proposals on behalf of the university. Prior to DCG approval, all proposals must be approved by the Vice Dean for Faculty and Research. Vice Dean approval is obtained by the College Research Office.

Proposal Submission Process
Principal Investigator >>>> College Research Office >>>> DCG >>>> Sponsor

The College Research Office (CRO) does not require that you submit your Full Proposal (Full Proposal means the complete packet that will be sent to the Sponsoring Agency). CRO only needs the Administrative Shell. There are two methods of submitting your Administrative Shell.

1. Hard Copy Submission of Administrative Shell:
   Please deliver the following five (5) components to the Research Office at ADM 304.
   - Proposal Approval Record (PAR)
     This form is completed and printed online through the ePAR system available at: http://ais-fa.usc.edu/FormAssistantLogin.html
   - Proposal Cover Page
     This is usually the first page of the proposal. If the agency does not require a specific cover page, create one using this template
   - Project Summary
     One page summary, project description, or abstract
   - Budget with Justification
   - Solicitation
     This allows the CRO to verify compliance with agency requirements. You may simply give us the link to the announcement, if available. The PAR forms contain space to include the link or the announcement number.

March 2010
2. Electronic Submission of Administrative Shell:
The Administrative Shell may also be routed for approval via the Pre-Award Research Information System (PARiS). PARiS is available through the DCG website at: http://dcg.usc.edu/

This system allows for electronic routing of your administrative shell by allowing you to upload the required shell components mentioned above in the hard copy submission section.

Submission Deadlines and Processing Times

a) College Research Office Processing

The College Research Office will process your Administrative Shell and approve within 24 hours provided there are no issues raised in the review process that require confirmation, clarification or additional approvals. However, keep in mind that if approvals are required by other units (e.g., on collaborative grants), this will add to the approval time. And also keep in mind that this does not include the time that DCG needs (see below).

Once we approve the Shell, we will deliver it to DCG and confirm its delivery to you by email. If you use PARiS for routing your Administrative Shell, the system will notify you by email when we have approved.

b) DCG Deadlines for Proposals NOT being submitted to Grants.gov

We recommend you route your Administrative Shell as early as possible. The Full Proposal should be at DCG three (3) business days before the agency deadline. DCG will notify you when the proposal has been approved and signed by the Senior Administrator.

c) DCG Deadlines for Proposals being submitted to Grants.gov

Grants.gov submissions require additional review time by Grants.gov before the package is actually sent from Grants.gov to the agency receiving the proposal. For this reason DCG has imposed different internal deadlines for Grants.gov
submissions only. In order to meet these new deadlines, the Administrative Shell (with approvals) is due at DCG seven (7) business days before the agency submission deadline. The Full Proposal package is due to your DCG administrator five (5) business days before the agency submission deadline. You may submit your Administrative Shell and Full Proposal beyond these deadlines, but DCG cannot guarantee acceptance by Grants.gov or the Sponsoring Agency. DCG will notify you when the proposal has been submitted to Grants.gov. For NIH submissions, the PI has two (2) days to check eRA Commons for errors or warnings.