



Office of the Vice President
and Provost

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Faculty and Administrators

From: Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick, Associate Provost for Academic Strategy and Growth

Date: October 20, 2025

Re: Research Growth at USD and Relevant Policies

Research at the University of San Diego continues to grow, despite headwinds in the external environment. This past year (FY 2024-2025) saw USD break \$20m in grant awards for the first time in our history.

This growth is fueled by our amazing community of undergraduate, graduate, faculty, and staff researchers. It is sustained by our amazing Centers and Institutes, including SOLES new Sponsored Initiatives Incubator (SII). And it is underpinned by the stalwart team at the Office of Sponsored Programs.

The Provost's Office is working over-time to navigate a dynamic funding environment, and ensure we support USD's research community in a strategic and supportive way. Despite challenges, our core commitments remain the same: stellar support for timely, accurate, and compliant proposal submissions. Because each proposal reflects the hard work of our faculty and staff, it is essential that submissions allow sufficient time for review and refinement. This annual memo from the Provost's Office highlights the expectations for proposal routing and timelines, ensuring every submission strengthens our reputation and competitiveness. **These guidelines apply to all external submissions of grants and contracts.**

New Guidelines and Policies

1. **Federal Funds and Lobbying:** New Federal guidance has reiterated that no Federal funds may be used to pay for professional association dues unless the association has an explicit disclosure indicating membership dues are not used for lobbying. This development is particularly relevant for PIs planning to use Federal funds to pay for professional association dues.

2. **New Requirements in Research Security Training:** New Federal policy now requires all PIs and senior personnel to complete training on Research Security prior to future submission of new grant proposals. This [training is required](#) of all senior and key personnel pursuing Federal funding. NOTE: This requirement took effect on October 10, 2025 for National Science Foundation, and takes effect January 25, 2026 for National Institutes of Health, and May 1, 2025 for Department of Defense and is not retroactively required. USD is finalizing the inclusion of this module in our CITI training. If you have an upcoming grant deadline with the NSF, please contact OSP at research@san Diego.edu.

3. **External Contract Intake Form:** The USD Office of Sponsored Programs is launching a new form for all external contracts associated with external funding (e.g., hiring independent contractor, service agreements, etc.). PIs are expected to notify OSP of all external contracts via the External Contract Intake Form at: <https://usd.tfaforms.net/219568>.

Existing Guidelines and Policies

4. **Proposal Intake Questionnaire:** The USD Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) supports PIs in the grant proposal process. PIs are expected to notify OSP of their intent to submit an external grant or contract proposal as soon as a potential funding opportunity is identified. Notify OSP via the Proposal Intake Questionnaire available from OSP on the USD website: <http://www.sandiego.edu/osp-proposal-intake>.

5. **Proposal Routing Timeline in Cayuse:** Cayuse is USD's electronic research administration system. Routing through Cayuse takes between 2 and 4 weeks, and as a result, PIs should have all the required documents pertaining to their grant or contract proposals ready for Cayuse input and routing **at least 2 weeks prior to the submission deadline**. Please work with OSP to identify the needed documents for Cayuse routing in advance. Refer to USD website for complete timeline expectations: <https://www.sandiego.edu/osp/proposal-development/proposal-and-contract-timelines.php>.

6. **Proposals Involving Human Subjects Research:** If human subjects research is a component of the external grant or contract proposal, then PIs should be aware that (a) Some funding agencies require the PI to show evidence of IRB approval before an award can be issued and that (b) it may take up to 30 days to complete the review and approval of an IRB study. See the USD IRB website for more details: <https://www.sandiego.edu/irb/getting-started/>, and consult USD's pilot AI Agent [here](#).

7. **Proposal Submission: PIs are not allowed to submit an external grant or contract proposal without formal approval from all required USD authorities.** Submissions of unapproved proposals could put the University at risk and out of compliance. All external grant and contract proposals must be routed in Cayuse for archival and compliance purposes.

8. **Request for Proposal (RFP):** PIs are required to include an official RFP with their proposal submission in Cayuse to assist the reviewers with a more meaningful review. When there is not an official RFP (e.g., private and unpublished proposal solicitations), the PI may attach proof of written correspondence (email is acceptable) between the funder and the PI about their request or invitation of USD proposal submissions.

9. **Reviewer's Feedback in Cayuse:** Once a reviewer reviews the proposal in Cayuse, they can choose to Authorize or Reject the proposal and input their feedback into the system. Documentation of reviewers' feedback not only helps the PIs improve their current and future proposal preparation, but also ensures that our review practice is meaningful and in compliance with USD policy. PIs are asked to carefully read the reviewers' feedback and take any necessary corrective actions before submitting the final version of their proposal to the funding agency. PIs can view the reviewers' feedback in Cayuse under the Notes tab of their proposal.

10. **Reminder for Funded Projects:** Contracted work cannot begin until an agreement has been fully reviewed and approved by all relevant USD authorities. Starting contracted work without formal USD approval will put the University at high risk.

11. **Reminder for Funded Projects:** PIs should **allow adequate time for contract** negotiation and preparation. PIs are advised to work closely with OSP to determine the appropriate USD review authorities and prepare the necessary documents for review submission, depending on the type of contracts involved. Once a contract is ready for signature routing, please allow **at least 2 weeks for review and authorization**.

NOTE: For **funded proposals**, PIs can find more detailed information on award support on USD website: <https://www.sandiego.edu/osp/award-support/>. Items 9 and 10 are intended as clarification and supplement to the published, online information:

Please feel free to contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at research@sandiego.edu or myself at caustin@sandiego.edu if you have any questions.