

# Frequently Asked Questions for Policies 11012 and 11029

## Policy 11012 — External Grant and Contract Proposal Submission Timeline

Q: What happens if OSP staffing or workload prevents timely review even when the PI followed the timeline—does the submission still go out, and who decides?

A: The assigned OSP Pre-Award Liaison (PAL) will determine if workload will allow for a successful submission or will seek assistance from another PAL to transfer the submission. If a PAL causes a delay (unforeseen workload, illness, emergency, etc.) in the timeline milestones, the project team will not be penalized. A resolution plan will be determined and executed to ensure a successful submission.

Q: If the sponsor's submission portal experiences outages or technical issues, how does CMU's "business day" definition interact with that risk?

A: As the policy requires all final documents submitted to OSP at least 3 full business days prior to submission, that extra time allows for unforeseen technical issues to be resolved well in advance of the submission deadline. OSP will work with the sponsor if issues persist in these last 3 business days.

Q: Can Cayuse routing start with some placeholders if all other items are complete, or must all materials be final before routing begins?

A: No. Cayuse routing cannot start until all required items are complete and uploaded to the shell. This is required because there are multiple levels of review that are needed during Cayuse routing and all reviewers need access to the proposal information in order to make an informed review and approval. Additional notes and attachments may be added after the fact, if needed.

Q: If CMU is a subaward and the lead university has stricter internal deadlines than OSP's, which timeline controls in case of conflict, and how is the conflict resolved?

A: CMU policy requires OSP to follow the more conservative rule, so the stricter timeline would dictate CMU submission dates. These dates should be established at the start of your proposal process so that everyone is aware of milestone dates.

Q: Who makes the final determination that a proposal is either “Standard” or “Specialized”?

A: OSP determines whether a proposal is classified as standard or specialized based on the requirements specified in the guidelines and based on your specific project considerations (subawards, construction, large equipment purchases, etc.). Those requirements may entail extra time to gather information needed for a full proposal submission.

Q: Does a Co-PI or Key Senior Personnel on the project team being late on their requirements jeopardize the whole submission?

A: The project team has a responsibility to ensure they are meeting the milestones laid out in the Submission timeline policy. They need to ensure they are available to meet the milestones when joining the research team. If there are any conflicts, please let OSP Pre-Award know so these can be sorted out ahead of time to ensure completion of Cayuse certification and Cayuse Conflict of Interest (COI) forms at least 3 full business days prior to the submission deadline.

Q: If a sponsor allows administrative fixes after submission, does OSP support those changes, and are there internal deadlines for making them?

A: Sponsors, particularly federal sponsors, do not normally allow for administrative changes/fixes after submission, unless they specifically reach out and request the change. When CMU is a subaward/subrecipient and has submitted our items to the lead, the lead may allow for an administrative change/fix or the lead may request specific changes ahead of final submission to the prime sponsor. OSP Pre-Award will assist in these changes/fixes where allowable.

Q: What documentation is needed at 10 and 20 days prior to submission?

A: Whether the proposal requires working with ORGS’s OSP 10 or 20 days prior to the submission deadline, the minimum information the PI should have is:

- College pre-approval to submit a proposal, as required (currently relevant to CMED and CSE);
- The guidelines for this specific submission, including the due date you are aiming for if there are multiple listed in the guidelines ;
- CMU project team members;
- External partners including the subrecipient’s OSP contact information;
- General idea for budgetary expenditures, as the budget draft is due 10 business days prior to submission.

## Policy 11029 — OSP At-Risk Proposal Policy

Q: How does OSP triage multiple at-risk proposals—are there objective criteria or is it strictly first-come/first-served?

A: OSP established the At-Risk policy to allow for submission of last-minute proposals or proposals that fall outside of the Submission Timeline Policy, partially because triaging multiple last-minute proposals while also ensuring they are fully vetted by OSP prior to submission was increasingly difficult and unfair to those who carefully prepared for submission in alignment with policy. Timing will determine the level of review and vetting that OSP will be able to provide, so it is “First come, First ‘Best’ served.” Plan and prepare early for the best level of support.

Q: What constitutes “final form” for narrative, budget, and subaward packages—does “final” allow minor typographical edits without triggering at-risk status?

A: Final form means the documents are ready for submission to the sponsor. Final documents should be reviewed and edited before they are sent to OSP. Since last minute changes create obstacles to submission, requests for such edits are granted on a case-by-case basis.

Q: If the sponsor grants an extension after an at-risk flag is applied, is the status automatically removed, and how quickly is that communicated?

A: Seeking a deadline extension or pursuing a later deadline are valid ways to avoid submitting a project with an at-risk status. If you reach out to the sponsor for a deadline extension and receive a positive response after your proposal is labeled at-risk, OSP can remove that status provided that the extension granted is in alignment with the Submission Timeline Policy. Be sure to secure the sponsor approval for the extended deadline in writing so that OSP can add this information to your grant file.

Q: Under what specific circumstances might institutional signatures be withheld for an at-risk proposal, and is there an appeal pathway?

A: Institutional signatures rely upon complete proposal vetting, so that any certifications or approvals signed are accurate. If a proposal modestly misses a required milestone from OSP’s Submission Timeline Policy, it is possible that the proposal could be fully vetted and suitable for signature prior to submission – but this is not guaranteed. The best way to ensure that required signatures are finalized is to meet your proposal milestone dates, as shared by your OSP Pre-Award Liaison.

Q: How long does the “At-Risk” label persist in Cayuse/SAP/ORGS reports—only until submission, through review, or until funding decisions are finalized?

A: Proposals submitted under an at-risk status retain this internal designation until funding because it conveys important information. Once fully awarded the “At-Risk” designator will be removed, understanding that full vetting and Cayuse re-routing may have to occur.

Q: If an external lead institution sets aggressive timelines, can CMU still participate without at-risk status, and what alternate safeguards are acceptable?

A: The realistic deadline for a proposal can vary depending on a number of factors. Situations like a lead partner with early proposal routing deadlines, intervening holiday, weekend, CMU closure periods limiting work, or just the PI’s travel or teaching schedule can require an actual submission deadline that precedes the sponsor deadline. When work with OSP begins, we will set milestones in accord with the project submission deadline – a date to which the PI and OSP will mutually agree. Those dates will then determine milestone deadlines that are no different from any other proposal and carry the potential for at-risk status, if ignored.

Q: When a previously at-risk proposal receives JIT or funding notice, which specific pre-award vetting steps must occur before CMU will accept funds?

A: If an at-risk proposal is pending award, the PI/PD Team will go through the standard, OSP proposal vetting process before any award negotiation commences. This may include collection of subaward materials, budgeting or rebudgeting, review and revision of project plans, Cayuse rerouting and/or other vetting processes. Given the timelines and conditions for award acceptance, these administrative requirements and rework may disadvantage an award.