

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions Submitting Preliminary Proposals

Revised 09.16.10

Leveraging Funds

Q: Your helpful hints encourage proposals to include leveraging. Does leveraging for this grant have to be cash/hard money, or can it be soft/in-kind?

A: Leveraging CAN be soft / in-kind.

Q: In order to include leveraging on a Preliminary Proposal, do I have to have my leverage in hand before I submit?

A: You do not have to have your leverage in hand, but you do need to have a good idea that it will be available should you win the award.

Q: Are tuition or indirect costs that are picked up by my department considered leveraging?

A: Yes. These and any other costs that are borne by your department in support of this project should be included in your Preliminary Proposal as leverage.

Q. What about equipment purchased on other funds that will be used on this project?

A. **New** equipment that will be used in this project and that will be purchased from other sources (startup funds, for example) is also considered leveraging and should be included. If the equipment will be shared with other projects, include the appropriate percentage in your leverage.

Budgets

Q: How much money can I request? Is there a limit or average size budget?

A: UTCM does not set a standard budget amount for a project; each project is funded at a level that is appropriate for the scope of work. You should carefully estimate your budget in your Preliminary Proposal to ensure it is reasonable. Leveraging is encouraged to reduce the UTCM budget on a sizable project. Information on projects awarded each fiscal year by the UTCM, including abstracts and budget totals, is available on the UTCM website under "[Projects](#)."

Q: Does the Preliminary Proposal require a formal budget form?

A: No. You only need to estimate your total budget for the Preliminary Proposal. If your PP is selected for a Formal Proposal, an itemized budget and budget justification will be required at that time. However, your budget estimate should fairly approximate your need, so we recommend sketching out a budget at this stage using the [UTCM Budget Worksheet](#). This form will **not** be submitted with the PP, but it will be required with a Formal Proposal.

Q: What about indirect costs? Are these included in my total request for funds?

A: Yes, UTCM grants are subject to standard indirect costs of 46.5%; that is, your Preliminary Proposal budget request will consist of direct costs and indirect costs that will total the amount you request.

Q: What sorts of things need to be accounted for in my budget estimate?

A: Standard fringes are included for faculty, staff and student salaries, and these are automatically calculated for you on the [UTCM Budget Worksheet](#). Also remember to include graduate student stipends that are customary for your department. Please contact us if you need more specific information on preparing your budget estimate.

Q: Can tuition for my graduate student be supported?

A: In-state tuition (no fees) is included for a graduate student who is supported on the project, if your department usually covers it. Tuition is listed as a separate line item (as opposed to increased salary support). A maximum of 9 hours (Fall and Spring) and 6 hours (Summer) may be included for a student fully supported on the project. Tuition is pro-rated for students not fully committed to the project. All these calculations are made automatically on the [UTCM Budget Worksheet](#).

Q: What budget items are not supported?

A: Foreign travel and capital equipment are not allowable. Non-capital equipment (e.g. computers, cameras, software, etc. under \$5,000) is generally not allowable, but may be justified **in advance** in very specific cases. That is, things like software and hardware that have a lifespan beyond the project and application to other projects would generally not be allowable; however, they can be justified if the project cannot be completed without them, and/or they have sole application to this project.

Other

Q: How many Preliminary Proposals can I submit?

A: UTCM can accept up to **two** Preliminary Proposals from one PI. Beyond that, you can participate in other Preliminary Proposals as long as you are not the PI (co-PI or other participant is ok).

Q: Do I need evidence of the originality of my project?

A: It is expected that you will conduct a basic review of the literature and current research, education and/or technology transfer on the topic (e.g., [TRIS](#) and [RiP](#) searches) to ensure the proposed project is

original, complementary work that extends the body of research, education and/or technology transfer on the topic. For the Preliminary Proposal, all that is required is your agreement that you have conducted such a review. Formal Proposals will require a brief summary of this review.

Q: I want to submit proposal to develop a course or an education program. Any limitations?

A: Review the RFPP information on Education projects here. The referenced recommendation letter should be submitted with the Preliminary Proposal and is excluded from the two-page limit.

Q: When can I start my project? What length of time is allowable?

A: A project can start any time in Calendar Year 2011. Projects generally extend 6-17 months, as appropriate to the scope of work for the project. **All projects awarded in the FY11 cycle must terminate by May 31, 2012.**

Q: How firm is my end date? Can my project be extended or can I incur costs after the end date of the project?

A: You are expected to finish your project on time and on budget. Extensions are not routine and all costs must be incurred or encumbered by your project termination date. For this reason, it is important to accurately estimate due dates on all deliverables and to give a reasonable project period. Remember too, that a final project report is due six weeks after the project termination date, and that this deadline is also firm.

Q: Once my project is funded, is there help available to me in monitoring my budget so that I can manage spending?

A: Yes. While it is up to the PI to plan for the proper and timely expenditure of funds, esp. salaries, the UTCM Office and the Research Foundation can assist you in planning and with real time financial statements at any time.

Q: Question 3 on the form is confusing. Please elaborate about the percentages assigned to Research, Education and Technology Transfer.

A: Since all research projects will have education and T2 components, do not assign percentages to these categories unless one or more significant deliverable of a research project is associated with Education or Technology Transfer. "Significant deliverables" would include such things as incorporating research results into a course module, or developing a webinar or guidebook for transportation professionals; it would not include GARs on a project, conference presentations or journal publications. If you have questions about this topic, please contact us.