

**University of Michigan  
Office of Research & Sponsored Projects**

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**Standard Operating Procedures & Policies**

Category:	Pre-Submission
Policy No.:	100.01
Title:	Pre-Proposals (PRE's) v. Proposal Approval Forms (PAF's)

**I. Purpose & Overview**

To clarify the situations when a “Pre-Proposal” (PRE) should be created, routed, and approved in eRPM, and contrast situations when a “Proposal Approval Form” (PAF) should be created, routed, and approved in eRPM. In general, most proposals the University submits to potential sponsors should be captured in the eRPM system through a PAF record in eRPM.

**II. Procedure / Policy**

- A. A PAF must be completed and routed in eRPM if any of the following are included in a submission to the sponsor, regardless of whether the sponsor asked for an “authorized signature” by a University official:
- Detailed Budget Items
    - e.g. Professor Smith says he is “happy to participate in the project, and estimates the costs at \$54,321, which includes \$4,321 in Tuition, \$9,876 in salaries, and \$2,345 in Indirect Costs,” etc.
  - Cost-sharing commitments
    - e.g. “UM will commit 50% in cost-sharing” or “UM will commit \$8,765 in cost-sharing over three years”
  - Space Commitments
    - e.g. “UM will provide 10 hours of laboratory time in our Space Research Facility Building”
  - Effort Commitments
    - e.g. “Professor Smith will pledge 5% of his annual effort to this project”
  - Third-Party Commitments
    - e.g. “UM will partner with Private Foundation, and will perform 40% and 50% of the work, respectively”
- B. A PRE must be completed and routed in eRPM if the sponsor requests either a general bottom-line budget, an “approval” or “signature” from an “authorized” University official, or physical or electronic submission by ORSP. For example:
- **Example 1:** In response to a request from Acme National Laboratory (“ANL”), Professor Smith intends to send a letter to Acme which includes language similar to: “I would be happy to participate in your New Technology Project, and estimate that my costs for two years of participation may be \$50,000.” ANL also requested that the letter be “approved” by the University. In this case, no detail budget is attached, and no specific resources, time, people, facilities, or effort are committed. Therefore, no PAF is required. However, because ANL requires that the University “approve” this letter, a PRE is required in eRPM.
  - **Example 2:** Federal Agency X requires that the University submit a “Letter of Intent” for a potential proposal, but no budget is required, and it does not meet the requirements of a PAF, above.

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However, ORSP will be required to “submit” the Letter of Intent formally through an electronic system that is only accessible to ORSP. Therefore, a PRE is required in eRPM.

C. Quick Reference Summary

“Happy to Participate” + [Detailed Budget, and/or Cost-Share, and/or Space, and/or Effort] = PAF

“Happy to Participate” + [High-Level “ballpark” budget, and/or UM authorized] = PRE

“Happy to Participate” alone (no UM authorized, no budget details, no resources) = nothing in eRPM

**III. Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: What happens if ORSP requires a PAF, but the sponsor considers or calls the submission a “pre-proposal” and thereafter requires UM to re-submit a full proposal?

A: The project team will revise the original PAF in eRPM at the time of the re-submission.

Q: What is the process in eRPM when a PRE is used for the first submission to the sponsor, and thereafter UM is invited to submit a full proposal?

A: The project team will create a new PAF by cloning the PRE in eRPM, and the PRE will be moved into the eRPM state “Invited for Full Proposal” which indicates the PRE process is complete.

Q: Is it possible that neither a PAF nor a PRE is required?

A: Yes. Neither a PRE nor a PAF are required if a PI is simply submitting a White Paper, Pre-Application, or Letter or Inquiry and nothing specific is required, committed, or promised, and ORSP is not required to formally submit that letter on behalf of the PI.

**IV. Resources**

<http://orsp.umich.edu/>

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