FAQs: Working With the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP)

Are you a research administrator or other staff who works with ORSP? Browse these FAQs to get answers to common questions.

Why did ORSP recently realign?

In ORSP's previous structure, staff members managed projects from proposal review through the life of the award until closeout, requiring extensive training over the full project lifecycle. Under the realignment, each team focuses on a functional area, allowing for specialization, reduced training time, and increased depth of knowledge. Learn more: research.umich.edu/orsp-realign.

What are the main responsibilities of each of the ORSP teams?

Pre-Award Team
Reviews proposals according to deadline policy, sponsor guidelines, regulations and institutional policies; submits proposals; serves as the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for post-submission requests such as Just-In-Time (JIT).

Contracts Team
Reviews and negotiates agreements, as well as modifications. Examples of agreements include nondisclosure agreements, data use agreements, clinical trial agreements, and funded agreements related to sponsored projects. The Contracts Team is organized into a funded agreement team, unfunded agreement team, and clinical trial agreement team.

Award Management Team
Handles non-financial post-award management of sponsored projects, serving as the AOR for post-award activities. Responsibilities include processing hardships, award acceptance, change requests, modifications, progress reports, close-outs and representing the institution in interactions with sponsors.

Sponsored Projects Coordination Team
Ensures the efficient and accurate processing of activities and data to support the administration of sponsored projects. Responsible for validating and recording data, establishing electronic records, initiating workflows in our electronic system and triaging emails that are sent to ORSP.

How do I know who my ORSP Officer is?

ORSP no longer assigns one representative to a project. Instead, Officers from each functional team handle the various stages of a project. To find the assigned Officer, check the eRPM record (listed in the Project Representative field) or the IronClad record (Workflow Owner). If an eRPM record has not been created yet, use the ORSP staff lookup at orsp.umich.edu/orsp-staff to find the Officers assigned to your department.

How do I determine if the purpose of the proposal approval form (PAF) is a proposal, contract or subsequent PAF when answering Question 1.2?

ORSP developed a decision making tool to help answer this question and it's available online at https://myumi.ch/VVdmX. If the purpose of the PAF seems to fall in a gray area, please note in PAF 6.2.3 "Instructions to ORSP" that the Decision Making Tool was used. This will help as we fine tune the PAF Question 1.2 webpage and Decision Making Tool.

What is the best way to reach ORSP for a PAF assigned to an Officer?

Use the "Request ORSP Action" activity in the PAF to get the request directly in the assigned Officer's work queue. If they are out of office, their coverage will also see the request. A Posted Comment only goes to that Officer's email and won't be seen by others.

If I have a question about a sponsor system and whether ORSP has access or who to list as a contact, who should I reach out to?

If there's no officer assigned to the PAF yet, questions can be sent to orsp-pre-award@umich.edu or Post a Comment in eRPM to First Name: Pre-Award Triage, Last Name: ORSP. The contact email on sponsor forms should be orsp-triage@umich.edu with rare exception.

What if I need ORSP to take action on or make changes to my AWD?
Use the "Request Action" blue button on the AWD record to create an Award Change Request (ACR). This places the request in the ORSP Award Management Officer's (AMO) work queue and can be seen by all officers handling coverage if that officer is off work.

If a PAF is in a state of Turned Down but a post-submission request is needed, such as NIH JIT, what should I do?
Post a comment to both the Pre-Award Officer assigned to the PAF and to orsp-pre-award@umich.edu (First Name: Pre-Award Triage, Last Name: ORSP). The eRPM system automatically turns down a PAF 18 months after submission to the sponsor. The PAF cannot be restored until an official award document has been received.

What is the best way to contact ORSP if I'm unsure who to contact or what action to take in eRPM?
If it's related to a proposal, email orsp-pre-award@umich.edu. For other questions, find and contact the assigned Officer per the instructions on "How do I know who my ORSP Officer is?" Please include the eRPM record number (e.g., AWD or PAF) and the PI's name to help us find the record.

What resources are available for working in the new Ironclad contract lifecycle management tool?
Training videos and job aids can be found at orsp.umich.edu/working-iron-clad-clm.

Tips for Working With ORSP

ORSP is a central resource for faculty and staff involved in sponsored research activities. Explore these tips to maximize our pre-award and non-financial post-award services.

Plan ahead. ORSP reviews and approves all proposals seeking external funding. To receive the most comprehensive review, adhere to the ORSP deadline policy. Learn more at orsp.umich.edu/deadline-policy.

Be prepared for research security training. PEERRS Research Security Training will be required prior to PAF approval for all investigators starting Oct. 1, 2025. Training must have been completed within the last 12 months.

Don't sign anything — send it to ORSP! Faculty and staff do not have the authority to sign legal agreements on behalf of U-M. Only authorized individuals have signature authority.

Know the estimated response time. How quickly ORSP can respond depends on the nature of the request and current workloads. You can learn more about ORSP response time goals at orsp.umich.edu/orsp-response-time-goals.

Help us easily find your record. Anytime you contact ORSP via email, always include the eRPM record number (e.g., AWD, PAF or UFA) and the PI's name. That helps ORSP find the record in question without follow-up emails. For pre-award questions, please also include the solicitation and sponsor deadline.

Learn about loan repayment. Did you know, the NIH Loan Repayment Program may repay up to $50k annually of an NIH researcher's qualified educational debt? Learn more at orsp.umich.edu/lrp.

Trust your partner in compliance. ORSP provides specialized regulatory, statutory and organizational knowledge. We're here to help you and your team make sure you're in compliance.

Subscribe to the Research Administration Post (RAP). Get sponsored research updates and resources, including information on Navigate training and the Research Administration Advisory Council, in your inbox by signing up at orsp.umich.edu/signup.

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