

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions

Submitting UTCM Formal Proposals • FY10

Revised 10.22.09

Invitation and Notification

Q: I have been invited to submit a Formal Proposal. Does that mean that my project will be selected for funding?

A: Being invited to submit a Formal Proposal after the evaluations of the Preliminary Proposals received does not guarantee that your project will be selected for funding. It is likely, however, barring unforeseen circumstances, that you will be selected provided that you 1) follow the required format and submission deadline, 2) follow any specific instructions given to you by the UTCM, 3) otherwise structure the project like your Preliminary Proposal and 4) have no delinquent reports or deliverables from other UTCM or TTI projects.

Q: When will I receive word whether my Formal Proposal has been funded?

A: UTCM Awards will be announced approximately December 11, 2009. PIs will be notified by e-mail.

Leveraging Funds

Q: Your helpful hints encourage proposals to include leveraging of funds. 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: What documentation is required to include leveraging on a Formal Proposal?

A: It depends on the type of leveraging. If you are leveraging state, local, or federal agency funds, some type of written documentation is required for UTCM files. Departmental leveraging (typically startup funds or academic salaries) requires consent on the budget by the department head/director of the unit(s) providing the leverage. If the funds for a non-university leverage already exist, an account number is needed on the budget form in the leverage column along with a copy of the contract. If the funds are a new non-university leverage commitment, a letter is needed from the organization providing the leverage.

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

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

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 leverage and should be included. If the equipment will be shared with other projects, include the appropriate percentage in your leverage.

Budgets

Q: How should I format the budget?

A: Proposals should include a project budget in the required format. (See the [Formal Proposal Budget Form](http://utcm.tamu.edu/funding/formal_forms.stm#budget) on the UTCM web site (http://utcm.tamu.edu/funding/formal_forms.stm#budget). The budget form includes columns for leveraging. If your project will span multiple fiscal years, you will need a cumulative budget and budgets for each fiscal year. The budget is constructed so that you will only need to complete the blue and green fields; all other fields are locked. All calculations are computed for you.

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

A: Yes, UTCM grants are subject to indirect costs of 45.5%; that is, your Formal Proposal budget will consist of direct costs and indirect costs that will total the amount you have been authorized to request.

Q: I need help completing the budget form. Whom do I contact?

A: Contact the designated representative for your unit in the TTI Research and Development Office (see the [TTI RDO Division Representative Directory](#)) for help in completing your budget form, including hourly rates. If your unit is not listed in the directory, your representative is [Susan Adams](#). Contact the UTCM office for help with the following: understanding the budget form, determining what budget items are appropriate to include for your objectives, determining what overall budget figure to set, including leverage on your budget form.

Q: What amount can I pay a graduate student? Can I pay graduate tuition on this project?

A: UTCM supports the actual or typical stipend for the student's home department, as well as in-state tuition (no fees). The budget form lists rates for Civil Engineering assistantships, but other departments may vary. UTCM does not support paying students a higher rate that includes a supplement to cover tuition (except for non-TAMU students). Funds are automatically included for graduate in-state tuition (no fees) as a separate line item (in Section B). UTCM supports a maximum of 9 hrs (Fall and Spring) and 6 hrs (Summer), and tuition is automatically pro-rated according to the percent time the student is supported on your UTCM project. You can decrease the amount of tuition UTCM provides if the student's tuition is covered from other sources (shown as leverage) or if the student attends a university other than TAMU. Fees are not supported on UTCM projects.

Q: How do I budget costs for my final report?

A: All UTCM projects must produce a final technical report within two months after termination of the project, and this report must be edited by TTI Communications. The UTCM will bear the costs of editing and printing your final report. This is not a budget item for your project.

Q: What budget items are not supported?

A: Foreign travel and capital equipment are not allowable. Non-capital equipment (e.g. computers, printers, cameras, etc. under \$5,000), their consumables, and office supplies are generally not allowable, but may be justified **in advance** in very specific cases. Because travel to present results at professional meetings generally occurs after the project deliverables have been produced, it is preferable to terminate the project and request funds from the UTCM separately for this type of travel, rather than keep the project open just for travel. If the budget estimate you provided in your Preliminary Proposal included funds for this type of travel, please contact the UTCM office for further information.

Q: What needs to be justified in the budget justification narrative?

A: Items in Section B, items 4-14 of the budget form are the only items that need to be addressed in the budget justification (justification of personnel is addressed elsewhere). Item 4 (tuition) only needs to be justified if making an exception to the default tuition amount. A simple explanation of the requested funds in each category is all that is necessary. For example, if you list travel funds, please explain who will be traveling where and for what purpose. It is especially important to fully justify write-in items in this section.

Q: Must I include salary support for everyone involved with the project?

A: Yes. Anyone working on the project must be listed in #4 of the Formal Proposal Form as a Project Participant and their involvement must be explained in #8 Project Plan. Each person named in #4 must show time and corresponding salary on the UTCM budget form. This salary can appear either in the UTCM column, or in a leverage column.

Miscellaneous Questions

Q: What is the difference between a technology transfer project and an education project?

A: The difference between the two can be confusing! According to the UTC guidelines, education projects refer to classes or academic programs developed for college students only. Continuing education workshops, conferences or seminars for practicing professionals are considered technology transfer activities. Outreach for K-12 is also considered technology transfer.

Q: My project is primarily technology transfer and/or education – how will I involve students?

A: While technology transfer and education projects may involve students, the only projects that require meaningful student involvement as a part of the project are research projects.

Q: What is meant by “meaningful student involvement”?

A: “Meaningful student involvement” means project activities by a student that contribute meaningfully to their educational experience, ideally in research that can be applied to a graduate thesis or dissertation topic or undergraduate research experience and that enhances a student’s research ability.

Q. Do I need IRB approval on my project?

A: It depends. If your project has a research component, you may need to apply to the IRB for approval of a Human Subjects protocol. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has devised a series of charts to help you determine whether you will need to make application. The charts can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/decisioncharts.htm>, and help in completing them can be obtained from the [TAMU Office of Research Compliance](#) (the "IRB Office") or [Sue Chrysler](#). Note that if an IRB application is needed, project funds cannot be released until the IRB approves your protocol and a copy of the approval and protocol are received in the UTCM office. In Appendix 3 of your Formal Proposal, you will state whether or not an IRB application is needed.

Q: Your instructions state that all projects must terminate by May 31, 2011. What if my project needs to continue beyond that date?

A: In this final year of our current grant from DOT, we must spend all funds by the termination date of the grant. Therefore, it is not an option to extend projects beyond May 31, 2011 and all projects will terminate by that date. Please construct your project plan carefully so that you will be able to conclude on time.