Proposal Policy Resources
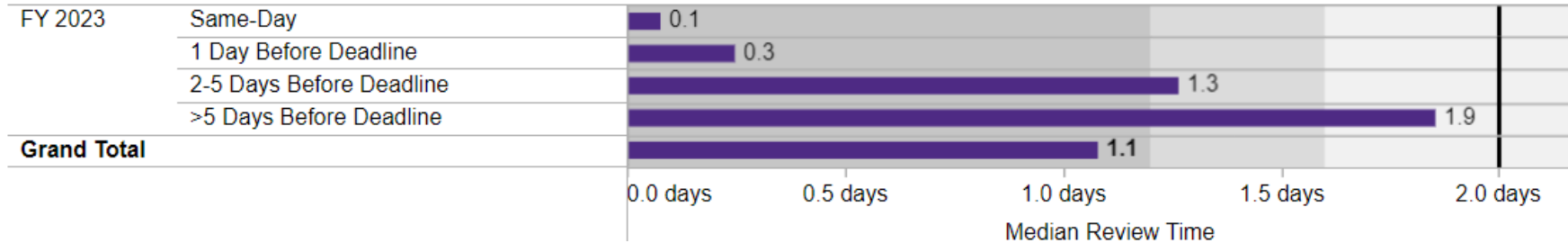
Proposal Review & Submission webpage
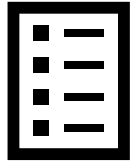
Sponsored Research Proposal Review Criteria Job Aid

Proposal Policy FAQ

Current State: Proposal Review

FY 2023		Median Review Time
	Same-Day	0.1
	1 Day Before Deadline	0.3
	2-5 Days Before Deadline	1.3
	>5 Days Before Deadline	1.9
Grand Total		1.1

Median Review Times

SR continues to review proposals in **1.1 days**

- Proposals arriving <u>more than 5 days prior</u> to deadline are reviewed in under 2 days

- Roughly 5% of all proposals arrive for SR review 10 or more days before deadline

Multiple Iterations (Send backs)

- Nearly 1/3 of proposals involve multiple send backs to the unit after SR review

Policy Overview

- In order to guarantee on-time sponsor submission, a complete proposal package needs to arrive in Sponsored Research, **ready for submission to the sponsor,** at least **5 business days <u>or earlier</u>** before the proposal deadline.

- Final proposal packages that arrive after the 5-day cutoff will be submitted on a first-in, first-out basis.
  - Any remaining non-compliant proposals at the end of the business day on the deadline will not be guaranteed submission.

Definitions

Complete

A proposal in which all required technical and administrative components are present, accurate, and in final format for acceptance by a sponsor. A complete submission cannot contain empty required fields or placeholder or draft documents. The proposal must be ready for submission without needing any additional confirmation from the PI to submit.

Accurate

A proposal that can be submitted to the sponsor without requiring corrections or returns to the PI/Department.

Compliant

All internal and external requirements are satisfied. The University will not submit non-compliant proposals due to timing or refusal to address requirements.

Definitions

On-Time Proposal

Complete Proposals submitted to Sponsored Research office five (5) business days before the sponsor deadline date.

Late Proposals

Proposals not in compliance with the 5-day deadline policy. Late proposals risk not being successfully submitted.

Submitted to SR

Used interchangeably with phrases such as "arriving in/at SR" or "sent to SR." In CERES, refers to reaching the *Specialist Review* state after all department approvals and PI certification are in place.

Benefits

- Fully **compliant**, **final, ready to submit** proposals arriving in SR on time will be submitted **ahead of the deadline**

    They will not be deprioritized by late/same-day arrivals

- Aligns with new system functionality, in which proposals and budgets cannot be edited during routing

- Provides common understanding of guidelines

- Peer institutions have similar policies that we already adhere to when collaborating

Policy Implementation

- The policy will be implemented **April 3**, providing the research community an opportunity to adapt to the new timeline ahead of the launch of CERES

- The policy announced by VPR will be enforced by Northwestern Sponsored Research.
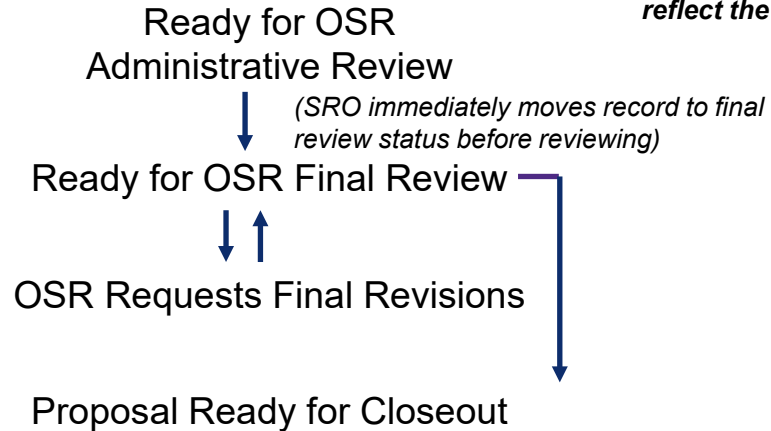
Policy and InfoEd (4/3-4/13)

Context

InfoEd Status

Note: InfoEd workflow/state names cannot be updated to reflect the new policy

Proposal Complete, Accurate and Compliant

Ready for OSR Administrative Review

(SRO immediately moves record to final review status before reviewing)

Ready for OSR Final Review

Changes needed?

OSR Requests Final Revisions

No further changes

Proposal is submitted

Proposal Ready for Closeout

Policy and CERES (starting 4/24)

Context	CERES Status

Department Review

(automatically transitions after PI certification is complete and the last department approver approves)

Proposal Complete, Accurate and Compliant

Specialist Review

(SRO executes activity to complete review)

Changes needed?

Clarifications Requested

No further changes

Proposal Pending Submission

Proposal is submitted

Pending Sponsor Review

Responding to Q&A

IMPLEMENTATION

Q: Does the policy apply to deadlines of April 3 (or later) OR proposals routed on April 3 (and thereafter)?

A: The new policy applies to proposals routed to Sponsored Research on April 3 and thereafter. The first deadline the new policy applies to is Monday, April 10. To be guaranteed on-time submission to the sponsor, proposals due on April 10 should be routed to Sponsored Research by April 3 (or earlier).

Q: How will the policy be handled in light of system downtime related to the CERES cutover and implementation?

A: The dates previously communicated for cutover remain - proposals received for review by SR on or before April 13 will be submitted to the sponsor from InfoEd.

Q: What about proposals due within the five business days after CERES goes live? Will there be a grace period to allow time to build proposals in the new system?

A: Proposals in CERES will be reviewed on a first-in, first-out basis in line with the policy. SR recommends focusing on routing proposals first that are due shortly following the system launch.

Responding to Q&A (cont.)

TIMING AND QUEUEING

Q How do you calculate at least five business days before the published deadline?

A To calculate five business days, start counting at 1 the day before the sponsor due date. (The sponsor's due date is Day 0.) University closures and holidays are not counted. For example, five business days prior to the Monday **June 5**, 2023 deadline is Friday **May 26**, due to the university holiday Monday May 29.

Example

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
May	21	22	23	24	25	26 Internal Deadline for 6/5	27
	28	29 University Holiday	30	31	1	2	3
June	4	5 Proposal Due	6	7	8	9	10

Responding to Q&A (cont.)

TIMING AND QUEUEING CONT.

Please clarify the statement "If a corrected proposal is received after the 5-business day deadline, it is not considered on time." Does that mean that if the proposal needs to be corrected and then is re-routed to SR less than five (5) business days before the sponsor deadline, it is not on time – even if the proposal was originally routed to SR five (5) or more business days in advance of the sponsor deadline?

Q **A** Yes, that is correct.

Is first-in, first-out being managed by capsule or across the University?

Q **A** First in, first-out will be managed by capsule.

Responding to Q&A (cont.)

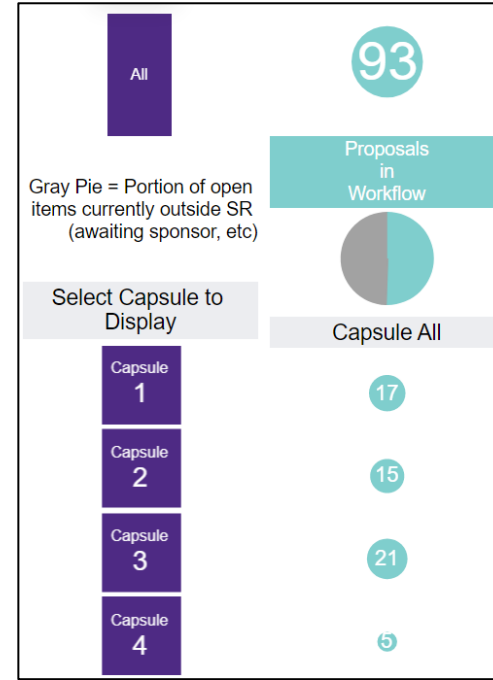## TIMING AND QUEUEING CONT.

Q Where can units see the proposal queue, including a designation for proposals submitted outside policy?

A Capsule Business Reps can access the Capsule Dashboard to see the number of proposals by capsule.

Example

Responding to Q&A (cont.)

TIMING AND QUEUEING CONT.

How will Sponsored Research handle sponsor-initiated proposals when a faculty member is invited to submit with a short turnaround time?

Q **A**

Proposals with documentation of sponsor invitation without a published deadline will be submitted within five (5) days of SR receiving a complete, compliant proposal.

REVIEW & COMMENTS

What level of review will be done if a proposal is routed to SR at least five (5) days before the sponsor deadline?

Q **A**

All proposals will receive the same level of review based on SR proposal review criteria.

Responding to Q&A (cont.)

REVIEW & COMMENTS CONT.

Will there be an additional 5 business day deadline for a pre-review of the "admin shell"?

Q **A** Reviews are no longer separated, i.e., there are no distinct administrative and final reviews. There is one review of the final, complete, compliant, accurate, application for submission to the sponsor. Proposals should arrive as final and complete – this includes complete technical and administrative components.

Will the RA have another chance to upload new versions of documents prior to submission? What happens if SR has no clarifications to request?

Q **A** Proposals should only be routed to SR when the complete, compliant application is ready to submit. When SR has no corrections to request, they will proceed with submission to the sponsor (for system-to-system proposals).

What is the SR commitment on turnaround time to review a proposal received per the policy? When can we expect comments back from SR after routing a proposal?

Q **A** SR targets up to 2 business days for reviewing a proposal. The implementation of this policy will prevent any delays in review of submissions getting deprioritized by last minute proposals.

Responding to Q&A

SUBMISSION & NOTIFICATIONS

Q Will SR return a proposal automatically if the science is missing or will SR perform the review and note the missing science so that it can be addressed by the department? Can we submit proposals for dept review without uploading the science documents?

A SR will return incomplete proposals without review. Local business process will apply for earlier steps in the process, including department review.

Q If proposals are ready for submission five (5) days prior to due date, when will the proposal be submitted to the sponsor by SR?

A If SR did not request revisions in a proposal, then it is being submitted upon completion of the review. The goal is to submit proposals as early as possible.

Q Will Sponsored Research send a notice if a proposal submission is rejected due to lack of time? Who will SR notify if a proposal is not submitted?

A If a proposal is rejected by a sponsor system and SR receives a rejection notice or notification that a proposal has been withdrawn, SR will forward the notice to the RA and PI.

Responding to Q&A

OTHER

Q Who will be accountable when faculty do not provide documents by the deadline? When RAs receive short notice of a due date?

A The faculty member is accountable /responsible for communicating deadlines and providing documents to RA's and accepts the risk of a failed submission (to the sponsor) if a complete, compliant proposal does not arrive in SR at least five (5) business days ahead of the sponsor's deadline.

Q Does this policy apply to RPPRs?

A We have a high rate of RPPR's arriving to SR late. Though the policy does not explicitly apply to RPPR's, it's a best practice to follow the guidelines from the policy for submission of RPPR's.

Responding to Q&A

CERES FUNCTIONALITY-RELATED

Q Can science be edited for system-to-system proposal submissions after the proposal is routed to SR for review?

A No. In CERES, system-to-system proposals should arrive in SR with the SF424 record in 'Valid for Submission' state, with all required components included and ready to submit.

Q If the "route for specialist review" means the proposal is ready for submission, how do we assure SR confirms with the PI the science documents are final in case they are being updated or found an error?

A SR will not require ready for submission confirmation as routing and submission of the proposal to SR is the indication it is ready to be submitted.