Updated Proposal Submission Policy

Effective January 6, 2026.

Establishes and enforces new internal deadlines for proposal submissions

Covers proposals for external funding, including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and Other Transaction Authority (OTA).

Full updated policy available online:
https://researchservices.cornell.edu/policies/proposal-submission-policy

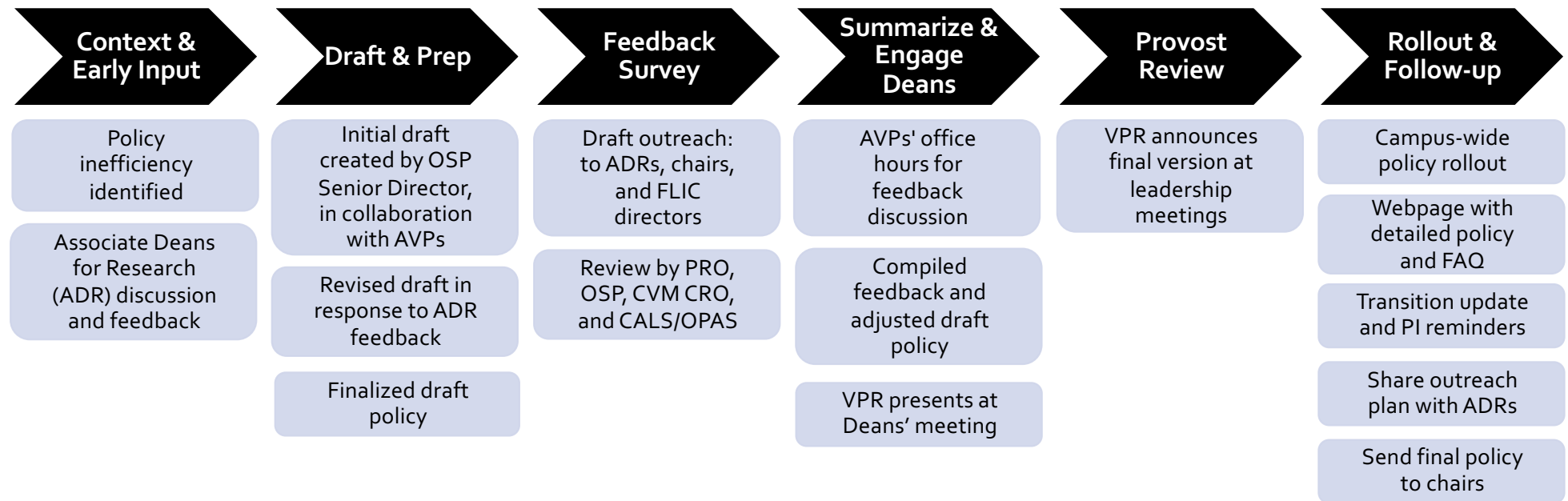**Proposal Submission Policy**

Rationale

- Pressures on research administrative staff due to:
  - Increased regulations from federal agencies and other sponsors (e.g., certifications, restrictions, and training requirements)
  - Increased number of proposal submissions (up 18% since FY2022)

- Strive to ensure that research administrative staff can operate on a more manageable and predictable timeline

Updates will ensure proper compliance review, support to faculty, and enhanced proposal quality
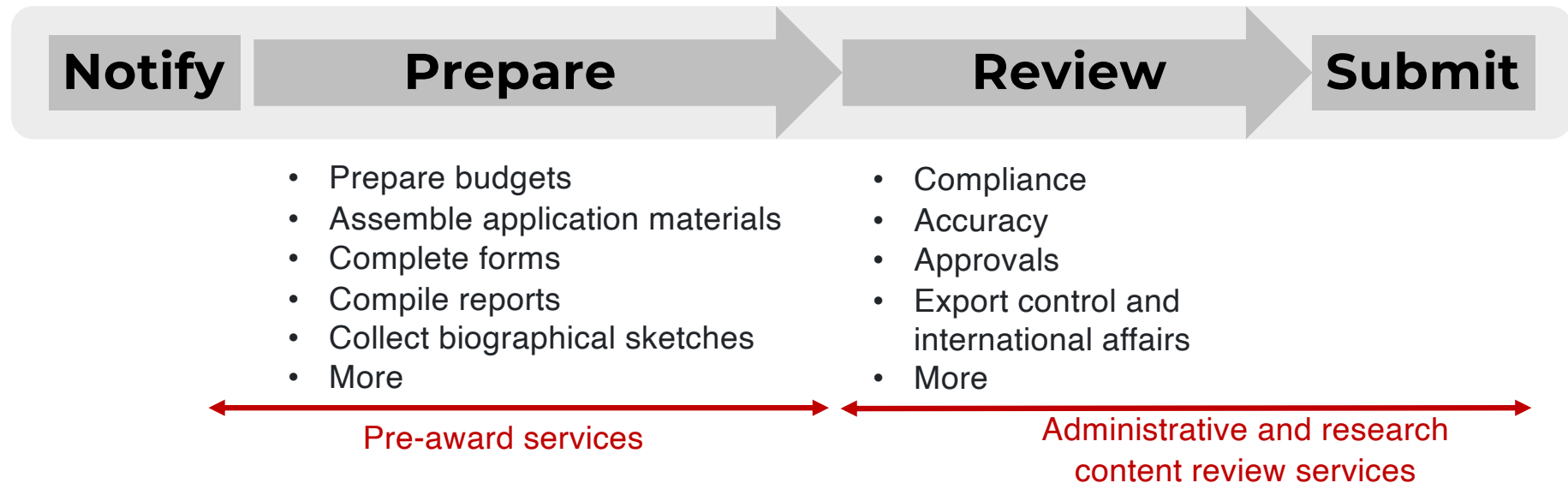
Proposal Submission Policy

Process used by AVPs for policy development:

Context & Early Input	Draft & Prep	Feedback Survey	Summarize & Engage Deans	Provost Review	Rollout & Follow-up
Policy inefficiency identified	Initial draft created by OSP Senior Director, in collaboration with AVPs	Draft outreach: to ADRs, chairs, and FLIC directors	AVPs' office hours for feedback discussion	VPR announces final version at leadership meetings	Campus-wide policy rollout
Associate Deans for Research (ADR) discussion and feedback	Revised draft in response to ADR feedback	Review by PRO, OSP, CVM CRO, and CALS/OPAS	Compiled feedback and adjusted draft policy		Webpage with detailed policy and FAQ
	Finalized draft policy		VPR presents at Deans' meeting		Transition update and PI reminders
					Share outreach plan with ADRs
					Send final policy to chairs

Proposal Submission Policy

The proposal submission process

Notify	Prepare	Review	Submit

Prepare (Pre-award services)
- Prepare budgets
- Assemble application materials
- Complete forms
- Compile reports
- Collect biographical sketches
- More

Pre-award services

Review (Administrative and research content review services)
- Compliance
- Accuracy
- Approvals
- Export control and international affairs
- More

Administrative and research content review services

See full list of pre-award duties and review items in the updated policy on-line

Proposal Submission Policy

Who does the work

Proposal submission services:

- OVPRI: Pre-award Operations (PRO) and Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)
- CALS: Office of Pre-Award Services (OPAS)
- CVM: College Research Office (CRO)
- Some units have research administrators that offer pre-award services

Pre-award services:
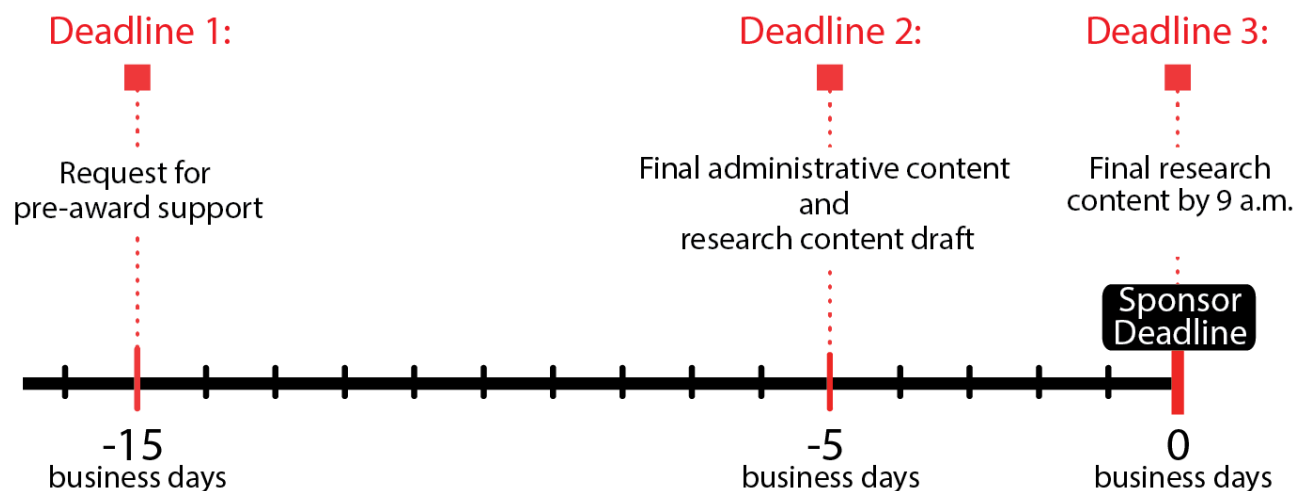
- Proposal development staff

Administrative review and submission:

- Grant and Contract Officers (GCOs)
- Authorized Organizational Representatives (AORs)

Proposal Submission Policy

Key Steps and Deadlines:

- **Step 1:** Request pre-award support at least 15 days before sponsor deadline

- **Step 2:** Submit final administrative content and research content draft at least 5 days before sponsor deadline

- **Step 3.** Submit final research content before 9 a.m. on the day of sponsor deadline

Deadline 1:
Request for pre-award support

Deadline 2:
Final administrative content and research content draft

Deadline 3:
Final research content by 9 a.m.

Sponsor Deadline

-15 business days

-5 business days

0 business days

Proposal Submission Policy

Best practices:

Submit requested materials as soon as you can ahead of indicated deadlines

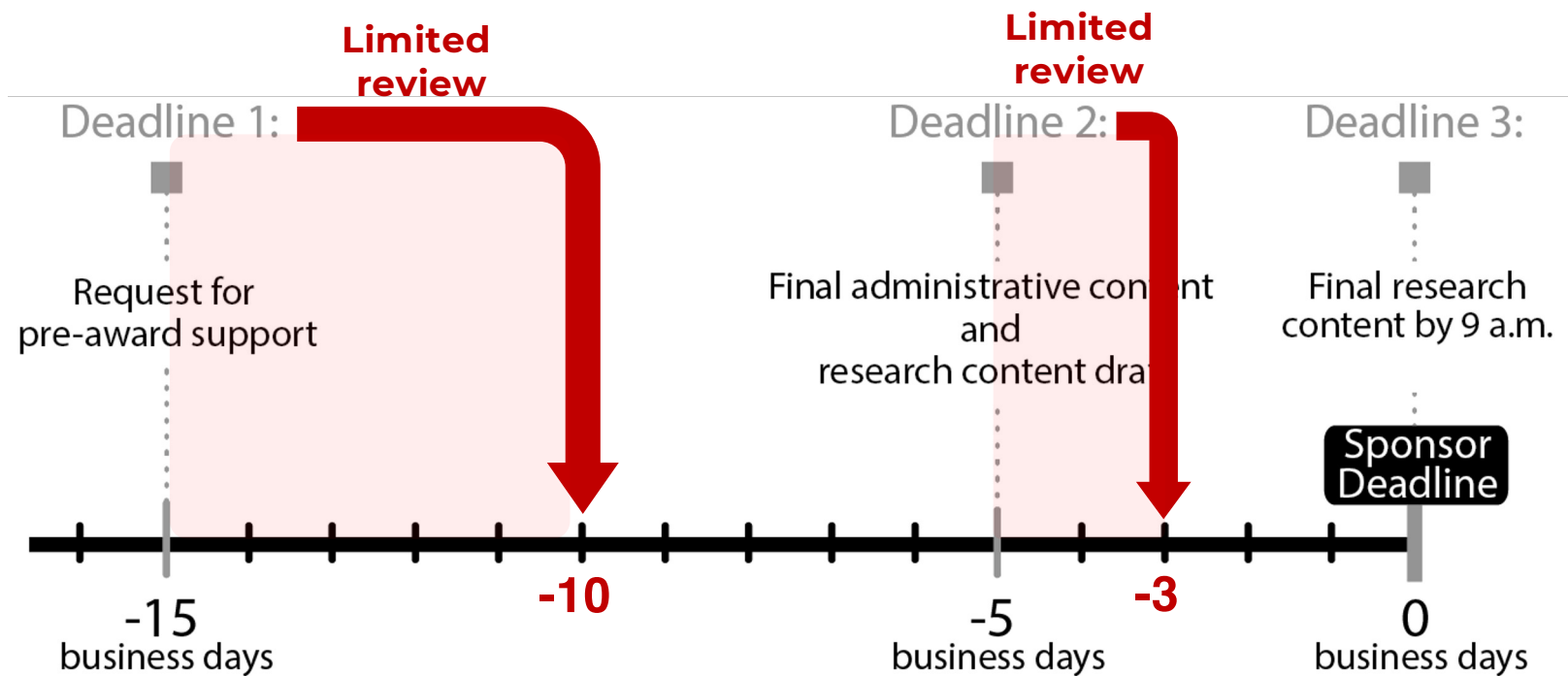**Proposal Submission Policy**

If Deadline is Missed:

- **Step 1:** May request pre-award support 10 days before sponsor deadline for limited review
    - Past this deadline, not allowed to submit
- **Step 2:** May submit administrative content to pre-award support 3 days before sponsor deadline for limited review
    - Past this deadline, not allowed to submit
- **Step 3.** Final research content may be submitted as above

NOTE: Not all proposals are eligible for late submission (see ahead)

Escalation procedure available for extreme cases of missed deadlines:
Department Chairs (equivalent), Deans and VPR

Proposal Submission Policy

Complex Proposals Not Eligible for Late Submission:

- Cost share included

- Total budget exceeds $10,000,000

- Subawards included

- Response to RFPs that are exempt from Cornell policies, including but not limited to export control, publication restrictions, IP ownership, citizenship restrictions, sponsor anonymity, and similar restrictions.

- Response to contract or Other Transaction Authority (OTA) solicitations

- Foreign sponsors, including foreign universities

- Proposals requiring space commitments, e.g., changes to laboratory/office space, additional space, or any renovation

Key differences compared to current policy:

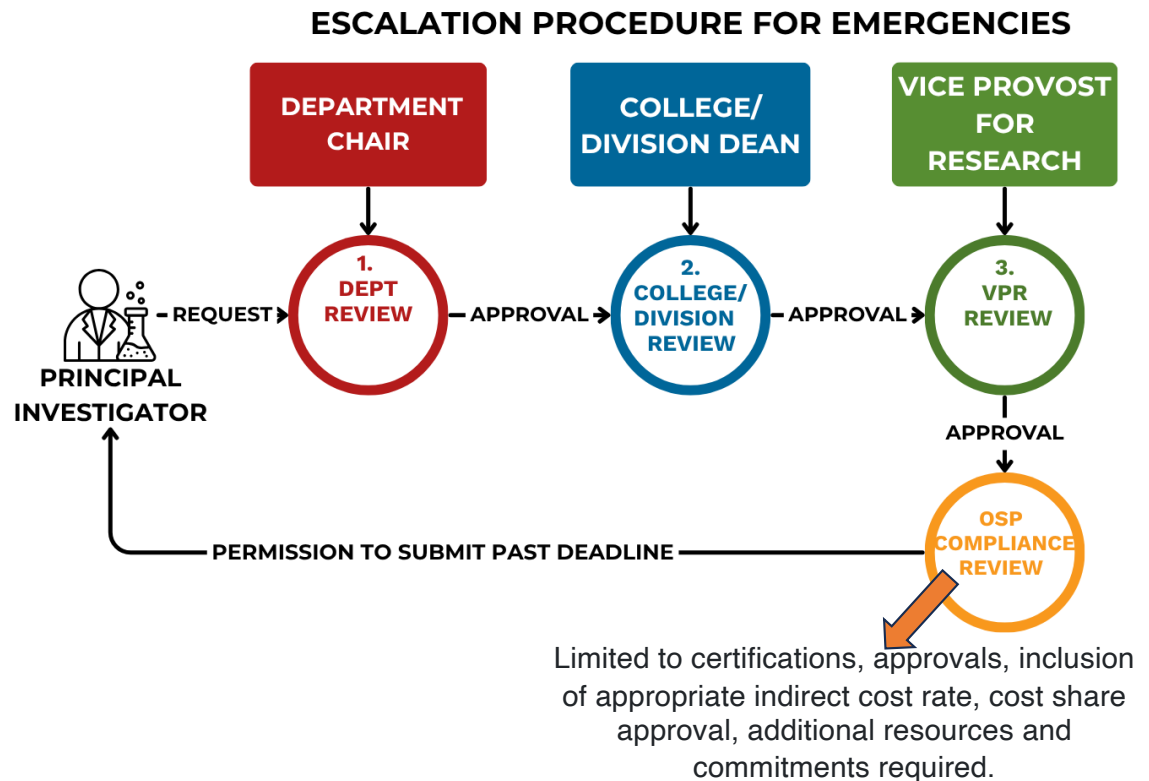|	Current	Updated
1. **Deadline for request for pre-award support**	No deadline	-15 days (-10 latest for limited review)
2. **Latest deadline for submission of administrative content (limited/no review)**	Deadline day (minor/no review)	-3 days (limited review)
3. **Deadline for submission of administrative content for complex grants***	Deadline day (minor/no review) -complex grants not treated differently-	-5 days

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Proposal Submission Policy

Escalation procedure (only for emergencies)

1. Department Review–PI emails Dept. Chair to request review and submission of the proposal. **Chairs should only approve compelling, well justified cases**

2. College/Division Review–Dean considers request and forward to VPR if meritorious

3. Vice Provost for Research (VPR) Review–VPR has final authority to grant an exception

ESCALATION PROCEDURE FOR EMERGENCIES

Limited to certifications, approvals, inclusion of appropriate indirect cost rate, cost share approval, additional resources and commitments required.

Proposal Submission Policy

Administrative Content

- RASS record
- Sponsor application forms
- Senior/Key Personnel documents
- Budget & Budget Justification
- Cost share commitments
- Appendices/Supplemental Documents
- Subaward RASS record
- Letters of Support

Proposal Submission Policy

Research Content

- Project summary/abstract

- Narrative/Research Plan/Project Description

- Specific Aims

- References Cited

NOTE: Draft/final research content will be reviewed as part of full review process but will not be re-reviewed on the day of the deadline.

Proposal Submission Policy

Full Review vs. Limited Review

- Compliance with sponsor guidelines/request for proposals
- Accuracy of proposal record in RASS
- Completion of PI/co-PI attestations and unit approvals
- Compliance with PI eligibility requirements
- Compliance with federal and state requirements
- Accuracy of budget and budget justification
- Inclusion of appropriate indirect cost and benefit rates

- Comparison of other support/current & pending support documents against Cornell records
- Compliance of biosketches/CVs with sponsor guidelines
- Appendices/supplemental documents
- Subaward documents, if applicable
- Completion of institutional certifications
- Compliance with Cornell policies and requirements
- Cost share approval
- Other Project Resources

NOTE: Limited review only includes those items in red font

Proposal Submission Policy

Additional Considerations

- Subrecipients are required to submit documents 7 business days prior to sponsor deadline

- Proposals without a stated deadline are subject to the deadlines

- Awards received for proposals submitted without OSP review will not be accepted by Cornell without approval by the Dean/Director and Vice Provost for Research

Proposal Submission Policy

Policy Exemptions

- Pre-proposals and letters of intent
- White papers
- Proposal updates and Just-in-Time (JIT) requests

Proposal Submission Policy

Administrative Contacts

[Find my GCO](#)

[Pre–award Research Operations (PRO)](#)

[CALS Office of Pre-Award Services OPAS](#)

[CVM Research Office](#)

[ILR Sponsored Research Office](#)

FAQs

https://researchservices.cornell.edu/resources/proposal-submission-policy-frequently-asked-questions-faqs