

Northern Illinois University
Office of Sponsored Projects
System Tracking and External Project (STEP) Form Instructions

The System Tracking and External Project (STEP) Form is used by the Office of Sponsored Projects to obtain internal approvals for all proposals submitted by NIU faculty to external sponsors for funding. The STEP form may also be used to obtain internal approvals for a variety of other reasons including but not limited to: award acceptance, project and/or budget changes and other sponsored project activities that require institutional endorsement.

Please use the following explanations to ascertain that the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) has complete and accurate information regarding your proposal/project.

REMINDER: OSP cannot process an award without a fully signed STEP form on file.

SECTION 1: TRACKING INFORMATION

1. OSP Staff Responsible for this Action

The individual named here is the OSP staff member who should be contacted with any questions or concerns related to the completion of the STEP form or attached proposal/award.

2. Proposal Review Completed

The signature of the OSP staff member (typically the same as named in #1) indicates their approval of the information on the STEP form and attached documents (e.g., proposal, awarded grant or contract).

3. OSP File #

This is the number (formatted ## - ###) that OSP has assigned to your proposal/project. Please reference this number in any correspondence with OSP. Typically, a proposal/project coded as a new proposal or competitive renewal will be given a new OSP number. A proposal/project coded as a continuation, revision or supplement will retain the previously used OSP number.

4. Previous OSP #

This section will likely be blank for new, continuation, supplemental or revised proposals. If the STEP form is being routed for a proposal/project coded as a competitive renewal, the OSP file number of the previously awarded project will be noted.

5. Awarded: Yes or No

This will generally be marked 'No'. In the event that the proposal has already been awarded and requires further signature approvals, it will be marked 'Yes'.

Other instances where this section would be marked 'yes':

- awards received by OSP in which a traditional proposal is not on record
- a traditional proposal is on record in OSP but the award amount and/or commitments differ significantly from those proposed
- other project changes including change of PI and F&A distribution

6. Full Proposal/Award Attached

Generally, the full proposal or award documents (including the detailed budget) will be attached to the STEP form to allow adequate review. In the event that OSP does not have the complete proposal at the time of routing, OSP must receive a copy of the full proposal within five (5) days of the submission deadline.

7. Review Required For

One of the following purpose/activity types will be selected:

- Administrative Change
 - E.g., PI change, title change or adjustment to F&A distribution
- Budget Revision
 - E.g., increase or decrease of budget amount based upon sponsor request (generally prior to award received)
- Continuation
 - E.g., additional funding is being provided and the time period may be extended

NIU Division of Research and Graduate Studies
Office of Sponsored Projects



SECTION 1: TRACKING INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

7. Review Required For (Continued)

- New Proposal
 - E.g., a new competitive proposal is being submitted to a sponsor
- Pre-Proposal
 - E.g., the sponsor is requesting specific information (usually the inclusion of a budget in a pre-proposal) prior to the actual submission
- Supplemental
 - E.g., additional funding is being provided for the same budget period

8. Instrument Type

One of the following funding instrument types will be selected:

- Contract
 - E.g., a traditional proposal is being submitted and funding is anticipated (or has been received) as a contract. Contracts are further defined on the OSP website at <http://www.grad.niu.edu/osp/>
- Cooperative Agreement
 - E.g., a traditional proposal is being submitted and funding is anticipated (or has been received) in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements are further defined on the OSP website at <http://www.grad.niu.edu/osp/>
- Grant
 - E.g., a traditional proposal is being submitted and funding is anticipated (or has been received) in the form of a grant. Grants are further defined on the OSP website at <http://www.grad.niu.edu/osp/>
- Non-Institutional
 - E.g., a traditional proposal was submitted and/or award guidelines specify payment directly to the individual. Typically, fellowships will be coded "Non-Institutional".
- Route Through OSP
 - E.g., a grant or contract is received by OSP and moves straight to award. No traditional OSP proposal submission involved. Typically, a project coded "Route Through OSP" will be indicated 'Awarded' in #5.

9. Purpose/Activity

One of the following purpose/activity types will be selected:

- Academic Support
- Instructional Programs
- Organized Research
- Other
- Public Service
- Student Services

Confirm that the activity type listed is appropriate for the scope of your project.

10. Code

This code is used by NIU to track external activity by purpose and funding source (see #9).

11. Deadline Yes or No

This section will be noted 'yes' or 'no' depending on whether the sponsor has given a deadline.

12. Deadline Date

If a firm deadline is identified in #11, the date will be indicated.

13. Deadline Type

One of the following deadline types will be selected:

- Post-mark: proposal must be mailed or submitted on the deadline date
- Receipt: proposal must be received and accepted (if electronically submitted) by the agency by the deadline

SECTION 1: TRACKING INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

14. Submission Type

This is the method of submission required by the sponsor:

- Email
- Fastlane (system used by the National Science Foundation)
- Fax
- Grants.gov
- Hard-Copy
- Other Electronic

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Project Director/Principal Investigator

15. Name

Confirm that the correct project director/principal investigator (PD/PI) has been named.

The PD/PI is the individual designated by NIU *and approved by the sponsor*, who will be responsible for the scientific or technical design and conduct of the project and for signing reports.

Note: OSP's NIUeRA system requires that one individual be recognized as the primary PI. This will be the individual named in this section.

16. Primary Unit

This is the unit in which the PD/PI's appointment resides. If a PD/PI is in multiple units or departments (excluding interdisciplinary units), the unit the proposed project is *most associated* with should be indicated.

17. Additional Units

If the PI is associated with any additional units (including interdisciplinary), and the project is related to these units, those units will be listed. Typically, the additional units receive a portion of the F&A distribution. Confirm this is correct in the F&A Distribution section.

18. Employee ID

Confirm that the PI's Employee ID is correct. This information allows for efficient access to records and for necessary maintenance of NIUeRA profiles.

Co-Project Director/ Principal Investigator

19. Name

Confirm that the correct co-project director/co-principal investigator (co-PD/co-PI) has been named.

All co-PDs/co-PIs should be listed on the STEP forms. The co-PD/co-PI is also an individual designated by NIU who may be approved by the sponsor, and will be responsible for the scientific or technical design and conduct of the project.

20. Primary Unit

This is the unit in which the co-PD/co-PI's appointment resides. If a co-PD/co-PI is in multiple units or departments (excluding interdisciplinary units), the unit the proposed project is *most associated* with should be indicated.

21. Additional Units

If the co-PD/co-PI is associated with any additional units (including interdisciplinary) and the project is related to these units, those units will be listed. Typically, the additional units receive a portion of the F&A distribution. Confirm this is correct in the F&A Distribution section.

22. Employee ID

Please confirm that the co-PD/co-PI's Employee ID is correct. This information allows for efficient access to records and for necessary maintenance of NIUeRA profiles.

Project Title

23. Title

This is the official title of the project that will be included in the OSP record.

Verify that the title is correct (including spelling) and matches the proposal submitted to the sponsor.

SECTION 1: TRACKING INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

24. Project Summary

This is a 3-5 sentence summary of the project.

This information will be retained in the OSP record. If the proposal is funded, this summary will be included in the quarterly report to the Board of Trustees.

SPONSOR

25. Sponsor

This is the name of the agency or organization to which the proposal is being submitted.

26. Federal Flow Through Funds Yes or No

This section will be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'.

Federal flow through funds are federal funds that are received by a non-federal entity and which are in turn provided to another non-federal entity. Federal flow-through is often involved when NIU is a subcontract in another institution's proposal.

27. Originating Sponsor (if any):

If the sponsor is receiving funds from another agency (generally a federal agency), that original sponsor should be named.

28. CFDA

This is only applicable to federal primary or flow through projects. When available, OSP will indicate the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.

29. Program/Solicitation

This is applicable to agencies that have many different programs to which one can apply. Please confirm that the program/solicitation identified is correct.

SECTION 2: BUDGET INFORMATION

BUDGET

Initial/Current Budget Period

1. Start Date

Verify the start date for the initial or current budget period.

2. End Date

Verify the initial or current period end date.

3. Direct Costs

This amount should reflect the total requested direct costs for only the initial or current period of the project.

4. Indirect Costs

This amount should reflect the total requested indirect costs, also known as Facilities and Administrative costs (F&A), for only the initial or current period of the project.

5. Total Costs

This amount should reflect the total request, including both direct and indirect costs, for the initial or current period of the project.

Total Project Period

6. Start Date

Verify the start date for the total project.

SECTION 2: BUDGET INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

7. End Date

Verify the project period end date. If only one budget period exists, the end date should be the same as the end date for the initial/current budget period identified in #2. If multiple budget periods exist, this should be the end date for the entire proposed project.

8. Direct Costs

This amount should reflect the total direct costs requested for the entire project.

9. Indirect Costs

This amount should reflect the total indirect costs requested, also known as Facilities and Administrative costs (F&A), for the entire project.

10. Total Costs

This amount should reflect the total request amount, including both direct and indirect costs, for the entire project.

Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A)

11. Rate

Please confirm the percentage at which the indirect costs are being charged.

12. Campus

On, Off or Both

Verify that this reflects where the *majority* of the project is being completed.

13. Recovery Type

One of the following recovery types will be selected:

- Full Recovery (TDC Base)
 - NIU is requesting full F&A recovery from the sponsor, either 45% or 26% with no exclusions taken.
- Limited Recovery (Indirect Cost Waiver)
 - NIU is requesting a lesser F&A rate than allowed by published sponsor policy based upon an internal approval (generally by the VP for Research)
- Limited Recovery (Normal Sponsor Policy)
 - NIU is requesting less than the full F&A rate based upon published sponsor policy.
- Modified Recovery (MTDC Base)
 - NIU is requesting full F&A recovery from the sponsor, either 45% or 26% with exclusions (tuition, rent, equipment) taken.
- No Recovery (Indirect Cost Waiver)
 - NIU is not requesting F&A based upon an internal approval (generally by the VP for Research) to waive the full rate.
- No Recovery (Normal Sponsor Policy)
 - NIU is not requesting F&A based upon published sponsor policy.

F&A Distribution (Section will be blank if this project does not include F&A)

This table contains information regarding the distribution of indirect costs. Review it carefully. The name of the PI and any Co-PIs will be listed along with their respective, project related, units. Units that are not project related will not be listed. Please confirm that this information is accurate. If there are concerns regarding the distribution, please contact the OSP staff named on this form *immediately*.

14. **Name** – the PI/PD and any co-PI/PDs named on this form

15. **Dept (A-L)** – the department codes listed in #15 and #16 represent the department(s) that will receive a share of the F&A distribution

16. **Dept (M-Z)**

17. **College** – the college code(s) listed represent the college(s) that will receive a share of the F&A distribution

18. **Interdisciplinary Unit/Ctr** – the interdisciplinary unit/ctr codes represent the unit/ctr that will receive the interdisciplinary share

SECTION 2: BUDGET INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Cost Share

19. **Cost Share Involved**

One of the following will be selected to describe the type of cost share included in this project.

- Mandatory: The sponsor is requiring cost share.
- None: No cost share is required or provided.
- Voluntary Committed: No cost share is required, but NIU is providing documentation of cost share to the sponsor.
- Voluntary Uncommitted: No cost share is required and NIU is not offering the cost share information to the sponsor. This category is used for internal purposes only.
- Mandatory & Voluntary Committed: combination
- Mandatory & Voluntary Uncommitted: combination
- Voluntary Committed & Uncommitted: combination

20. **Percent (if req'd)**

If a specific percentage of cost share is required, that percentage will be noted.

21. **# of Grad Students**

If there are any graduate students receiving an assistantship on this project, the total number will be listed.

22. **Tuition Waiver** Yes or No

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'.

This refers to graduate student tuition waivers only.

If the answer is 'yes' a tuition waiver has been granted for the number of student(s) noted in #21. If the answer is 'no' and graduate students are identified in #21, the waivers have been included in the project budget and requested from the sponsor.

23. **Total Waivers**

The total number of tuition waivers will be indicated.

NIU COST SHARE COMMITMENT DETAIL (Section will be blank if this project does not include cost sharing)

24. **Type**

Each specific cost share item will be placed into one of the following three categories:

Mandatory Committed: The sponsor is requiring this cost share and this amount is indicated in documentation sent to the sponsor.

Voluntary Committed: The sponsor is not requiring this cost share, but this amount is indicated in documentation sent to the sponsor.

Voluntary Uncommitted: The sponsor is not requiring this cost share, and this amount is indicated for internal purposes only. This amount is not indicated in documentation provided to the sponsor.

25. **Line Item**

This is a brief description of the cost share item.

26. **Amount**

This is the amount designated to this item.

27. **NIU Source**

This is the unit that will be providing the cost share. The source for fringe benefits and unrecovered F&A will either be blank or identified as Northern Illinois University.

SECTION 2: BUDGET INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

NON-NIU COST SHARE COMMITMENT DETAIL (Section will be blank if this project does not include non-NIU cost sharing)

28. Type

Each specific cost share item will be placed into one of the following three categories:

Mandatory Committed: The sponsor is requiring this cost share and this amount is indicated in documentation sent to the sponsor.

Voluntary Committed: The sponsor is not requiring this cost share, but this amount is indicated in documentation sent to the sponsor.

Voluntary Uncommitted: The sponsor is not requiring this cost share, and this amount is indicated for internal purposes only. This amount is not indicated in documentation provided to the sponsor.

Note: Approval from the non-NIU source should be included in the proposal's supporting documents and included in the OSP file.

29. Line Item

This is a brief description of the cost share item.

30. Amount

This is the amount designated to this item.

31. Source

This is the source (Non NIU) that will be providing the cost share.

32. Notes

Please refer to this section for any additional information regarding this project.

SECTION 3: INSTITUTIONAL CLEARANCES

HUMAN SUBJECTS

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews research proposals that involve human participants. Even projects that require minimal involvement of human participants, such as surveys or questionnaires, require some procedural IRB review. The investigators department chair/ or director of graduate studies should have specific procedures in place for the department. The IRB Chairs are Professor David Henningsen and Professor Andrea Bonnicksen.

Dr. Henningsen can be reached at tm0dxh1@wpo.cso.niu.edu, or by phone at (815) 753-7103. Dr. Bonnicksen can be reached at albcorn@niu.edu, or by phone at (815) 753-7059.

Investigators are reminded that IRB written approval must be received before beginning any recruitment, data collection, or data analysis.

Questions related to the IRB approval process, progress of protocols, and status of protocols can be directed to Dr. Sandra Arntz, phone (815) 753-8524, e-mail: sarntz@niu.edu.

1. Human Subjects Yes or No

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Confirm this answer is correct.

Human subjects research means "a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" [45 CFR 46.102d](#). Human subjects are living individuals about whom an investigator conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individuals, or (2) identifiable private information. However, regulatory requirements to protect human research participants can apply to a broad range of research.

If you are uncertain whether your planned activities constitute research with human subjects requiring IRB approval, refer to the Screening Form (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/human_research/applications.shtml) on the IRB webpage or contact Dr. Sandra Arntz, Office of Research Compliance, phone (815) 753-8524, e-mail: sarntz@niu.edu.

NIU Division of Research and Graduate Studies
Office of Sponsored Projects



SECTION 3: INSTITUTIONAL CLEARANCES (CONTINUED)

2. Protocol Status

If human subjects are identified in #1, an ORC protocol status will be shown. The statuses include:

- Not initiated
Project anticipates involvement of human subjects but a protocol has not been initiated through ORC.*
- Pending
Project anticipates involvement of human subjects. An application has been submitted and is under IRB review. *
- Approved
Project involves human subjects and has received full IRB approval.
- Exempt
Project has undergone an Administrative Review by the NIU Departmental Reviewer and IRB Chair and identified the project to be exempt from full IRB review.

**** OSP will not issue an award for projects involving human subjects without confirming that the appropriate IRB review has been completed and ORC protocol number identified.***

3. ORC

All protocols with a status other than “not initiated” **must** have an ORC # identified. Confirm this number is correct.

LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS

NIU has established an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to review all research and instructional activities that involve the use of live, vertebrate animals, and to set forth institutional policy governing such activities. IACUC is chaired by Dr. Richard B. King. Dr. King can be reached by phone: (815) 753 7833 or by e-mail: RBKing@niu.edu.

Questions related to the IACUC approval process can be directed to Dr. Sandra Arntz, Assistant Vice President for Research, Phone: (815) 753-8524, e-mail: sarntz@niu.edu.

4. Live Vertebrate Animals Yes or No

Will be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Confirm this answer is correct.

NIU is guided by the ethical principals regarding the humane treatment of animals used in research as set forth in the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq., as amended). University policy specifies that (a) the proper management of laboratory animals is essential to the welfare of the animals, to the validity of research data, and to the health and safety of the animal care staff, and that (b) the University will comply with state and federal regulations regarding animal welfare.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to know and to comply with the review procedures of the IACUC. Information may be obtained by contacting:

Dr. Sandra Arntz, Office of Research Compliance, phone (815) 753-8524, e-mail: sarntz@niu.edu or visiting http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/animal_research/index.shtml.

5. Protocol Status

If live, vertebrate animals are identified, an ORC protocol status will be shown. The statuses include:

- Not initiated
Project anticipates use of vertebrate animals but a protocol has not been initiated through ORC. *
- Pending
Project anticipates use of vertebrate animals. An application has been submitted and is under IACUC review. *
- Approved
Project involves use of vertebrate animals and has received IACUC approval.

**** OSP will not issue an award for projects involving live, vertebrate animals without confirming that the appropriate IACUC review has been completed and ORC protocol number identified.***

6. ORC

All protocols with a status other than “not initiated” **must** have an ORC # identified. Confirm this number is correct.

NIU Division of Research and Graduate Studies
Office of Sponsored Projects



SECTION 3: INSTITUTIONAL CLEARANCES (CONTINUED)

RECOMBINANT DNA OR BIOHAZARDS

The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) reviews all activities that involve recombinant DNA and/or pathogenic substances, and conducts yearly inspections of laboratories where such activities are conducted. The Chairman of the IBC is Dr. Michael E. Hudspeth. Dr. Hudspeth can be reached by phone: (815) 753-3201; (815) 753-1187 or by email: mykes@niu.edu

Questions related to the IBC approval process can also be directed to Dr. Sandra Arntz, Assistant Vice President for Research, Phone: (815) 753-8524, e-mail: sarntz@niu.edu

7. Recombinant DNA or Biohazard Use

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

The IBC oversees all research and classroom activities conducted at or sponsored by NIU, that involve recombinant DNA, potentially pathogenic substances/ toxins, and/or human tissue/ body fluids. Said research and classroom activities must be carried out in accordance with applicable federal, state and local regulations and this policy, irrespective of the source of funding. For further information, please visit the NIU Institutional Biosafety Committee website: <http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/biosafety/index.shtml>

EXPORT CONTROL

Export controls are federal laws that regulate the shipment of goods or the release of technological data to foreign nationals or foreign countries. The primary regulations controlling export activities are the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), administered by the Department of State; the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), administered by the Department of Commerce; and the Foreign Asset Control Regulations (OFAC), administered by the Department of the Treasury.

Note: Questions #8, 9, and 10 are used to identify whether additional export control review is required. If any of the below statements are answered 'yes', additional OSP review may be required and an OSP Record of Export Control Review may be attached. It should be noted that most research activities will be excluded from export control review and such questions are used to reaffirm this.

8. Export controls are addressed in connection with this proposal/project.

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

Common examples of export controls that may be connected with a proposal/project include (but are not limited to): referencing U.S export regulations, requiring sponsor approval of publications, requiring the identification of Foreign National (FN) personnel by name or country and addressing classified security concerns.

9. This project may require collaboration with a foreign entity.

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

10. This project may involve the shipment of equipment outside the U.S.

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

ACADEMIC UNITS/PROGRAMS

11. New administrative unit established.

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

New administrative units must receive approval from the Provost.

12. New academic unit established.

Will be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Verify this is correct.

New academic units must receive approval from the Provost.

13. Description of the new program or unit.

If it is anticipated that a new administrative or academic unit will be established, a brief description of this unit will be provided.

14. Provost Approval

The Provost must approve the establishment of any new administrative or academic unit. Signature by the Provost (or designee) indicates support for the proposed unit.

SECTION 4: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

For the purposes of sponsored research or other funded activities and in accordance with federal guidelines, NIU has a responsibility to manage, reduce, or eliminate any conflicts of interest that may be presented by a financial interest of an investigator, including the investigator's spouse and dependent children. This document requires that investigators disclose any significant financial interest that would reasonably appear to be affected by sponsored research or other externally funded activities.

Each individual named as PI or Co-PI must complete the certification in this section. After reading the information regarding conflict of interest definitions and requirements to disclose, the PI or Co-PI must sign under the appropriate statement. The two certification options include:

*A real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest **does not** exist with this project.*

*A real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest **may** exist with this project.*

If a potential conflict of interest exists, a Statement of Financial Interest will be provided by OSP for completion and submission to the University Conflict of Interest officer.

SECTION 5: SIGNATURE/APPROVALS

The STEP form must be signed by all PI/PDs, Chair(s) of appropriate department(s), Director of interdisciplinary unit (where appropriate), College Dean(s), Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects and Authorized University Official before an application can be submitted or awarded.

Signatures attest to approval and commitment of services and funds and assure the proposal is consistent with department and college objectives.

NOTE: Proposals submitted without obtaining internal approvals may be withdrawn by OSP should there be a concern upon full review about the commitment of services, funds and/or objectives identified in the project.

PI/PDs signing the STEP form certifies the following:

- 1) that the information submitted within the application is true, complete and accurate to the best of the PI/PD's knowledge;
- 2) that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or claims may subject the PI/PD to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties; and
- 3) that the PI agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded as a result of the application.