

Letters of Intent
OSP Procedures Revised – October 14, 2025

BACKGROUND: A Letter of Intent, also called a White Paper, Pre-Proposal, Concept Paper, or Quad Chart (hereafter called LOI), is a shortened version of a complete grant proposal. Typically, Sponsors will request LOIs to allow them to assess whether or not there is a good match between the proposed project and their interests. Sometimes the Sponsor will offer the option of an LOI, but it will not be required or evaluated. Following submission of an LOI, the Sponsor will invite full proposals (except in some cases where the LOI is optional).

LOIs are primarily technical narratives; however, some Sponsors will request aggregate budget numbers or a detailed budget. Additionally, Sponsor requirements regarding submission will vary; some Sponsors require the Principal Investigator (PI) to submit the LOI while others require the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) to do so. In some cases, the Sponsor requires the PI to submit but requires a signed letter of intent by the AOR. Additionally, for federal LOIs that required AOR signatures or submission, the Department is required to initiate a Malign Foreign Talent Review Program (MFTRP) review, following the [MFTRP procedures](#).

Additionally, some Sponsors impose limits on the number of LOIs that institutions can submit. In these cases, the PI will need to follow the new [limited submission opportunity process](#). Beginning in October, 2025, limited submission opportunities will be posted on the [WizeHive platform](#). All applications and documentation submitted in response to those opportunities will be submitted through the platform. While the Research Development team makes every effort to identify all limited submissions opportunities and notify faculty, it is the responsibility of the faculty to contact limited@gmu.edu should a faculty member identify a limited submissions funding opportunity that she/he is interested in, but finds that it is not posted on the WizeHive platform. All limited submission LOIs must have records in RAMP and go through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) for submission. Faculty may not proceed with an LOI to a limited submission competition without notice of approval from Research Development.

PROCEDURES:

1) Submission of LOIs

LOIs are typically submitted directly by Principal Investigators (PI) to Sponsors. However, there are cases where certain LOI requirements necessitate or require the submission of LOIs by OSP. These are outlined in Number 2 below. PIs are encouraged to contact their respective Departmental Research Administrator (RA) if they are unsure whether OSP involvement is required. The RA, in coordination with OSP if needed, will advise on whether a RAMP record is needed and whether OSP will need to review and/or submit the LOI.

2) LOI OSP submission and RAMP Requirements

A Funding Proposal (FP) must be created in RAMP for OSP's review, approval, and

submission when, the Sponsor:

- a. limits the number of LOIs an eligible institution may submit (these must follow Mason's [Limited Submission process](#))
- b. requires a detailed budget or discussion of institutional commitments (e.g., cost-share or facilities use) as part of the LOI submission
- c. requires AOR signature or organizational letter of commitment for the LOI
- d. requires a letter of support with the submission. The Departmental RA will prepare the letter of support and send to PI when signed
- e. interprets signing the LOI is a proxy for signing a full proposal (i.e. there wouldn't need to be a signature on a full proposal if invited to submit, the Sponsor uses the LOI signature.)

All federal LOIs submitted by OSP must have a MFTRP review conducted. The MFTRP review involves collecting biosketches and current and pending docs for all key personnel and sending these to ORIA for review. The reviews are initiated when the LOI is sent to OSP, typically four business days before the Sponsor deadline.

For those LOI's submitted by OSP, OSP will also perform a limited review to flag for the College/School whether any of the following are included. If included, OSP will require confirmation from the Lead Unit designated official (Associate Dean for Research or Chief Business Officer) via email that they approve the LOI submission.

- a. Cost share
- b. Indirect cost deviation/waiver from approved rate
- c. Personnel effort
- d. Representations and Certifications (e.g., Intellectual Property, data sharing, etc.)

Additionally, if the LOI names subrecipients or collaborators, OSP strongly recommends obtaining letters of commitment from those institutions and submitting a copy to OSP to ensure there are no difficulties should the LOI be invited to submit a full proposal.

3) Successful LOIs (Invitation to Submit a Full Proposal)

- a. If the PI receives notification from the Sponsor that they are invited to submit a full proposal, the PI must, within 48 hours, create a Funding Proposal record in RAMP
- b. OSP will assign a Departmental Research Administrator to work with the PI on the full proposal. OSP will send PI initial email identifying assigned Departmental RA.
- c. Upon receiving initial email from OSP, PI forwards the notification from Sponsor (invitation to apply, if applicable) and copy of submitted LOI proposal to assigned Departmental RA if it was not submitted by OSP
- d. PI completes full Funding Proposal, Sponsor application, and applicable university requirements in collaboration with Departmental RA in accordance with the College/Academic Unit policies, proposal timelines and with the University's 4-day internal deadline policy.
- e. Departmental RA initiates an updated MFTRP review on the full proposal key personnel.
- f. OSP conducts internal review and submits a full proposal to Sponsor, unless Sponsor requires otherwise.