Cost Share Guidance for Main Campus External Grants

Office of the Provost
Vice Provost for Research

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This guidance is meant for faculty members applying for external grant proposals that include a cost share component, and supplements the Division of Financial Affairs’ Cost Share Policy 132-15. The University’s primary objective is to support funded research as much as possible, while maintaining a prudent budget position. So unless there is a requirement or an explicit encouragement to do so, external grant proposals should generally not include cost share commitments. And the funding for any commitments that are made should be explicitly sourced and documented during the proposal routing process.

1. Introduction

A “cost share” for externally funded projects is that portion of a research grant that is NOT covered by the funding agency and is covered instead by the University and/or another outside source. In some cases, the funding agency may require a cost share, and in others the funding agency may “encourage” it. In addition, some faculty and researchers might be tempted to include a cost share in their proposal in the hope that it might increase a proposal’s likelihood of success.

While Georgetown University’s Division of Financial Affairs has a Cost Share Policy (132-15) that provides definitions of the different types of cost shares, how they are tracked, and the applicable federal regulations, this document provides brief guidance for Main Campus faculty and researchers regarding the circumstances under which a cost share should be included in a grant proposal, and the types of approval that are needed.

The goals of this guidance are:

a. To maximize the chances of success for faculty members’ grant proposals, while not over-committing Main Campus resources; and
b. To ensure that affected parties are informed and have decision-making power when their resources are being used to finance a cost share commitment

2. Main Campus Guidance

a. Financing cost shares

The funding source(s) of any cost share that requires additional resources from the University should be identified, and approval from such sources should be documented, as
a part of the proposal routing process. Typical sources include the department, the school, the Provost’s Office, and other external grant resources, with approval needed from the chair, dean, vice provost for research, or sponsor, accordingly.

b. How much cost share to include?

The amount of cost share to include depends on the nature of the sponsor requirements and policies. In most cases:

(i) If a cost share is neither required nor encouraged by the sponsor, typically none should be included in the proposal;
(ii) If a cost share of ”at least” a certain dollar or percentage amount is required, then typically this amount should be included;
(iii) If an unspecified cost share is ”encouraged but not required,” the amount of cost share included in the proposal would be limited to that which can be funded from confirmed sources, based on the principles above.

c. Cost share analysis

If cost share is included, then the following analysis should be included as a part of the proposal:

(i) What is the dollar value of cost share that is being reported to the sponsor?
(ii) What additional costs, if any, will the University incur in order to deliver on this cost share commitment?

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1 If the sponsor requires it, this funding information can be included in the proposal that is sent to the sponsor, but otherwise it would not need to be included in the submission.