



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Policy and Procedures on University Cost Sharing (Matching) on Externally Sponsored Projects

INTRODUCTION

Some funding agencies (such as the Board of Regents Support Fund) require or strongly encourage significant cost sharing on the part of the university, while others (such as the National Science Foundation) significantly restrict cost sharing. Unless necessary to make a proposal competitive for an award clearly beneficial to the institution, the university prefers to limit cost sharing to only that required by the funding agency as published in the RFP, program announcement, or agency guidelines. The university may consider limited voluntary cost sharing of personnel effort, equipment acquisition, or departmental/college/center resources as noted below, if allowed by the funding agency.

In all cases, whether the cost share commitments are mandated by the funding agency or are volunteered by the institution, the university has the obligation to monitor and account for all of its cost share commitments as described in the text of a proposal or included in the project budget. All cost share requests will be reviewed and approved as part of the internal proposal review process before the university will agree to commit funds or other resources as cost sharing.

PRINCIPLES

The following general principles about university cost sharing pertain to most funding agencies. A few private and state funding agencies allow more flexibility in the ways that the university can show cost sharing. In such cases, the university will follow the sponsor's guidelines as much as possible. See the last section of this document for information about cost sharing policy regarding National Science Foundation proposals.

- The most common form of cost sharing is faculty time and effort. The university frequently allows a faculty member to commit a portion of academic year effort as cost share on a sponsored project, especially if this commitment does not impact teaching load. The amount of effort available for a particular faculty member to commit to a sponsored project depends on the particular project activities to be accomplished, teaching and other university duties, and obligations to other sponsored projects.
- The university does not provide faculty cost sharing effort during the summer. In addition, time/effort cost sharing normally is not appropriate to awards that involve mostly equipment purchases or enhancement of facilities.
- With appropriate administrative approval, unclassified (non-faculty) employee time/effort may be used as cost share, depending on the impact on other duties.
- The university will consider sharing the cost of major equipment purchases, if required by the funding agency or if the PI can make a strong case that such cost sharing will substantially increase the probability of the project being funded. In some cases (e.g., for BoRSF programs),

the university will provide the matching funds from one of its administrative accounts; in others, the department, center, or college will be asked to commit its own (possibly anticipated) equipment funds for the match.

- Departments, centers, or colleges may agree to allow travel expenses or specialized supply purchases as cost share in grant proposals. When such a proposal is funded, university funds will be transferred from the unit's operating budget or other accounts to the project account. Cost sharing for supplies is limited to specialized supplies whose cost can and will be documented, and are needed for and used exclusively by the project. Project use of office supplies or other supplies commonly available in the unit cannot be claimed as cost share.
- Project use of department, center, or college equipment or specialized facilities can be cited in a proposal as evidence of the institution's commitment. However, such use should not be quantified (in terms of time or money) in a grant proposal unless accurate usage records will be kept and there is an established and documented way to value it.
- Unless specifically reserved and documented for the project, the use of office and other generally available equipment (including computers), secretarial time, postage, or telephones cannot be claimed as cost share, because these items are included in the calculation of the institution's indirect cost rate.
- The university will not voluntarily commit indirect costs as cost share unless the funding agency, as part of a regularly established policy, will not compensate the university for the full amount of indirect costs. In these exceptions, the principal investigator should instead claim the portion of the indirect cost rate that is not compensated by the funding agency as university cost share, if allowed by the funding agency.
- F&A under recovery due to written agency guidelines limiting F&A should be used as part of the cost sharing contribution, unless prohibited by agency guidelines (Example: US Department of Education prohibits the use of unrecovered indirect cost on their training programs that limit indirect to 8%). F&A costs associated with UL Lafayette's cost share commitments can also be used as part of the project's cost sharing.

COST SHARING PROVIDED BY A THIRD PARTY

If the proposal includes third-party contributions/match, a letter of commitment signed by a representative from the third-party contributor that includes specific details about the proposed contribution must be included with the proposal package prior to submission.

COST SHARING IN PROPOSALS TO THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

NSF's revised policies heavily discourage cost sharing in NSF proposals unless such cost sharing is specifically required in the program announcement. NSF understands that investigators may invest released time during the academic year on the project, as long as it is not promised specifically as cost sharing. Thus, the university policy regarding cost sharing on NSF proposals is as follows unless cost sharing is specified in the program announcement.

- Line M (Cost Sharing) on the budget page(s) should be left blank.
- University-supported “released time” to be devoted to the project should be noted in the proposal narrative and/or budget explanation, without specific commitment of time or effort.
- Funding for any needed summer salary should be requested from NSF.