

Process of Obtaining Institutional Cost Share Support

The process for obtaining institutional cost share support, used for investigators requesting institutional resources, is outlined below. If an investigator is seeking an institutional letter of support with no measurable commitment of resources, please see the [cost sharing page on the Sponsored Research website](#) to download a template letter of support.

The process of obtaining institutional cost share support is comprised of three steps:

1. Development of cost share budget and justification
2. Formal request of cost sharing commitments
3. Generation of official cost share letter of support, if required

Questions?

Contact your school research administration office.

Resources

[Cost Share Decision Tree](#)

[Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[Sponsored Research Cost Sharing Page](#)

[Cost Share Budget Template](#)

[Cost Share Workbook](#)

1. Development of Cost Share Budget and Justification

The PI will work with the Research Administrator (RA) to discuss solicitation requirements, [Cost Share Policy](#), [Office for Research Cost Share Guidance](#), and associated School Cost Share Policies ([McCormick](#), [Weinberg](#)), to develop both the sponsor and cost share budget. For equipment proposals additional information is required (see School cost share policies).

Exceptions to the Cost Share Policy are rare and need to be approved by an AVP of Research in the Office for Research (refer to the Cost Share Decision Tree.) Note that due to the University budget model, the Office for Research can only participate in cash cost share per the policy. RAs should contact their Research Dean's Office if an exception is anticipated.

The sponsor budget and key personnel must be finalized before the cost share budget can be completed. The final sponsor and cost share budget must be prepared on the [Cost Share Budget Template](#). The [Cost Share Workbook](#), is used to determine the cost share distribution and to request commitments. All sections of the Cost Share Workbook should be completed by the RA:

1. Cover Page
2. Investigator List (including appointment breakdown and academic salary budgeted)
3. Cost Share Distribution

2. Formal Request of Cost Sharing Commitments (at least two weeks in advance of application deadline)

The RA prepares a formal request via DocuSign on behalf of PI to Chairs, Research Deans and the Office for Research. Both the Cost Share Workbook and Sponsor/Cost Share Budget (on the Cost Share Budget Template) should be attached as Excel files within the request. The Cost Share Distribution page of the Cost Share Workbook will be used for signature. The order of signature within DocuSign is as follows:

Signing order 1: Department Chairs, with copy to Department Business Administrators

Signing order 2: Research Deans, with copy to Directors of Research

Signing order 3: Office for Research (send to researchfinadmin@northwestern.edu)

Chairs and Research Deans will review these requests and direct any administrative questions to the RA. Requests for further justification or technical information should be directed to the PI.

FSM cost share requests are routed to the Feinberg Research Dean only (no departmental approvals).

Fellowship support only requests (no cash) are only routed to the associated research deans. Department Chairs and the Office for Research do not review or approve these types of requests.

3. Generation of Official Cost Share Letter of Support (at least one week in advance of application deadline)

A *Letter of Institutional Commitment* template is available on the [SR cost sharing page](#). Please note that all cost share commitments must be final to be included in a draft letter of institutional commitment.

The PI or RA should use the [VPR Signature Request Form](#) to submit the draft letter of support to the Vice President for Research for review and endorsement. The request form includes instructions about what information and documentation to submit along with the draft letter. Note: The Office for Research cannot guarantee a letter of support unless a complete cost share request is received **at least one week before the sponsor deadline**.

The final letter of support will receive an electronic signature. An e-copy of the endorsed letter will be sent to all those listed in the Contact Person(s) and Contact Email Addresses fields on the form – please make sure this information is correct and complete. If a physical / hard copy of the letter is required, this is a special request that should be made in the “Additional Instructions” section in the VPR Signature Request Form.