

**Policy Title:** Proposal Policy

**Policy Type:** Finance/Administration (Advancement)

**New/revised:** New

**Old Policy #:** N/A

**Approval level:**  Board of Trustees  
 President  
 Vice President  
 Other (specify here) ETSU Executive Team (7/24/17)

**Attachments:**

A. Sample Proposal Template

**1. Purpose.** The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and instructions to East Tennessee State University Advancement staff as they plan solicitations for financial support to alumni, partners, and friends.

**2. Process/Procedures:**

- a. Proposals can be verbal or in writing. Determination regarding which is appropriate should be made by the respective development officer, in consultation with the AVP for Advancement, if necessary.
- b. If a proposal is made verbally, it should be documented as soon as possible and entered into a contact report in Banner Advancement.
- c. Pledges will be made in writing (e-mail is acceptable). If a donor makes a verbal commitment to donate (pledge), that should be documented immediately and sent to Advancement Services for processing.
- d. If a proposal is made in writing, consider using the attached sample template.
- e. Proposals to federal, state, and/or local governmental funding agencies that require "matching" support from private contributors, must be coordinated with University Advancement.
- f. Any literature, including brochures, booklets, and letters used to attract private funds to ETSU shall be coordinated through University Advancement.
- g. Copies of all proposed solicitation letters, or any other solicitations which may appear in brochures, newsletters, etc., must be approved in advance by the University Advancement Office.
- h. Proposals for major gifts (currently defined as \$10,000 or above) must be approved by the dean/head of the respective unit and the AVP/VP for Advancement.

**3. Preparing Proposals:**

- a. **Develop your Project.** What is the problem or research question you hope to solve? Who is your audience or target population? What outcomes do you hope to achieve? How long will the project take? When will you start? Keep in mind the grant proposal

and/or decision process may take many months. How much will it cost? Most of all, why should a donor care about your project?

- b. **Contact University Advancement.** Discuss your project with the AVP for Advancement. Many donors/agencies will accept only one proposal per institution. Therefore, you need to know if another faculty/staff member is applying to the same funder. Also, the research office and/or your dean may want to know whether your project involves the commitment of university resources and that your proposal is in line with the ETSU Strategic Plan and the goals. Even if your project does not directly require university funds, indirect costs may still apply.
- c. **Consult the Combined Goals Worksheet.** The most recent goals worksheet, representing the plans of all members of University Advancement, can be found in S:\Advancement\Goals. This document will tell you if others are planning solicitations to the same donor.
- d. **Consult Contact Reports in Banner Advance.** Check contact reports within the past 2 years or so to make sure others aren't currently working with the donor or if specific timing was outlined in previous contact reports.
- e. **Guidelines & Deadlines.** Before you start writing, make sure you have the most up-to-date application information, including (in the case of corporate/foundation proposals) the deadlines and the application requirements. Check to see if the deadlines are "postmarked by," "received by," or ongoing. For applications accepted on an ongoing basis, consider the average time for application review and plan your proposal submission date accordingly. Call the program director when in doubt. Next, make sure your project truly fits the donor's interest/passion or the funder's guidelines. Do they live/work/give in your geographic area? What types of activities do they support?
- f. **Start Writing.** The length of the narrative and the tone of the proposal can vary according to the agency/donor, but three tips apply universally: appeal to the interest area of your donor, follow any guidelines explicitly, and write clearly. University Advancement can assist in editing your proposal.
- g. **Recruit People to Read the Proposal.** Find colleagues you trust to read your proposal and to make suggestions for improving it. Volunteer to fulfill this role for others.
- h. **Deliver the Proposal.** Determine who should deliver the proposal; whether it should be delivered in person or could be mailed/e-mailed; and what other information should be provided along with the proposal (annual report, college/unit background, floor plans, etc.).

## Attachment – Sample Proposal Template

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Proposal for [Subject]  
*[Subtitle]*

Prepared [Date]



Prepared by:

[DoD Name]

Director of Development, [school/department]

(423) 439-[XXXX]

[email]@etsu.edu

**GRADUATION BEGINS TODAY.**

## Summary

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*Open with information about the donor's relationship with ETSU, if possible. The summary should be concise, stating what school/department is making the request, the amount of the request, and what the request is for. As a rule, the request should appear at the beginning of the proposal.*

[Name], your long-standing relationship with East Tennessee State University has been characterized by leadership, generosity, and a clear vision for what this University can achieve. Your interest in ETSU and the [school/college] reflects a deep commitment to excellence. We are grateful for the opportunity to present this proposal to you now, a proposal which seeks to build on this relationship and focus our collective vision on the most important asset of any institution of higher education, its students.

## Background

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*If the proposal is to an individual, link the program/project with the donor's interest, experience, profession, etc. For a corporation, mention the history of the relationship and the relevancy of the proposal to the donor's interests.*

Your commitment and ongoing involvement with the [school/college] through your support and guidance [examples], has guided us to some amazing accomplishments. With your help and your continued support, we look forward to the future and to even more amazing results.

## Program/Project Description

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*Describe what the program or project is, answering who, what, when, where, and how questions. Who is the audience? What results are expected? What is the timeframe? If beneficial, include the qualifications of the program leaders. What equipment is needed? How will the program be conducted? Are there other sources of support to give the program even more credibility? This could include one project or multiple options*

### **Giving Opportunity 1**

[description]

### **Giving Opportunity 2**

[description]

## Our Request

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*Make a clear unmistakable request. State the amount and offer a description of what it will be used for.*

We request a \$**XX,XXX** gift, payable over **X** years, to fund one of the projects below, or some other project that may be more to your liking and interests. In addition, if **[donor's employer]** has a matching giving program, you may be able to compound the impact of your gift.

*How will the donor benefit or otherwise be recognized for their support of ETSU? For corporate proposals, donors want to see an outcome that will benefit them and their business. For individuals, recognition of the donor's vision and generosity (for example, an invitation to the annual dinner, recognition in the department newsletter, plaque, naming, etc.) will provide satisfaction in their investment. And, how will ETSU benefit from their support? (Examples: more opportunities for students to learn about a certain profession, allows the university to provide a service, etc.)*

## Conclusion

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*Briefly summarize the request, and express appreciation for their consideration of your proposal. There may also be other points to add about the relationship with the donor.*

**[Name]**, we appreciate the opportunity to present this proposal and very much look forward to speaking in order to find the most appropriate area you'd like to support and discover the ways in which we can recognize your generosity.

