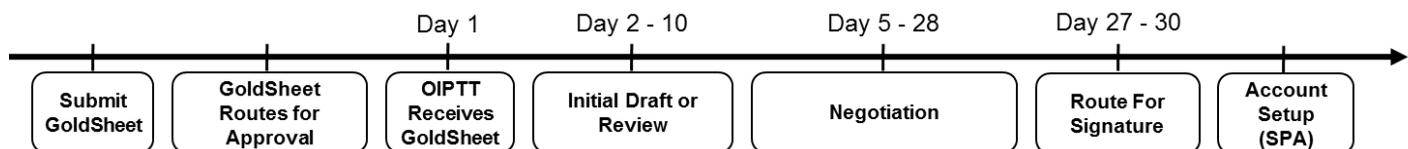




Sponsored Research Agreement – What To Expect . . .

The implementation of a sponsored research agreement (SRA) is a negotiation between ISU and the company or commodity group funding the research. Primarily, the OIPTT negotiator protects the principal investigators' (PIs) ability to publish, continue to do research, and have students graduate in a timely manner, while ensuring that ISU complies with federal and Iowa laws and university policies. Each SRA represents a balance of risk and opportunity. Differences of opinion on agreement terms are expected; the role of the OIPTT negotiator is to reach consensus on how to proceed.

While each SRA is different, OIPTT completes about two-thirds of the negotiations within 30 days after receipt of the GoldSheet and the notice of funding. The following describes the process for negotiations completed within 30 days and provides information on factors that may lengthen the timeline.



Timeline (Days)



Pre OIPTT: GoldSheet Submission, Routing, and OSPA Pre-Award Review

Once a GoldSheet is submitted, it typically takes five (5) days to route through the approval process and reach OSPA Pre-Award, and four (4) days for OSPA Pre-Award to review the budget, scope of work, and, if applicable, RFP guidelines. This process may take additional time if errors are found in the budget, F&A waivers are pending, documentation is missing (e.g. sub agreements), etc. After OSPA Pre-Award approves a GoldSheet for an industry or commodity sponsor, it is handed off to OIPTT.



Day 1: OIPTT Receives GoldSheet and Notice of Funding

Once OIPTT receives an approved GoldSheet, a negotiator is assigned, and the request is reviewed to determine if negotiations are ready to begin. Negotiations begin after a GoldSheet is approved and the company indicates it is ready to proceed through email, conversation, formal notice of funding, or draft agreement, which should be shared with OIPTT.



Day 2 – 10: Initial Draft Preparation or Agreement Review

After the GoldSheet has been assigned, the negotiator will send an introduction email to their company counterpart. Negotiations proceed more quickly when starting with an OIPTT template or when a master agreement exists. When OIPTT is initiating the agreement, it will take up to five (5) days to send a draft. When the company provides a draft agreement, it will take up to ten (10) days to review and return a redline draft for consideration. During this time, the negotiator determines relevant deadlines and gathers company contact, background intellectual property, and compliance information.



Day 5 – 28: Negotiation

After a draft agreement is provided, negotiations begin. Initially, negotiations take place via email, using track changes to provide a redline version of the agreement. Generally, after sending a redline back and forth, the negotiator will know if the agreement can be completed in a timely manner or if there are issues that require additional time. Often a phone call is used if any issues remain after the agreement has been exchanged two or more times. If a phone call does not resolve remaining issues, the agreement will likely take more than 30 days, and up to several months, to complete. During negotiations, PIs are notified if questions or issues arise.



Day 27 – 30: Route for Signatures

Once the agreement is final, the document is routed for signatures. The PI does not have signature authority for SRAs, but signs in a “read and understood” capacity. If the company allows electronic signatures, the signature process usually takes 1-3 days. If original signatures are required, this could take 14 days or longer.



Post OIPTT: Account Setup

After the fully executed (signed) agreement is received, OIPTT sends an award notice that allows the PI to view the award documents in Quali Coeus (KC). A KC action will be processed and routed to SPA. SPA will provide notification of account setup and the account number. It will generally take no more than three (3) days to receive an account number.



Factors that Affect the Negotiation Timeline

- Agreement – Whose agreement is used to start the negotiation. It takes longer if the company’s agreement is used.
- Company – Long delays in negotiations usually occur on the company’s side, for the following reasons:
 - International. International entities have different laws, procedures, expectations, and languages.
 - Experience. Working with a university is different from working with another type of entity. For a company with limited experience working with a university, it takes time to understand the differences.
 - Negotiator Turnover. Working with a new negotiator is similar to working with an inexperienced company (above).
 - Organization. Some companies require multiple layers of approval. Negotiators at large companies may have to get approval for changes to an agreement. Some companies require a purchase order or requisition in addition to the agreement. Some companies also require original signatures.
 - Workload. OIPTT sends reminders every two weeks if we have not heard from a company.
- ISU – Delays can occur at ISU for the following reasons:
 - Negotiator Workload. The beginning of the academic year (August), the end of the academic year (May), government fiscal year-end (September), and company fiscal year-end (December) are peak times for OIPTT. Peak time requests may take longer.
 - PI Availability. OIPTT may have questions that require the PI’s input to proceed.
 - Pre-Negotiations. Negotiations are OIPTT’s responsibility. The PI is responsible for the scope of work and the budget. Agreeing on any other terms without involving the negotiators on both sides can cause significant delays.

The most frequent agreement terms that may require additional time to resolve are:

- Indemnification/Liability – determining who is responsible if things go wrong.
- Compliance – addressing differences related to ethics, safety, treatment of animals, export control, IT security, etc.
- Data – determining who owns the data and what rights the data owners and non-owners have to the raw data.
- Background Intellectual Property – managing existing intellectual property used in the project.
- Publication – restricting the publication of data/results generated during the project.

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