

TARA Frequently Asked Questions



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1. Who is required to use TARA for proposals?

Currently researchers in Annenberg, Social Work, Architecture and Pharmacy are required to use TARA for proposals. Other schools will be included over the next few months as training for each school is completed.

2. How do I access TARA to create my proposals?

You can log into TARA by clicking [here](#).

3. Do I need a special username or password for TARA?

No. You can use your regular USC Shibboleth name and password that you currently use to access email, KFS, diSClose, etc.

4. What browsers can I use?

USC supported browsers include Internet Explore and Safari. You should not have any problems using a current version of Firefox or Chrome as well.

5. Where can I find training manuals or documentation for TARA?

You can find quick guides and information for TARA in the following links:

[Office of Research - USC TARA](#)

[Kuali@USC TARA User Guides](#)

If you are looking for information on FiPS (Financial Projection System) or directions for TARA Cognos Reporting (BI), you can find it in the following link:

[Office of Research - FiPS and Reports](#)

6. How do I get help if I have questions about TARA?

For specific TARA questions, you can send email to tarahelp@usc.edu.

If you have systems issues or are unable to log into TARA, you can call the ITS help desk at: 213-740-5857

7. What is a wildcard, and how can using it help me find what I am looking for?

When using the lookup or search function (by clicking on the magnifying glass next to a field), you can use one or more asterisks (*) as wildcards to expand your search.

Depending on its position, wildcards work as a stand-in for any text that may be entered before or after the search term.

For example, searching for *Health* will bring up a list of all the results that contain the word

“Health” and have other words preceding or following it (such as National Institutes of Health as well as World Health Organization, etc. if you are searching for sponsors). This can also be helpful when looking up personnel by their names.

8. Can I copy and paste text into a field?

Yes. Text can be pasted into text boxes however the text boxes do not accept special formatting such as **bold**, *italics*, or bullet points. You may lose your special formatting or scientific notations.

Most text boxes have a 2,000 character limit. You will not see an error message if you enter more than 2,000 characters. The system will cut off the text that is over the 2,000 characters.

We recommend that if you are entering a significant amount of text, you should double-check that all necessary text is accepted by the system before moving on.

9. What will happen to my old proposals that I submitted to DCG before TARA?

Pending proposals will remain in the previous system. When an award comes in, they will be entered into TARA so your current reports will reflect your new awards.

10. Can I use the back arrow in my browser?

No. You should not use the Back or Forward arrows from the browser. Using the browser arrows may skew the data that has been entered. You should navigate within TARA by clicking the appropriate tab, panel, or link.

11. What information do I need to have when I create my first proposal?

There are 9 required fields for saving a new proposal document:

1. Description: Enter a description of the proposal in this format:
Due Date xx/xx/xx_Pi Last name_Pi First Initial_Sponsor Initials_Short Title (first 3 characters are funding mechanism if applicable)

Example: 07/05/14_TrojanT_NIH_R01_Studies on xyz

2. Proposal Type: (New, Continuation, Renewal, Resubmission, etc.)
3. Lead Unit: (you can enter the number or use the search function)
4. Activity Type: (Basic research, applied research, clinical trial, etc.)
5. Project Title: (Can be up to 200 characters)
6. Sponsor Code: (You can enter the number or use the search function)
7. Project Start Date
8. Project End Date
9. Award Type: (Grant, Contract, Subcontract, etc.)

12. If I am developing a proposal that will be a Sub-Award to another institution, am I required to submit it using TARA?

Yes. TARA will be used to gather all proposal information. The system will route the proposal to department heads, deans, and DCG for their approval prior to sending the proposal to the

"prime" institution for their official submission to the funding agency/source.

13. If I am submitting a continuation, do I need to create a proposal in TARA?

Yes. TARA will be used for all proposals including continuation proposals for competing and non-competing awards.

14. Can graduate students use the TARA system for proposal development?

Yes. Your graduate student can initiate your proposals.

You can also give them specific permissions to edit the narrative, etc. once your proposal has been created by you or someone else.

15. What happens if my sponsor is not listed already in TARA?

You can submit your request to DCG to add your new sponsor by following the instructions in the following link: [DCG - Request a New Sponsor](#)

16. What happens if my Subaward organization is not listed already in TARA?

You can submit your request to DCG to add your new sponsor by following the instructions in the following link: [DCG - Request a New Subaward Organization](#)

17. Can I provide access to other people to my proposal?

Yes. The proposal initiator can grant permission to another user to access the proposals. To do this, click on the "Permissions" tab in your proposal, then on the "Users" tab within your proposal.

In the "Users" tab, your name will appear with the default role of "Aggregator". If you have added PIs or Co-PIs to your proposal, their names will appear below yours with permission as 'Aggregator' as well.

To view a list of the permissions associated with each role – click on the 'view permissions' button located on the 'Assigned Roles' panel on the far right side.

If you want to give access to others, search for their names, select a 'role' from the drop down and click 'add'.

The permission you grant will happen in real time – which means they will have access to your proposal as soon as you save the page. You can remove or edit their permission at any time and the change will take place instantly.

18. Can I copy my proposal?

Yes. You can either locate the proposal you want to copy from the Proposal Development Lookup and click the 'copy' button or by opening the proposal that you want to copy and go to the 'Proposals Actions' tab.

In the 'Copy to New Document' panel, you will be able to choose to copy the entire proposal or the proposal with or without budgets, attachments, questions, etc. You will have to select a

Lead Unit as well.

19. How do I add a non-USC employee as a PI or Co-PI to my proposal?

If you are adding someone who will serve as the PI or Co-PI on the proposal and their name is not found in the employee search, you will need to request access for him/her.

You will begin the process by having them added to iVIP. You can initiate the process by contacting the iVIP administrator for your school/department who is listed on this [iVIP website](#).

20. How do I add a non-USC employee as a Key Person to my proposal?

If you are adding someone as a Key Person on your budget, who will not be a PI or Co-PI on the proposal, and his/her name cannot be found in the 'employee' or 'non-employee' search, you will need to add him/her to the Rolodex.

For instructions on how to add a non-USC employee to the Rolodex, go to the following link: [Kuali@USC TARA User Guides](#)

21. What types of attachments can I upload on my proposal?

We suggest that you ONLY upload PDF files if at all possible.

File names should NOT include special characters or any blank spaces (you may use underscore or hyphens):

Good examples of filenames: johnsmithbiosketch.pdf, narrative_joannesmith.pdf, johnsmith-biosketch.pdf

Unusable examples of filenames: John Smith Biosketch.pdf

In the "Abstracts and Attachments" tab, TARA allows you to upload:

- **Proposal Attachments** – Used to upload all files required by the funding agency, such as project summary, narrative, budget justification, and facilities. Remember that sponsors may have different names for the different parts of the proposal. Please follow the specific program announcement guidelines.
- **Personnel Attachments** – Used to upload personnel-specific documents. These include but are not limited to bio-sketches (curriculum vitae or equivalent), current and pending support, current and pending support, etc. There may be several attachments of each type, depending on the number of people involved in your proposal.
- **Internal Attachments** – Used to upload documents that are institutional proposal information. These documents will not be submitted to the agency/sponsor.

22. Can I upload document drafts, or only the final versions?

Documents you upload can be marked as complete or incomplete, allowing you to upload drafts during proposal development. You may also add comments about the file for future reference.

However, all attachments must be marked as “Complete” for routing and approval.

23. I have completed my proposal - How do I submit it to my department/school and DCG?
In the "Proposal Actions" tab, select "Data Validation" and press "show".

Click “turn on validation” to activate a validation check that will determine if there are any errors or incomplete information that could prevent routing.

Errors identified by the system will be easily accessible for correction using the “fix” button located to the right of the error notification.

When the proposal is complete and validates properly, click the “submit” button at the bottom of the page to initiate the process.

The proposal **MUST BE COMPLETE** prior to submitting to routing. Be sure to mark all your attachments correctly before submitting your proposal.

24. How will I know what is waiting for my approval or review?

Log into TARA and click on your Action List (a box at the top of the page on the left side). A document will appear in your action list only when your action is requested and will disappear after you have taken action on it.