

## **Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) Procedures for Developing an AES Project**

All research in the College must be conducted under a properly approved U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) project. This ensures that each scientist's research is accurately represented in the USDA's national research information system and the information is available world-wide to the scientific community.

Projects within the College are organized by an individual or two or more scientists in one or more departments, colleges, and/or universities. Projects are financed through state and federal appropriations or extramural grants and contracts from the federal government, state government, private industry and foundations, gifts, and internally funded competitive programs.

Planning for a project should begin six months prior to the desired starting date. Projects can start the first of any month, but they *must* end on one of the following dates. March 31, June 30, September 30, or December 31. The procedure for developing an AES project involves several important sequential steps:

1. **Current Research Information System (CRIS) Search.** All projects should begin with a review of past and current research from the CRIS. This will help to identify ongoing work in the area of the proposed project and to avoid unnecessary duplication.
2. **Prospectus.** The prospectus should include the title, personnel, objectives, approach, duration, and advisory committee members. An advisory committee is optional. A prospectus is prepared when a new project and/or new direction of emphasis is initiated.
3. **Prospectus Review.** The prospectus should be submitted to the lead unit leader who will identify at least two people to review the proposed project. A review form that includes nine criteria must be completed by each reviewer. This form must be signed by the reviewer, the lead unit leader, and the Director of AES.
4. **Project Outline.** The project outline should include all of the following sections in order:
  - a. a brief, clear, and specific title
  - b. probable duration
  - c. personnel
  - d. justification, relevance, and expected outcomes or impacts
  - e. previous work (background) and present outlook
  - f. a concise, logically arranged, and numbered series of objectives
  - g. a number of procedure statements to correspond with each numbered objective
  - h. stakeholder engagement
  - i. scope of impact
  - j. integrated activities
  - k. milestones
  - l. timeline (*for McIntire-Stennis projects only*)
  - m. literature cited
5. **Project Outline Review.** The project outline should be completed and submitted to the lead unit leader who will distribute it to at least two reviewers for their critique and recommendation. If a prospectus was prepared, the project outline must be sent to the same reviewers.
6. **Assurances Checklist.** The Assurance Checklist must be completed and signed by the lead investigator and unit leader, and the Director of AES. If the project needs to be reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Protections, a copy of the approval letter(s) should accompany the completed Assurance Checklist.
7. **Signature Sheet.** All project investigators, their unit leaders, and members of the advisory committee must be knowledgeable of the proposed project. Their signatures are evidence of their approval of the project.

8. USDA/CRIS AD416 and AD417 forms. These forms are used to provide project information to CRIS. They need to accurately reflect the objectives, the approach, keywords, and other pertinent information that other scientists may use to identify and locate the project.
9. Project Checklist. This checklist, when completed, will ensure that the lead investigator(s) have completed all the necessary steps for project submission. The AES will review the final project and all supporting materials and will submit the proposal to USDA for approval. The project will officially commence on the date indicated in the official approval letter sent to the unit leader(s) and project investigator(s).