

## Guidelines on Writing Grant Proposals with the MATFab facility

The MATFab facility is always supportive of efforts to obtain funding to support research at the University of Iowa. The staff and director have a lot of expertise that may be helpful to the grant writing process so the guidelines below explain different ways you can interface with the facility on these efforts.

1. It is very important to interface with the staff and director if you plan on using MATFab equipment or facilities extensively in your proposed work. By communicating your needs, we can make sure that the instruments can collect the data or fabrication the materials that you proposed and ensure that the work can be completed as written in the proposal. Contact the MATFab director to set up a meeting to discuss. The director will then loop in any relevant MATFab staff members to the conversation for additional instrumentation expertise. At the meeting expect the following questions:
  - A) What instruments are you planning on using for the proposal?
  - B) What expertise do you need to conduct the research? Will the staff train your students to collect the data or will you need staff time/expertise to complete the work?
  - C) Approximately how much time each month will you need on the instrument?
  - D) What funds are you including in your budget to support the work in MATFab?

In addition, we can discuss concerns for instrument downtime/lifetime, data processing software availability, or staff time constraints. Again, the main purpose of this meeting will be to ensure that if the grant is then funded, you will be able to conduct the work.

2. The director can provide letters of support if necessary to show the granting agency that the instrument capabilities and expertise are available at the University of Iowa. Letters should be requested at least 1 week in advance of the internal deadline. In some cases, the funding agency requires a form letter or specific language that is required for submission. If this is the case, please send along the information to the director when you request the letter. In addition, a draft of the project narrative should be included so that the MATFab contributions are clearly articulated. If the project needs change between the time the letter is provided and the submission of the proposal, then MATFab cannot be responsible for not being able to support the work.
3. MATFab is also interested in partnering with faculty to submit equipment grants (i.e. NSF-MRI or NIH-S10). The first step in the process is again to have a discussion with the director and relevant staff at least one month (2-3 months is preferred) before the internal grant deadline. The discussion will focus on the following questions:
  - A) What instrument are you interested in purchasing?
  - B) Do we currently have staff expertise or interest in this piece of equipment?
  - C) Does it fit within the MATFab mission and vision?
  - D) Do we expect to have a broad user base for this instrument that spans disciplines across campus?
  - E) Do we have the space for the instrument in the current MATFab laboratories?
  - F) What are the general utilities required (i.e. water, electricity, exhaust, gas lines)?

If the instrument is a good fit for the MATFab facility, the director and staff can help support the grant writing process. For instruments that are going to be placed in the MATFab

facility, then the director should be listed as the co-PI of the proposal. We encourage the faculty to have the MATFab staff contact companies to get quotes for the instrument, since they will be involved in the purchasing process with a successful proposal. In addition, the director and staff can write text related to the instrument specifications, facility and instrument management plans, billing, and facility/user base descriptions. The director can also serve as the proposal management lead to reach out to faculty for research descriptions and pull together the budget, budget justification, biosketches, current and pending, and facilities. If there needs to be travel to support the bidding process or significant methodology development by the staff, funds should be included in the budget to support these activities.

4. The MATFab does not lead curriculum development or outreach/engagement proposals. This would need to be led by the faculty in the research area of interest. We can support instrumentation training and classroom instruction (please see policy on instructional use), but research staff time typically is not available to organize outreach events, serve as assistants in courses, or develop laboratories for instruction. If you would like to include extensive instrument training or instructional use of MATFab equipment in your proposal, please contact the MATFab director for further discussions.