U.S. Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary of Transportation

ORDER

DOT 7000.3D

1-2-85

Subject: SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR CONTRACTS UNDER THE PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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1. PURPOSE. This Order establishes the procedures and criteria for selection of nonprofit institutions of higher education for research contracts under the Program of University Research.

2. CANCELLATION. DOT 7000.3C, Selection of Institutions for Contracts Under the Program of University Research of the Department of Transportation, of 3-1-82.

3. BACKGROUND. The Program of University Research is in the Office of Economics in the Office of the Secretary. In fiscal year 1985 and beyond contracts under the Program are administered by the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary. Program contracts started before fiscal year 1985 are administered by the Procurement Division in the Research and Special Programs Administration. The University Research Program is intended to support multi-disciplinary, multi-modal, and modal transportation research in institutions of higher education which offer baccalaureate and/or graduate degrees in fields related to transportation and which are accredited by one of the six regional accrediting associations in the United States. The research is mission-oriented and is directed toward fundamental and long-range problems and issues. The research complements, rather than supplements or replaces, other programs in the Department. Selection of projects under this Order is made from those proposals which are submitted and received by the date specified in the solicitation. More than one solicitation may occur each year. The proposals undergo the review, competitive evaluation, and award procedure outlined in paragraph 8 of the Order.

4. EXEMPTIONS. The following directives do not apply to award or modification of contracts where such awards or modifications are made pursuant to this Order.

   a. DOT 4200.9A, Acquisition Review and Approval, of 8-29-78;

   b. DOT 4200.10A, Review and Approval of Proposed Noncompetitive Procurements, of 6-16-82;

   c. DOT 4200.11A, Source Selection, of 10-18-81;

   d. DOT 4200.12A, Review of Proposed Contract Awards, of 12-10-78;

   e. DOT 4400.6, Selection of Educational Institutions to Perform Study and/or Research Projects of 4-30-70;

   f. Secretarial Memorandum, Public and Congressional Notification of Contract and Grant Awards, of 4-9-81;

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OPI: Office of Economics, OST

g. Secretarial Memorandum, Grant and Contract Prenotification to the Secretary; Amendments to Public and Congressional Notification Procedures, of 6-18-81;

h. Secretarial Memorandum, Departmental Procurement Practices, of May 18, 1984; and

i. Secretarial Memorandum, Departmental Procurement Practices, of July 3, 1984, amending 4h above.

5. REFERENCES.

a. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-21 of 2-29-79, which outlines principles for determining costs applicable to research and development and educational services under grants and contracts with educational institutions;

b. OMB Circular A-110 of 7-1-76, which covers grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations;

c. DOT Order 4600.10 of 1-19-77, which covers grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations; and

d. Executive Order 12320, of 9-15-81, issued to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the capacity of historically black colleges and universities to provide quality education, and to overcome the effects of discriminatory treatment.

6. DEFINITIONS. As used in this Order the following terms have the meanings indicated below.

a. University Research is organized activity within individual institutions or groups of institutions of higher education dealing with new ideas, concepts, experiments, methodologies, and theories from which fundamental understanding, invention, advanced techniques, applications, methods, devices, facilitation, systems, and policies in transportation emerge. University research includes, but is not limited to, factors, studies, seminars, investigations and considerations involved in the behavioral, ecological, economic, engineering, mathematical, legal, medical, earth, managerial, marketing, distribution, natural, physical, administrative, policy, political, and social sciences.

b. The Departmental University Research Review Board is the source evaluation body for university contracts. The voting members of the Board are the Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, who is Chairperson, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs, the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, the General Counsel, the Science and Technology Advisor, the Coordinator for Minority Affairs, and two Administrators of the Operating Administrations. The latter two membership positions shall rotate annually among Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Maritime Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Adminstration, Research and Special Programs Administration, Urban Mass Transportation Administration and United States Coast Guard. The non-voting members of the Board are the Director of the Program of University Research and the Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary. Both voting and non-voting Board members may designate alternate persons to represent them. An Executive Secretary for the Board shall be selected by the Chairperson.

c. The Deputy Secretary of Transportation is the source selection official for contracts funded by the Program of University Research.

d. The Contract Monitor is the individual designated in the contract between the Department and the University to be the major technical liaison on all aspects of the contracted work.

e. The Contracting Officer is the Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary, or his/her designee, and is responsible for the proper award and administration of all University Research contracts. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Research and Special Programs Administration is responsible for the administration of those University Research contracts started before fiscal year 1985. All information requested by the Contracting Officer shall be provided in a timely manner.

f. A Procurement Cycle is the periodic process of proposal solicitation, evaluation, selection, contract negotiation and contract award.

g. Continuation is the progression of a multi-phase contract into its second or third year. (See Paragraph 9.)

7. PROCEDURES FOR SOLICITATION OF PROPOSALS. New proposals will be solicited each year. The following procedures will be observed:

a. The areas of research which are important to the Department and which may draw upon university expertise and knowledge will be reviewed annually. The Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, after consultation

with Administrators of the Operating Administrations and the other Assistant Secretaries, shall prepare a statement of potential research areas. The Deputy Secretary will review and select the final set of research areas to be solicited under the Program of University Research.

b. A solicitation notice will be issued by the University Research Program at the beginning of each new proposal cycle. The solicitation notice will be placed in the Commerce Business Daily, and will briefly describe the purpose of the program, identify general areas of research which will be funded and indicate where to write for more information. The notice will explain how a university may request to be placed on the mailing list for the solicitation booklet described in paragraph 7c.

c. A solicitation booklet will be mailed by the University Research Program to all universities with a known interest in the program at the start of each new proposal cycle. This booklet will describe the purpose of the program, contain a detailed description of the areas of transportation research which will be considered for funding in the current cycle, and include proposal submission instructions, evaluation procedures and selection criteria. The closing date for receipt of proposals will be announced in the booklet and will be three to seven months after publication of the solicitation notice described in paragraph 7b.

8. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION PROCEDURES.

a. The evaluation period for each competition will start as soon after the closing date for receipt of proposals as is practicable and normally will be completed in approximately three months. Contracts will be awarded by the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary generally within six months after the start of the evaluation period.

b. Appropriate professionals serving as members of the Department's permanent or consultant staff will evaluate all proposals submitted for funding under the program. The advice of Government and non-government professionals outside the Department and knowledgeable in fields covered by the proposals may be obtained when the subject matter of the proposals or the size of the funding requested is such that outside help is justified. Outside professionals will not evaluate proposals from their own institutions or from institutions from which they hold a degree. In addition outside professionals will not evaluate proposals which compete with proposals from their own institution or from institutions from which they hold a degree. Evaluations will be based on the criteria set forth in paragraph 10 of this Order. In order for the Contracting Officer to discharge his responsibilities under the FAR 1.602-2 the Evaluation Review Panel shall forward a copy of the Evaluation Forms, memoranda and any other supporting documentation.

c. All evaluations shall be presented to the Departmental University Research Review Board by the leaders of the proposal review. These leaders shall be members of the policy or research staff in the Operating Administrations and the Office of the Secretary. The Board will operate with no less than five (5) members and will select a set of the most qualified proposals. Each proposal must be approved by majority vote. Recommendations for awards will be made by this Board from the set of most qualified proposals. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary shall receive copies of the proposals, evaluations, memoranda, and other supporting documentation.

d. The Deputy Secretary of Transportation shall review the recommendations of the Board and make the final award selections.

e. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary, or his/her designee, in coordination with the Director of the Program of University Research, will negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contracts with the selected universities. The Director of the Program of University Research will notify those universities which do not receive awards and will appoint a monitor for contracts with those universities which do receive awards.

9. CONTINUATIONS OF EXISTING CONTRACTS. Continuations will be evaluated at the end of each phase of a contract by the contract monitor and by the members of the Department's professional staff as designated by the Director of the Program of University Research. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary, or his/her designee, will assure that the terms and conditions of the contract apply relative to the continuation. The evaluations shall be supervised by the Director of the Program of University Research who shall approve or disapprove all continuations. Continuations may be accomplished only for those contracts which were originally approved by the Deputy Secretary for more than one year. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Research and Special Programs Administration has jurisdiction over those University Research contracts started before fiscal year 1985.

10. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS.

a. The criteria for evaluating proposals are:

(1) Merit of the technical approach to solving the problem;

(2) Merit of the management approach to conducting the research; and

(3) Qualifications of the investigator(s) to do the research.

When proposals are judged to be in the competitive range in terms of the first three criteria, then proposed cost shall become the fourth evaluation factor.

b. The following requirements and exclusions apply to research proposals which will be considered under the Program:

(1) Only mission-oriented research as directed by DOT staff will be supported.

(2) Transportation research which duplicates other work in the programs of the Department will not be supported.

(3) Multi-year research programs are limited to three years of funding; however, the research may extend for longer periods of time.

(4) Contracts for seminars are limited to one year.

(5) Only research proposals from regionally accredited institutions of higher education which offer baccalaureate and/or graduate degrees in fields related to transportation will be supported.

(6) Proposed transportation research requiring a security classification will not be supported.

(7) Proposed transportation research must complement the normal academic program of the educational institution and must be performed primarily by teaching faculty and students.

(8) The principal investigator(s) must be a full-time member(s) of a university faculty and his/her/their duties must include teaching. The principal investigator(s) must be an active participant(s) and must devote a reasonable portion of his/her/their professional activity to the proposed research.

(9) Total estimated cost for accomplishing the subject matter of the proposed research must be reasonable.

(10) A portion of the funding each year will be considered for awards for transportation research at universities drawing a preponderance of their students from disadvantaged groups.

(11) Research proposals must clearly define and describe the end product(s) to be produced at the time of contract completion and at the completion of any phase(s) of the contract.

11. ADMINISTRATION OF CONTRACT AWARD PURSUANT TO THIS ORDER.

a. All contracts shall be administered in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations. Except as exempted by this Order contracts shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Transportation Acquisition Regulations.

b. Requests from contractors for additional funding to complete work previously authorized and funded under the contract may be approved:

(1) Jointly by the Director of the Program of University Research and the Chief of the Procurement Division in the Office of the Secretary, or his/her designee, for requests not exceeding ten percent of the then existing project budget for that contract phase. The Chief of the Procurement Division in the Research and Special Programs Administration has jurisdiction over those University Research contracts started before fiscal year 1985.

(2) By the Departmental University Research Review Board and the Deputy Secretary of Transportation for all other requests.

c. Requests from contractors for approval and funding of additional phases of work beyond that which was envisioned in the original contract must be approved by both the Departmental University Research Review Board and the Deputy Secretary.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION:

Jon Seymour
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Administration