

UIDP 1-Minute Survey: Time to Agreement for U-I Sponsored Research

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Two researchers—one from academia and the other from industry—meet around shared research interests and decide to pursue collaboration. How long does it take to get to a negotiated, signed sponsored research agreement?

The 2012 UIDP publication *The Researcher Guidebook: A Guide for Successful Institutional-Industrial Collaborations* begins with this real-life scenario. The “long and convoluted process” that precipitated a sponsored research agreement between the two took a torturous nine months to negotiate.

A decade later and as UIDP prepares to present a webinar series based on key learnings from that same publication, we asked our member representatives to revisit that seminal question: How many months does it take to come to agreement for a sponsored research project--from the initial contact to discuss an agreement, to signing the final contract?

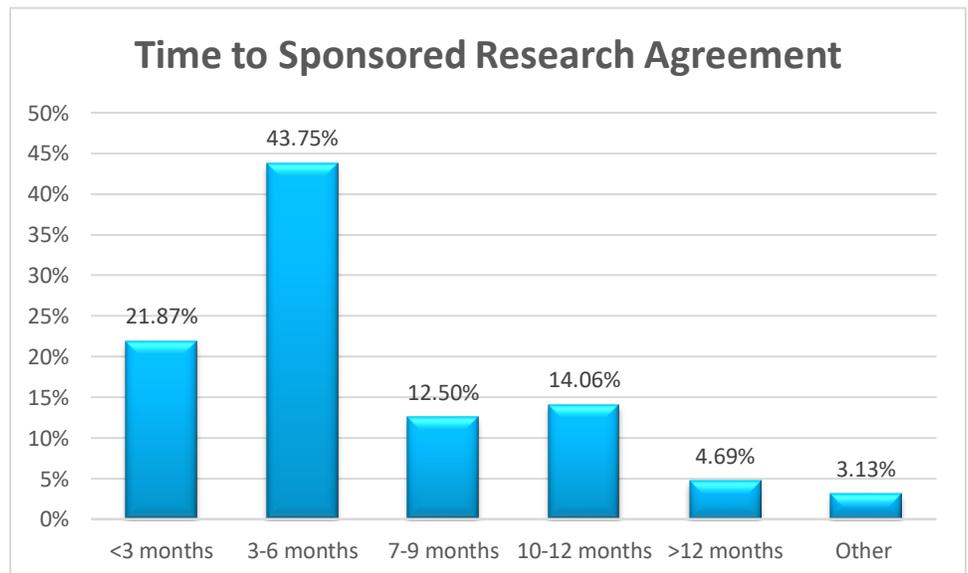
Because there is wide variation between sponsored research agreement, we asked for a “best estimate” generalization. Some organizations have conducted an analysis of their portfolio to determine time to agreement for university-industry sponsored research projects. The survey specified that we were seeking information about sponsored research agreements only, not gifts or grants.

The survey received responses from 64 UIDP member representatives from academia and industry. The largest proportion of respondents were from universities (75%), followed by industry (20%) and other research organizations (3%).

The largest proportion of respondents (44%) indicated that, on average, sponsored research agreements come to completion in a three-to-six-month time period.

Just over a fifth of respondents (22%) said their sponsored research agreements are completed in less than three months. Some 14% said it takes between 10 and 12 months to come to agreement, and another 5% said it takes, on average, longer than a year. Open-ended responses noted the wide variation among

agreements. Open-ended responses noted the wide variation because of differences among collaborators, the scope of agreements, and whether there are many commercial terms involved.

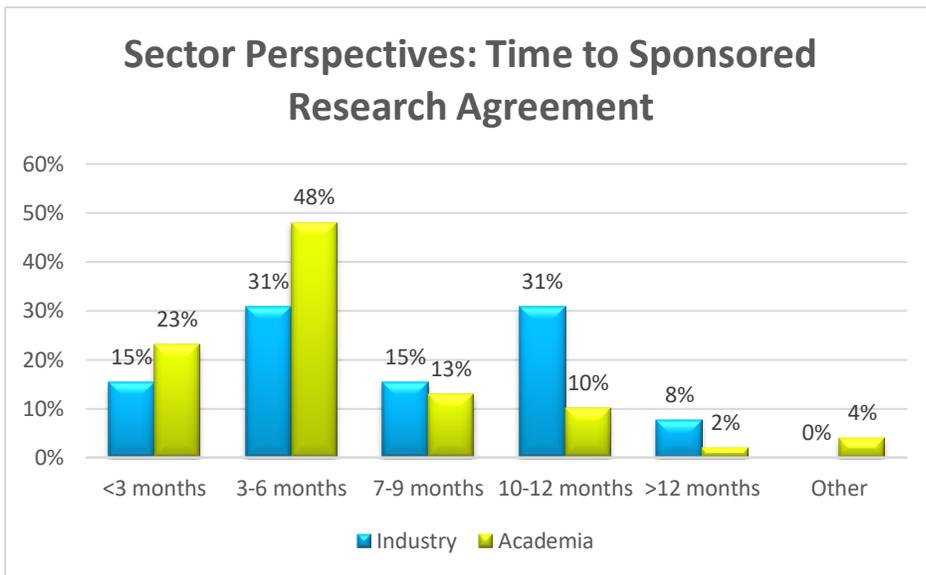


The survey results change considerably when comparing the results by sector. Those from universities perceive that the time to sponsored research agreement is within six months (71%), but respondents from industry believe more the time it takes is seven months or later (54%).

It is important to note that this survey asked respondents for their *best estimate* of time to sponsored research agreement. A May 2021 UIDP survey of university contracting

professionals found that 75% of respondents track turnaround time for sponsored research agreements (higher than the rate for nondisclosure agreements, material transfer agreements, and data use agreements), but there is no universal metric or mechanism for tracking the time to sponsored research agreements.

While this survey provides a snapshot of member representative perception of time to agreement for sponsored research, more rigorous research would be required for a comprehensive understanding based on greater input and specificity about the complexity of projects.



Related Resources

[UIDP Researcher Guide and Quick Guide](#): These fundamental university-industry collaboration guidance documents address the opportunities and challenges unique to institution and industry collaborations. The *Researcher Quick Guide* provides academic and industry perspectives on key issues discussed at length in *The Researcher Guidebook*.