Overview

Recent agreements involving the University of Alberta such as the Memorandum of Understanding on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards signed with the Tri-Councils (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) (September 2002) outline basic requirements for maintaining eligibility to administer Agency funds. The general philosophy at the University of Alberta is to have many of the processes take place as close to the researcher as possible and only use central teams where this is the most effective form of meeting the obligations. Researchers, administrators in faculties and departments, and central administrative units need to understand their respective roles regarding the administration of research funds at the University. This document is the main resource for communicating roles and responsibilities to new and continuing staff.

Purpose

To set out the primary responsibilities of the major parties involved in research administration at the University of Alberta.

PROCEDURE

Summary:

Researcher

Faculty

Research Facilitator

Research Services Office (RSO)

Financial Services

Note: The roles of Supply Management Services (SMS), Staff and Students Payments (S&SP), Human Resources (HR) and the Development Office are not addressed in this document as these roles are not research specific but are common to all funds including research.

Procedure Details:

1. Researcher

In general, the researcher is required to carry out research responsibly. Projects are carried out on behalf of “The Governors of the University of Alberta” in accordance with the negotiated, contractual terms (e.g. confidentiality,
handling of intellectual property, publication rights, graduate student rights, conflict of interest). The primary responsibilities of the researcher are:

a. Preparing funding applications that:
   i. meet the requirements of the sponsor;
   ii. include the signatures of all co-applicants and their appropriate administrators;
   iii. budget for all direct costs;
   iv. include indirect costs where applicable; and
   v. identify in writing the space and other resource requirements.

b. Signing all applications, where the researcher’s signature denotes that:
   i. the researcher will abide by sponsor terms and conditions and the University’s policies and procedures; and
   ii. research involving human subjects, animals, biohazardous agents or radioactive materials will only be undertaken with prior approval of the appropriate University committee.

c. Disclosing any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest at the time of the application or at any time during the term of the award.

d. Exercising financial control over research funds, including:
   i. approval of all expenditures where such approval indicates that expenditures are
      - associated with the project or program for which the award is made;
      - eligible in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement;
      - necessary to the research endeavour being undertaken;
      - reasonable and conform with the financial guidelines of the sponsor and University;
      - incurred within the eligible dates of the agreement.
   ii. submission and retention of original documentation; and
   iii. review and approval of financial reports.

e. Delegating signing authority in accordance with University policy, where such delegation is in writing and retained on file.

f. Being personally responsible for any expenses in excess of available award funds, including ineligible costs and revenue lost due to failure to meet the terms and conditions of the agreement.

g. Managing and supervising research personnel by:
   i. abiding by University policies and procedures including those relating to Human Resources where acting as a supervisor; and
   ii. ensuring all staff and students engaged in the research are fully informed of and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the award.
h. Submitting all required reports and deliverables to the sponsor in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

i. Advising the Faculty office, Research Services Office and sponsor of:

i. any change in academic status, (e.g. extended, sabbatical or sick leaves);

ii. any significant change to the research program that was originally approved, including any impact on certifications; and

iii. any other changes that may impact the terms and conditions of the agreement.

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1. Faculty

In general, Deans are responsible for supporting research activities in their Faculties.

a. the Dean and Chair must sign all grant applications, where the signatures denote:

i. the Faculty’s willingness to administer the research funds in accordance with University policies and sponsor terms and conditions;

ii. their support of the proposed activity;

iii. the availability of space and other resources that the applicant has declared;

iv. the ability to provide administrative support to the research activity;

v. that the applicant is eligible to hold grants under University policy;

vi. that the applicant meets the sponsor’s eligibility requirements; and

vii. where specified, agreement to the negotiated terms and conditions.

b. The Faculty will provide one-over-one approval for expenses paid directly to the researcher. Such approval implies that expenses are reasonable and conform to sponsor terms and conditions and University policies.

c. The Faculty is responsible for implementing effective systems to ensure that:

i. research is carried out in compliance with University policies and sponsor terms and conditions;

ii. all research has the appropriate certification approvals;

iii. researchers provide research deliverables and reports; and

iv. potential conflicts of interest are addressed.

d. The Faculty is responsible for implementing internal control procedures for:

i. monitoring grant finances;

ii. ensuring action is taken to address

- potential or actual over expenditures (failure to act promptly would be interpreted as tacit approval for the over-expenditure. Where the Faculty has approved an over-expenditure, any unresolved balances will be the responsibility of the Faculty).
2. Research Facilitator

a. The Research Facilitator acts as a faculty-based extension of the Research Services Office.

b. The role of the Research Facilitator is:
   i. facilitating the collaborative identification and implementation of services, systems and processes that will enhance research administration;
   ii. improving communication with researchers, and
   iii. ensuring accountability to all stakeholders.

c. Their responsibilities include:
   i. working collaboratively with internal and external partners to implement best practices in research administration, accountability and compliance; and
   ii. providing related education and training for researchers and administrators.

3. Research Services Office (RSO)

a. Applications and Award Processing, which includes:
   i. providing assistance to identify potential sources of financial support for research projects;
   ii. maintaining website with comprehensive links to sources of funding opportunities (internal and external);
   iii. providing assistance in negotiation of contracts and multi-party collaborations;
   iv. negotiating, approving and signing research agreements and contracts on behalf of the University, where the signature indicates:
      - indirect costs have been included as allowable;
      - appropriate ethics approval has or will be secured prior to the release of funds;
      - approval of any required institutional commitments (e.g. matching funds);
      - required approval signatures have been obtained from researcher(s), Chair(s), and Dean(s).
   v. processing notices of award from sponsors;
   vi. communicating to researchers and faculty on sponsor decisions and administrative requirements related to awards;
vii. establishing accounts (Projects) for successful awards and providing account maintenance over the life of the awards and beyond as necessary; and

viii. arranging for sub-awards with other institutions.

b. Ongoing Grant Management, which includes:

i. providing assistance to researchers and other University staff on administrative processes; and

ii. liaising with sponsors to ensure compliance with the most recent guidelines and to resolve conflicts and concerns (where applicable).

c. Financial administration, which includes:

i. administering and accounting for research funds received by the University;

ii. generating invoices during life of the award in accordance with the sponsor terms and conditions;

iii. preparing and submitting financial reports to sponsors, including institutional awards;

iv. coordinating researchers’ progress reports to sponsors and for institutional awards;

v. monitoring over-expenditures on behalf of the University and providing regular reports to executives and Faculties;

vi. coordinating research-related audits; and

vii. processing indirect cost allocation where indirect costs are provided for within the grant award or contract.

d. Administering Institutional Awards, which includes:

i. administering various internal funds and awards;

ii. administering the submission of various institutional awards on behalf of the University (e.g. Canadian Foundation for Innovation, CRC Chairs); and

iii. exercising financial control over funds received from institutional awards, including monitoring and approval of all transactions.

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4. Financial Services is responsible for:

a. PeopleSoft table maintenance;

b. developing and maintaining institutional delivered end user reporting;

c. processing research accounts receivable payments;

d. performing an initial collection role on research accounts receivable;

e. performing an advisory role regarding outstanding amounts or collection problems;

f. providing accounts receivable management reports for Research Services Office and Financial Services;

g. calculating and processing interest (interest policy on non-endowed funds, Unitized Endowment Pool spending allocation policy); and
h. setting up all new research endowments (PeopleSoft set-up, endowment files, ensure all documentation is complete, etc).

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲Top]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Includes the term “institution.”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>A ten-digit number designating an award of funds received from a granting agency or sponsor to a specific researcher for a specific project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>Includes the term “funding agency,” “granting agency” and “contractor.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Includes the term “grant” and “contract.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Includes the terms “Department,” “Division,” “School” or other administrative units that exist within the Faculty.</td>
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FORMS

There are no forms for this Procedure. [▲Top]

RELATED LINKS

Should a link fail, please contact uappol@ualberta.ca. [▲Top]

Conflict Policy – Conflict of Interest and Commitment, and Institutional Conflict (UAPPOL)

Financial Management and Practices Policy (UAPPOL)

Memorandum of Understanding on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards (NSERC)

Research Over Expenditure (Unauthorized) Procedure (UAPPOL)

Signing Authority & Delegation of Signing Authority Policy – All Funds (UAPPOL)