PennERA: Interim Solutions for Grants.gov/NIH Now in Place

In April 2006, the PennERA (Electronic Research Administration) team, in conjunction with the Office of Research Services (ORS), put in place interim solutions to address the Grants.gov electronic portal initiative.

Background

As all Federal grant-making agencies transition to electronic grant submission through Grants.gov, faculty researchers here at Penn, as well as at all other universities, are required to search for funding opportunities and download grant application packages from this portal site.

Penn’s interim solutions for Grants.gov

To access and complete the administrative components of grant applications at Grants.gov, users need to use free software that must be installed on their local desktop/laptop machines. To this end, the following solutions have been put in place for Penn researchers:

- **Windows PC**: PureEdge Viewer (also known as IBM Workplace Forms) is used. This software can be downloaded from the Grants.gov web site at [http://www.grants.gov/DownloadViewer](http://www.grants.gov/DownloadViewer). Since several Schools are using their local networks to distribute the PureEdge Viewer, users should check with their Local Support Provider (LSP) before downloading from the Grants.gov web site. For a contact list, go to [http://www.upenn.edu/computing/view/support/](http://www.upenn.edu/computing/view/support/). If users will be downloading the software from Grants.gov, they will need administrative rights (the administrator name and password) for their machines. If users have any trouble with the installation process, they should contact their LSP.
Mac users at Penn (Mac OS X only) can now connect to a local Windows Terminal Server at Penn rather than using the NIH’s Citrix server, allowing them to complete applications more quickly. Users should follow the instructions at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/grants.gov/UPennTopaz.pdf to use the Pure-Edge viewer. The user manual includes information on Remote Desktop installation, downloading and completing grant application files, and transferring those files to ORS.

Principal Investigators can continue to use any platform (Mac or PC) to prepare the project description. However, the assembly of the application packet must be done on a machine that has the PureEdge Viewer installed.

File transmission to ORS: A web-based application has been created at http://www.upenn.edu/isc/apps/proposalupload/ where users can upload and transfer completed grant applications to ORS using a standard web browser. This replaces the current method of sending applications as e-mail attachments. For help using this application, see the document at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/grants.gov/ProposalUpload.pdf.

Penn’s long-term strategy

Penn’s long-term strategy for submitting proposals electronically through Grants.gov (as well as to other sponsors) is to utilize the Proposal Development module in PennERA. Work is underway on this module, which will allow investigators and other research personnel to create proposals, route them for internal approvals, and then submit the resulting data set to Grants.gov. This module is targeted for a fall 2006 pilot followed by a phased implementation across campus.

Questions about the Grants.gov solutions

Faculty members with operational or procedural questions regarding grant applications should contact Pam Caudill at ORS at 215-573-6706 or caudill@pobox.upenn.edu, or their assigned pre-award contact. For questions regarding local hardware or software issues, users should contact their Local Support Provider (LSP). A contact list is available at http://www.upenn.edu/computing/view/support/.

More information about Grants.gov

For more information on Grants.gov, please visit the Office of Research Services’ Grants.gov page at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/grantsgov.html.

More information about PennERA

Additional updates about PennERA will be provided throughout the project. For the most current information, please visit the PennERA web site at https://www.pennera.upenn.edu/ and click on the “PennERA Project” tab at the top of the page. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send an e-mail to pennera@pobox.upenn.edu.

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American Heart Association
Revises the Guide for Grant Awardees

The American Heart Association Affiliate and National Center revised the Guide for Grant Awardees in March 2006. The revised guide includes updated information regarding rebudgeting of funds, items that require prior approval, an updated list of allowable and unallowable costs, expenses generally treated as F&A and the deficits. Following are a few of the changes:

Advance Approval is required for the following:
- Budget personnel with doctorate degrees
- Utilize funds for postdoctoral salary/fringes not budgeted in original application
- Rebudgeting of funds for equipment >$10,000
- Rebudgeting of funds for computers and components >$5,000

Unallowable Costs:
- Co-Pi Salary/Fringe
- Expenditures such as Postage, Rent, Lights, Office furniture & telephones
- Patient Care, Hospitalization, Diagnostic Laboratory Tests
- Membership Dues
- Office supplies, books & Subscriptions
- Scientific Meetings Abroad
- Reception & Meals

If upon review of expense, costs that were deemed not reimbursable by the sponsor are discovered, they will be handled in accordance with Sponsored Projects Policy #2129.

Expenditure Reports and Payments:

AHA states that “Expenditure reports are due 90 days after the close of each annual grant period”. Quarterly Payments will be withheld if the expenditure report has not been received by the due date”. In addition, if AHA has not received all reports within six months after the award period ends, the withheld payments will revert back to AHA. Any loss of funds will be the responsibility of the responsible Penn department.

Deficits:

AHA does not permit overruns or deficits from year to year and therefore it is important to review expenditures regularly to ensure the following: unallowable charges have not been charged to the grant, we have complied with AHA’s mandated restrictions on PI salary and Employee Benefits, computers and equipment, travel, and that the fund is not in deficit. Deficits will also be handled in accordance with Sponsored Projects Policy #2129.

The revised Affiliate and National Center Programs Guide for Awardees and the can be found at http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3005286.
Cost Transfer Facts for PennERS Clients

1) BA’s who have access to Salary Management, have access to do reallocations through the payroll system, based on ORG security.

2) BA’s are allowed to do Reallocations through the payroll system UNTIL:
   - The reallocation Cutoff Date (see Note).
   - The salary payment has been extracted into PennERS.

Note: BA’s are restricted from reallocating Salary Management Detail Records with a check date or pay period end date prior to the Cut-off date set in the start up program. The Cutoff date is determined by the current system date, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT SYSTEM DATE IS</th>
<th>CUTOFF DATE for REALLOCATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January or February current year (01/01 -&gt; 02/29)</td>
<td>01/01 of previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March through August of current year (03/01 -&gt; 08/31)</td>
<td>07/01 of previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September through December of current year (09/01 -&gt; 12/31)</td>
<td>01/01 of current year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) If a Salary Payment has been extracted to PennERS through an initiation (and it is before the Cutoff Date), Cost transfers (another name for reallocations) should be done from the PennERS system. They are posted to the mainframe at the time of certification. (For dates on PennERS initiations, see Payroll Closing Schedule).

4) If a Salary Payment is prior to the Cutoff Date, or there is a special case within PennERS (effort form certified already), the Payroll Office must assist with the reallocation. BA’s must fill out a Restricted Request for Salary Reallocation and if a grant is involved, get approval from the Office of Research Services. Once approved, the payroll office can process the restricted reallocation. A blank form from the ERS website must be prepared with the final distributions.

5) Salary reallocations can be split into up to 6 different new accounts. If you try to split a single salary payment into more than 6 new accounts, an error will occur. This is a Payroll system limitation.

6) In ERS, cost-transfers are sent to the Payroll system upon certification of an effort form. Unlike Payroll, once a reallocation is done, it is final and it cannot be split again through subsequent reallocations.
7) Account validations are done when reallocations are entered within the payroll system or within PennERS. The account validation will validate the 26 digit account number, the fund information as well as a number of other account attributes. However, changes to accounts often occur between when the reallocation is posted and the reallocation is processed within the next weekly payroll process. If the reallocation is done through PennERS, an email containing the error will be sent to the responsible party.

Examples of common reallocation error are listed below:

Example of Error:
- Error: FUND IS FROZEN.
  Fix: The account must be unfrozen to process the reallocation. No changes are needed within PennERS or Payroll. The transaction is held and will process once the account is un-frozen.

- Error: OTR RECORDS NOT FOUND.
  Explanation and Fix: This error only occurs within PennERS because cost transfers are sent in large groups. The root cause of this is when there are two or more payments from the same account number for the same amount in the same pay period for an employee. The Cost transfer process in UMIS Payroll cannot distinguish between the two separate payments. The problem is compounded by ERS because if one cost transfer fails to post to payroll we do not allow any transactions for that form to be posted. The cost transfer owner may not be aware that there is a problem until the following Tuesday when they receive an email stating “OTR RECORDS NOT FOUND”. The owner of the cost transfers will continue to get notified each week until all the transactions have been successful processed by payroll.

When this occurs the ERS support team must manually post the transactions over two or more payroll runs. The Owner of the Cost Transfer will be notified by a PennERS support member who will handle the posting of the cost transfers.

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Research Compliance Tutorials Available

Available on the ORS Web Site are tutorials on the subjects of Allowability, Cost Transfers & Documentation; Export Controls, and Effort Reporting. Please take a few moments to view these tutorials. The tutorials and other compliance related information can be found at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm.
UPCOMING TRAINING

Using PureEdge Viewer and Preparation of NIH Electronic Grant Applications

The Office of Research Services is pleased to announce that hands-on training using the PureEdge Viewer and SF424(R&R) forms to prepare NIH electronic grant applications will be offered on the following dates:

- Monday, May 22     2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, June 5      2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, June 12     2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, July 10     2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, July 24     2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, August 7    2:00-4:00 PM
- Monday, August 21   2:00-4:00 PM

The classes will be held in the Franklin Building, Room 409.

Because of the hands-on nature of this training, attendance is limited to fourteen participants per class. The goal of this first round of hands-on training is to prepare faculty and business administrators to submit applications through Grants.gov for NIH programs with deadline dates on or before June 1, 2006. These include the R03, R21, R33 and R34 grant mechanisms, as well as the mechanisms that have already transitioned, such as STTR/SBIR applications. Therefore, faculty and business administrators meeting this criterion will be given priority should the number of registrants exceed the number of available places. Additional hands-on training will be conducted to accommodate faculty and business administrators who will be using Grants.gov to submit NIH applications due after June 1, 2006.

To register for one of these classes, please call (215) 898-5624.
ORS Monthly Quick Quiz
(Answers can be found within the FAQ section of this newsletter.)

1) Original National Research Service Awards, Institutional Training grants (NRSA T32’s), trainee appointment and reappointment forms are due to the awarding component:
   a. Immediately following the appointment of the trainee
   b. The end of the fund adjustment period
   c. After the FSR for the fund budget period is issued

2) Copies of the NRSA (T32) trainee appointment and reappointment forms are due to ORS:
   a. Immediately following the appointment of the trainee
   b. The end of the fund adjustment period
   c. After the FSR for the fund is issued

3) Original NRSA (T32) termination notices are to be reviewed and signed by:
   a. The Program Director, Trainee and Business/Financial Administrator
   b. The Program Director, Trainee and ORS
   c. Someone with first hand knowledge of training program

4) Increases in the number of trainees appointed (slots) on a NRSA T32 must be approved by:
   a. ORS
   b. Business Administrator and Program Director
   c. NIH Awarding component

5) Payback agreements are required for all trainees appointed to T32.
   a. True
   b. False
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the process for appointing a trainee to a National Research Service Award Institutional Training Grant (T32)?

Initiation of support on a NRSA Institutional Training Grant (T32) begins after the award is made to the Grantee Organization. The awarding component issues the Notice of Grant Award (NGA), which is normally for a 12 month budget period. It also provides a categorical breakdown of the budget categories and the total number of position (slots) for the period. In accordance with Public Health Service Policy, prior written approval from the awarding office is required to exceed the number of trainees appointed in each category shown on the NGA (for short term, Pre-doctoral and Postdoctoral positions) for the budget period.

The training Program Director selects and appoints the trainees which may be appointed any time during the budget period for an appointment period of 9 to 12 months. At the time of initial appointment and reappointment, the Program Director must submit an Appointment Form (form PHS 2271) to the awarding component before the start of each trainee’s appointment or reappointment. The Appointment form and the Payback Agreement establish the payback obligation, if any, for postdoctoral trainees. If the support covers the individual’s initial 12 months of postdoctoral support, a signed Payback Agreement (form PHS 6031) must be submitted with the appointment form. No stipend or other allowance may be paid until the forms have been submitted. A copy of the signed appointment form and Payback Agreement for each trainee supported by the T32 should be forwarded to the ORS account immediately. The forms will be used to verify the stipends, number of trainees appointed for the budget period, and the total stipend and tuition obligations remaining at the end of the budget period to be reported on the FSR as unliquidated obligations, if applicable.

Upon termination of support under the training grant, the program director is responsible for submitting the Termination Notice (form PHS 416-7) for each trainee within 30 days of the end of the period of support. The notice should be signed by the trainee and the Program Director and forwarded to ORS for review and signature. The lack of timely and accurate information on this form could adversely affect the payback process for the trainee and delay the appointment of a new trainee to the position.

For more information on NIH NRSA awards, visit http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2003/.
Did You Know.......??

...Though a bonus may be an allowable charge on an NIH award it **must** meet the following definition requirements: “...be part of a total compensation package, provided such payments are reasonable and are made according to a **formal policy** (emphasis added) of the grantee that is consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.” **Unless a bonus meets ALL of these requirements it is an unallowable expense to an award.**

...Earnings Type CVP is not included in ERS nor is it considered part of a faculty member’s institutional base salary.

...Earnings Type GVP is included in ERS and is considered part of a faculty member’s institutional base salary.

...A faculty member who is a PI on an NSF award and is absent from the project for short periods of up to three months, is required to notify ORS. ORS shall then notify the NSF Program Officer about arrangements for the conduct of the project during the PI’s temporary absence. (See [NSF Grants Policy Manual](http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm))

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Training Opportunities:

**Sponsored Programs at Penn:** **JUNE 6 & 7**
This is a two day workshop which covers the fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration at Penn. Topics include Proposal Preparation & Processing, Contract Negotiation, Award Acceptance and Account Set-up, Financial Compliance & Allowability, Post Award Management, Reporting Tools and Data Sources, Closeouts, and Audits. Please visit [http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/training.html](http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/training.html) for more information.

**ORS Quizzes and FAQ’s:**
Take a moment to look at our quizzes or FAQ section for more guidance on administering 5-funds here at Penn. Both can be accessed by clicking **Training** on our home page ([http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices](http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/)).

**Research Compliance Tutorials and Other Education:**
For further guidance on administering 5-funds here at Penn, please visit the Research Compliance Training and Education page at [http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm](http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm).
Getting to Know......

Kerry Peluso
Director, Post Award Financial Administration

Time at Penn: 4 years

Time in Research Services: 4 years

ORS Responsibilities: Oversight of Post Award areas including Financial Invoicing and Reporting, Accounts Receivable and Data Management

Hobbies/Interests: Gardening, Reading, Home Decorating, Antique Shopping

Favorite Restaurant: No favorite --like many.

Favorite ways to spend a vacation: Cruise with my family.

What Co-workers say:
...Hard working and well organized, a real contribution to ORS.
...Kerry has an incredible amount of energy and accomplishes an amazing number of tasks in a day, plus she's also very likeable!!
...Multi tasking is her middle name. Great resource for the office.

May’s Contributing Authors, ORS Newsletter:

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Kerry Peluso, Director of Post Award Financial Administration, Office of Research Services
Andrew B. Rudczynski, Associate Vice President for Finance and Executive Director, Office of Research Services
Todd Swavely, Associate Director –Penn ERA, Project Manager, Office of Research Services
Alice Tangredi-Hannon, Institutional Compliance Officer, Office of Audit and Compliance
Pre-Award Administration Staff

The Pre-award staff is responsible for processing proposals, reviewing, negotiating, and accepting awards (except for corporate contracts), as well as, providing post-award non-financial administration for these accounts. Questions concerning industrial clinical trial agreements and sponsored research agreements should be addressed to the Corporate Contracts Group.

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- Microbiology – SOM
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The main functions handled by these ORS staff members are the preparation of financial invoices and reports, coordination of audits, collection of receivables, cash management functions, and close outs of funds. The Federal Compliance Group handles facilities and administrative costs, employee benefit rates, effort reporting, and compliance issues.

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About Our Organization...

Our Mission

The Office of Research Services (ORS) oversees the administrative support of the University’s externally funded research and is responsible for implementation of University policies established for this purpose. An important part of the ORS mission is service to the research faculty, through the provision of information and advice for the development of applications, and assistance in the administration of awarded grants and contracts.

In this role, ORS

- Supports the schools and centers in the development of proposals for grants and contracts;
- Reviews and approves all proposals before submission to the potential sponsor;
- Coordinates negotiations of awards;
- Accepts awards for the University, including the signing of contracts;
- Provides oversight and guidance to faculty and staff concerning the proper management of sponsored projects;
- Prepares all financial reports to sponsors.

In addition to these functions, ORS is responsible for billing of contracts, management of letters of credit for payment of grants, preparation of the facilities & administrative and employee benefit rate proposals and rate negotiations, management of the effort reporting system, and oversight of service center rate development. ORS reports jointly to the Vice President for Finance & Treasurer and Vice Provost for Research.

Office of Research Services
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