

## Office of Research Services -- Research Administration News --

### *Special Interest Articles:*

- **SPRING EFFORT REPORTS DUE TO ORS BY MONDAY NOVEMBER 17**
- Wonder Why the Fund Number for your Project Changed? -- See page 5
- Find Out How to Set Up a PI in NIH Commons -- See page 6
- Upcoming Training: Sponsored Programs at Penn -- See page 7

### *Individual Highlights:*

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## Introducing PennERS:

### Penn Effort Reporting System

PennERS is the University's Effort Reporting System project—an initiative designed to increase awareness of the regulatory requirements and provide better technological tools to meet the effort reporting needs of Penn's research community.

Begun last fall, the PennERS project team has steadily moved this initiative forward, completing such important tasks as assessing key effort reporting risks at Penn, conducting initial education sessions for administrators and faculty, and identifying technology tools to facilitate the effort reporting process. An advisory group is being formed that includes individuals with effort reporting responsibilities from the School of Medicine, SEAS, SAS, the VET School, and GSE. The project's core team consists of members of the Office of Research Services (ORS), the Comptroller's Office, the School of Medicine, Information Systems and Computing (ISC), and the Office of Institutional Compliance (OIC).

A core software product has been selected to be augmented with web-based interfaces to the payroll system. The team is currently finalizing the contract with the selected software vendor and the project has moved into the design phase for the Penn-specific software components.

## Components

The PennERS project will be composed of two primary modules—Salary Distribution and Effort Certification. There is also an Educational Awareness Training Initiative.

### 1. Salary Distribution module

The Salary Distribution module is a secure, web-based system that provides real-time web access to current payroll job distributions. This module will provide Business Administrators and Fund Managers the ability to establish, review, and modify salary distributions via a web browser. Users will be able to modify salary distributions for specific employees outside of their home organization and will also be able to more closely monitor salary payments for sponsored projects. The module also functions as a tool to help facilitate future salary planning.

#### *Anticipated benefits include:*

- Ability to store additional pending salary distributions—a total of 16 lines for each of 4 jobs, up to 8 of which can be made simultaneously active for each job
- Validation edits that ensure that salary distributions to sponsored projects do not exceed the project end date
- Validation edits to ensure that the sum of the active distributions for a pay period does not exceed the recorded total compensation for the pay period
- Ability to delegate responsibility for salary distributions to other appropriate administrators

## 2. Effort Certification Module

The Effort Certification module is a secure, web-based application for reviewing, adjusting, and certifying effort on sponsored projects, used by administrators responsible for managing personnel who are paid from grants or for managing salary distributions for their departments. This module also provides the ability for a home organization BA to assign another qualified BA to review and/or certify effort for an individual in their home organization. In addition, users will also have the ability to generate cost transfers (reallocations) from within ERS.

### ***Anticipated benefits include:***

- Eliminates periodic paper effort reports that must be reviewed and distributed to appropriate certifying individuals
- Provides online access to historical payroll distributions for individuals paid from sponsored projects
- Allows administrators to review and make changes to historical payroll distributions from within the PennERS application
- Ability to review certification status for all individuals quickly
- Clarifies effort reporting procedures through the clear delegation of roles and responsibilities to users
- Automatically identifies specific accounts from which the individual's salary distribution exceeds a salary limitation
- Eliminates "lost in the mail" problems
- Maintains an "audit trail" to help Penn demonstrate the institution's compliance with federal requirements

In addition, the PennERS design includes a component that allows users to view effort commitments previously recorded in PennERA as part of the proposal development process. During the effort certification process, users will be able to review and compare pre-printed effort distributions with effort commitments to better understand an individual's total committed activity.

## 3. Educational Awareness Training Initiative

An initiative began this fall to provide education related to effort reporting. This initiative includes both Business Administrators and Faculty:

- Over More than 200 Business Administrators attended classroom training in September 2003
- As of November 12, 2003, education related to effort reporting has been presented to the chairs of research departments at five schools, and we anticipate that faculty education will be completed on or about April 30, 2004

## More Information about PennERS

Additional updates about PennERS will be provided throughout the project. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send an e-mail to [effort@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:effort@pobox.upenn.edu).

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**Vice President of Information Systems and Computing**

**--Andrew B. Rudczynski, Ph. D.**

**Executive Director of Research Services and Associate Vice President of Finance**

**--Kenneth Campbell  
Comptroller**



## Proposal Tracking Implemented

The PennERA (Electronic Research Administration) team is pleased to announce that we are nearing the completion of Phase I. The goal for Phase I has been that the implemented modules would provide a solid foundation for an integrated research administration environment at Penn. PennERA was conceived and organized as a multi-stage project with new and improved systems and processes being implemented at phased intervals. Phase I components include the Proposal Tracking module, the Human Subjects and Lab Animal Protocol Tracking modules, and SPIN Plus.

The Proposal Tracking module, used for collecting, tracking, and reporting on application and award information for proposals, was released to the Office of Research Services (ORS) on October 14, 2003.

On November 17, 2003, the Human Subjects and Lab Animal Protocol Tracking modules, used to manage protocols currently active or under review by the IRB, IACUC, and/or Safety Committee, were released to users in the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) and to other central offices that previously had electronic access to protocol information.

We'd like to encourage your patience as ORS or ORA staff acclimate to the new system. While we do not anticipate excessive delays with business operations, we do expect to experience some slowdown during this transitional period. We appreciate your patience as we strive to improve the way we do research administration at Penn.

While there were some initial problems related to production and distribution of AIS documents, these problems have largely been addressed and AIS distribution is proceeding. Efforts to eliminate the backlog are well underway.

The SPIN Plus funding opportunities application was implemented over the summer and full rollout to end users is expected later this month when the application will be migrated to an onsite server.

### Additional Improvements

In addition to implementing the Phase I PennERA modules, changes were made in the following areas:

- Protocol Module of BEN Reports—The Protocol Module of BEN Reports was upgraded to include additional status information and has some other cosmetic changes. No changes to the Financial Reports in BEN Reports have been made at this time.
- GRAM—Minor cosmetic changes were made to GRAM.
- AIS document—The former AIS template and field guide were redesigned to reflect the streamlined account setup process. The new AIS user guide is available from the PennERA web site.
- BEN Financials—Minor modifications were made to BEN Financials as part of the Proposal Tracking implementation. These changes were specific to facilitating a nightly process for account/fund requests. ORS will request and maintain sponsored project funds, attributes, mappings, and eventually special budgets via PennERA.
- Data Warehouse—A new data collection called "PennERA Proposals" was implemented in the Data Warehouse along with its corresponding Business Objects Universe. Documentation is available at <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/da/dw/research/proposals/index.html>. The documentation includes information on each table and data element, a data diagram, and a cross-reference document from the Sponsored Projects data collection to the new Proposal Tracking data collection.

### More Information about PennERA

Additional updates about PennERA will be provided throughout the project. For the most current information, please visit the PennERA project web site at <http://www.pennera.upenn.edu/project/>. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send an e-mail to [pennera@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:pennera@pobox.upenn.edu).

## Did you know?

In order to determine a 25% reduction in effort, the new percentage of effort is divided into the old percentage of effort. For example, a PI was originally devoting 30% effort to a project and reduces her effort to 20%,  $30 - 20 = 10$ ,  $10/30 = 33\%$  reduction in effort.



If NIH's salary cap increases, the new salary cap should be used as soon as it goes into effect. Do not wait to change the dollar threshold until the non-competing award is made. This results in unnecessary cost sharing

ORS recently introduced Sponsor Sheets. These two to four page summaries include funding agency application guidelines, funding policies, reporting requirements and closeout procedures, along with links to the sponsor's websites. More to be added soon....

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/sponsorsheets.html>

ORS has also recently introduced a tool to assist departments with calculating NIH Salary Caps.

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/docs/SalCapCalculator.xls>

New Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) are added to the ORS web site on a monthly basis.

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/faq.html>

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## UNFREEZE@pobox.upenn.edu Discontinued

Upon review of ORS current processes, we have determined that the most efficient way to process Unfreeze Requests is to have them directly forwarded via email to the ORS Responsible Accountant with a cc to the ORS Responsible Assistant Director (Kim Garrison or Jim Clavin). It appears that this is the process that many have followed for some time. Please note that any individual school procedures regarding the unfreezing of grants should be still be followed. Effective immediately, departments should not send any email to [unfreeze@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:unfreeze@pobox.upenn.edu) as it will no longer be an active email address. If you have any questions, please contact Kerry Peluso, Post Award Director at 3-6705 or [pelusok@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:pelusok@pobox.upenn.edu).

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## Where can I get more information about administering my grants?

Office of Research Services Web Site:

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/>

Research Investigator's Handbook:

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rih/intro.html>

A Quick Guide for Faculty:

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/pdfs/newfacbk.pdf>

University of Pennsylvania Cost Sharing Policy:

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rs/costshare.html>

Contact an Office of Research Services Staff Member:

<http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rs/contact.html>

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## **Frequently Asked Questions...**

### **Why do some awards retain the same fund for the duration of the project, while other change funds for each budget period?**

The determining factor in whether the fund number remains the same or is changed at a specific interval is the Sponsor's terms and conditions. Does the sponsor allow for automatic carryover from one period to the next or do we need to request permission? Are there financial reporting requirements that necessitate keeping each period as a discrete fund? Does the sponsor assign new contract numbers for each increment? For those awards that require that new funds be accounted for separately or that carry forward be approved by sponsor, a new fund will be created for each funding period; for all other awards, the award will retain the same fund number for each new budget period. Also, please note that subaccounts that have a different F&A rate from the prime account will also be assigned a unique fund number.

### **Why are some multi-year awards set up for the entire project period while others are set up on an incremental basis?**

The manner in which we set up multi-year awards is also predicated by the sponsor's terms and conditions. Sometimes, only a portion of the funding is awarded at the outset with the additional funding being contingent upon the submission of a progress report, a financial report or the availability of funds from the sponsor. Some awards provide all the funding at the beginning, but may require that the funding be expended during specific budget years. For these types of awards, the account is set up on an incremental basis with funding being added to the account and the period of performance extended as we receive notice from the sponsor.

Other awards are made for the entire award period with the full amount of the award being obligated at the start of the project. While there may be reporting requirements, future funding is not contingent on the receipt of the reports and no additional notice of funding will be received. These awards will be set up for the multi-year period and will show as fully funded. Research Services occasionally receives requests to establish these types of awards on an annual basis, but in order to track and report on these awards accurately and in a timely manner, these requests cannot be honored.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING PI ACCOUNTS IN THE NIH COMMONS

The NIH eRA Commons is a web-based system that allows NIH extramural grantee organizations, grantees and the public to receive and transmit information electronically about the administration of biomedical and behavioral research. Numerous individuals within the University have been assigned the role of Administrative Official (AO) and are charged with creating accounts for principal investigators(PI) within their departments.

The suggested steps for AO users in creating PI accounts in the NIH Commons are:

1. Log-in to Commons and go to Administration --> Accounts.
2. Click on Maintain Account
3. Query for the specific PI last name and set account status to "All"- OR - just set account status to "Not Affiliated."
4. Click on CREATE ACCOUNT in the action column for the PI that you want to create a User ID for - OR - click on CREATE AFFILIATION for PI who has a user ID in the system already, but is not affiliated with the institution yet. Some PIs may have had a user ID created for use with the Internet Assisted Review module, hence the reason they are in the system with a user ID already, but with no institution affiliation.

If the user's name is not on the list of unaffiliated PIs, the SO/AO/AA will have to create the new account the same way s/he would create any other account: by going to "Create New Account."

For more information regarding the NIH Commons, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section of the June, 2003 ORS newsletter.

### Important NIH Reminder

Applicants planning to submit NIH proposals are reminded of the revised policy on the acceptance for review of unsolicited applications that request \$500,000 or more in direct costs in any year.

This policy, most recently updated in October 2001, can be found at the following URL: (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-02-004.html>) and has the following requirements:

- Effective with the January 1, 2002 receipt date, applicants must contact the appropriate Institute/Center **at least six weeks** in advance of submission of the application and obtain agreement from an Institute/Center to accept assignment of the application.
- If an Institute or Center is willing to accept the application, the Center for Scientific Review is notified prior to the receipt date.
- The Principal Investigator must include in the application, a cover letter that identifies the name of the program staff member or the Institute or Center that has agreed to accept the assignment of the application.

This policy does not apply to applications submitted in response to RFAs or in response to other Announcements that include specific budgetary limits. However, such applications must be responsive to any budgetary limits specified, or they will be returned to applicants without review.

For additional information about this policy, please contact your ORS Contract Administrator or the program staff at any NIH Institute or Center. Applicants who are uncertain about which Institute or Center may have the greatest interest in the research for which support is sought should contact:

Division of Receipt and Referral  
Center for Scientific Review  
National Institutes of Health  
Telephone: (301) 435-0715  
FAX: (301) 480-1987

## Training Opportunities:

### 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/>).

### Available from ORS:

#### Sponsored Programs at Penn December 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

ORS is once again offering their workshops on "Sponsored Programs at Penn". For the past few years, these workshops have been offered on a monthly basis throughout the course of the year. In order to provide this training in a more comprehensive and timely fashion, these courses have been consolidated into a two-day program. 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.

This program has been designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the basic knowledge required to effectively monitor and manage grant funds at Penn. The program is being offered on December 8th and 10th 2003. Please see the Financial Training Department Website for registration information For more information or to register, please go to:

<http://www.finance.upenn.edu/ftd/courses.html>

### Outside Upcoming Training

National Council for University Research Administrators (NCURA), Financial Research Administration Conference, San Diego, February 29 – March 2. For further information or to register, please go to <http://www.ncura.edu>.

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### November's Contributing Authors, ORS Newsletter:

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## 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 issues such as no-cost extensions, carryover requests and other administrative matters should be directed to the appropriate pre-award contact.

Questions concerning **industrial clinical trial agreements and sponsored research agreements** should be addressed to the Corporate Contracts Group. Greg Curley is responsible for Account Information Sheets (AIS's) for all industrial clinical trials and sponsored research agreements.

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- Institute for Environmental Medicine – SOM
- Institute for Human Gene Therapy – SOM
- Institute for Neurological Sciences – SOM
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- Institute on Age – SOM
- Pennsylvania Muscle Institute – SOM
- Pharmacology – SOM

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- Clinical Research Center – SOM
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- School of Social Work
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- Genetics – SOM
- Hematology/Oncology
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- School of Medicine, Institute for Medicine & Engineering – SOM
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- Annenberg Center for Performing Arts
- Annenberg School for Communication
- Cell & Developmental Biology – SOM
- Center for Bioethics – SOM
- Dermatology
- Geriatrics – SOM
- Microbiology – SOM
- Ophthalmology – SOM
- Otorhinolaryngology – SOM
- School of Nursing
- School of Veterinary Medicine

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- Account Information Sheets for Contracts

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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 Senior Vice President for Finance & Treasurer and Vice Provost for Research.

## Office of Research Services Quick Contact List:

**ORS General Phone Numbers:** 215-898-7293 (General Information, Proposals, Awards)  
215-898-7269 (Financial Reports & Invoices, Accounting)

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