PennERA Proposal/Award Tracking View Access Rollout

The PennERA (Electronic Research Administration) team is planning to provide view-only access to the Proposal Tracking module later this fall to School and Department level research administrators and other appropriate research personnel. This access to the PennERA system is part of an effort to improve service to the University’s broader research community.

What will be available to view-only users?

View-only users will be able to immediately access information on proposals and awards via the web, including:

- Proposal and award details based on ORG security
- A snapshot of a project’s administrative information, including the ability to compare proposed and awarded dates, amounts, and status history
- Basic high-level regulatory approval information associated with a proposal and/or award

Training

Prior to obtaining access to the system, users will be required to attend a demo-style training session, where features of the application and navigation will be presented. Affected users will be contacted directly with dates, times, and locations of training.

Announcing New Section of ORS Website dedicated to Grants.gov and Electronic Submissions. Please visit Click Here for more information on news, training and additional resources.

For further information, please also see ORS September and October Newsletters.
Access

Users will need to complete an access form, which requires appropriate authorization. Once access is set up, users will only need to authenticate with their PennKey and PennKey password before accessing the system with a standard web browser.

End-user support

A support system is in place for PennERA users, including a help line, e-mail, web form, and online reference materials. Information is on the PennERA web site at http://project.pennera.upenn.edu/help.asp.

View-only rollout details coming soon

The PennERA team is currently finalizing the rollout date for view access to the system. Affected users will be contacted with details as they become available.

Proposal Development underway

The PennERA team is currently planning for the next phase of development, which involves implementing the Proposal Development module for use by investigators.

As part of its planning, the PennERA team recently convened focus groups of faculty and staff involved in proposal development to discuss processes for preparing, tracking, and submitting grant proposals. The team is currently evaluating feedback from the focus groups to ensure that we are comprehensively representing the needs of the research community as we move forward with Proposal Development. Stay tuned for more information as we move through the planning process.

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.

--Robin H. Beck
Vice President of Information Systems and Computing
--Andrew B. Rudczynski, Ph. D.
Executive Director of Research Services and Associate Vice President of Finance
--Joseph R. Sherwin, Ph.D.
Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs

Penn Research Administrators Attend National Council for University Research Administrators Annual Conference

Brian Squilla, Manager of Administration and Finance, Pathology Department, School of Medicine, Kerry Peluso, Director of Post Award Financial Administration, ORS and Sam Dianni, Research Audit Specialist, Office of Audit, Compliance and Privacy at October’s NCURA Conference.
Frequently Asked Questions

When setting up a new award, how are the Project Periods and Budgets Periods determined? (reprinted from June 2004 Issue)

Project Period will reflect the expected term of the award or competing segment according to the Notice of Award (NOA).

Budget Periods are determined by the NOA and any corresponding term and conditions published by the Sponsor. If the award is divided into periods with corresponding budgets, then each Period will be set up with the corresponding budget. If the NOA awards all funds for the Project Period, then both the project period and budget period end dates will be the same, i.e. one budget period and one project period. If a project period is divided into more than one budget period based on either specified funding periods (as specified in the NOA) or if a required report must be submitted before any further funding is received, then the project period will reflect the full term of the award but the budget periods will correspond to the funding or reporting periods. The Budget Periods that are currently obligated will have a status of “awarded”, while additional funding, often shown as recommended support on Federal awards, will have a status of “Future”.

Examples:

1) A notice of grant award is received stating that the award is for 3 years and that the budget is $100,000 per year. A progress report and/or financial report are required at the end of each year. This award would be set up for three separate budget years, with the first year being “awarded “ and the two subsequent years being awarded as “future”.

2) A notice of grant award is received stating that the award is made for an eighteen month period, the total of the award is $300,000 and a check for the full amount is enclosed. The award would be set up for one period of eighteen months and three hundred thousand dollars.

3) A notice of grant award is received for three year period with limitations on the amount that can be expensed for any given period within the award. ORS would set up budget periods corresponding to the restrictions in the award.

Where the Project Period is awarded as one period of more than one year, is incrementally
funded, and specific budget periods can be discerned from either the award or the proposal, the award will be set up with multiple budget periods and show “Future” funding.

Where the Project Period is awarded as one period, is incrementally funded and specific budget periods are not discernable from the award or proposal (such as budgets tied to tasks or subject enrollment), the first increment will be established using a reasonable period of time (i.e. one year). A second budget period will be established and will run to the end of the Project Period and will show all the future funding. As increments are awarded, the first increment will be revised to include an extended period of time and the additional awarded dollars. The time period and the dollar amounts of the second period will be reduced accordingly.

Example:

1) A NOA is received for a period of three years and obligates $100,000 of an estimated $300,000 award. The proposal was submitted with a three year budget of $100,000 per year. The award will be set up with a project period of three years consisting of three budget periods of $100,000 each.

2) A notice of grant award is received with a two year period of performance and obligates $20,000 of a $150,000 award. The increase in obligated funds is not tied to a budget period or the submission of a report, but is tied to the completion of a task. The initial award would be set up with a project period of two years and an awarded budget period of one year and $20,000. A second year will be set up as future funding in the amount of $130,000. If the task is completed six months into the first year of this award and an additional increment of $40,000 is received, the first budget period will be increased to $60,000 and the second budget period will be reduced to $90,000. This will continue at the time of each award until all the increments have been awarded.

Please Note:

“Future” funding is not considered awarded until ORS receives official documentation from the sponsor and should not be budgeted by the department. A notation will be added to the AIS stating that “future” funding is contingent upon receipt of documentation from the sponsor. Departments will be responsible for any expenses incurred beyond the awarded amount. If an AIS is printed prior to the start date of an award, the award will be listed as future funding on the second page of the AIS, but it will show as an award on the front page of the AIS. This is not the same as having a status of “future”.

“Future” periods are set up if the current award document notes that future funding can be expected. For those awards that do not reflect the future funding, the future years requests from the original proposal have a status of “pending” and are not listed on the AIS.

Future funding was not captured in the RSS system, so awards that were set up prior to October do not have “future” funding entered into PennERA.

It is recognized that deviations from the above guidelines might be necessary or advantageous to appropriately account for and report spending on a sponsored project in accordance with the requirements of the Sponsor. In these instances, Research Services will discuss the account set up with the responsible Business Administrator or, if the Business Administrator is requesting an exception to these guidelines, the request will be reviewed by the Executive Director or his/her designee.
Job Openings in Research Services

ACCOUNTANT B
Grade 25
Duties: Performs general ledger review and reconciliations; prepares financial statements and billings; provides University Business Administrators with grant accounting advice; prepare journal entries and trial balances. Initiates and coordinates the account close-out process in coordination with the responsible department administrator. Tests for accuracy, completeness and compliance with federal guidelines and/or other contractual agreements. Performs other related duties as required.

Qualifications: Bachelor’s Degree in accounting or business required and 0 to 2 years of experience. Ability to prioritize tasks, demonstrated strong communication and organizational skills; demonstrated proficiency with PC software (MS Word & Excel); knowledge of Ben Financials a plus.

POST AWARD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Grade 28
Duties: Performs, oversees and receives general ledger review and reconciliations; reviews financial statements and billings. Ensures timely billing and reporting. Provides post award staff and University staff with sponsored projects advice and (varying levels of) training. Oversees and manages special projects. Provides general supervision of 4-5 accountants. Tests for accuracy, completeness and compliance with federal guidelines and/or other contractual agreements. Responsible for financial administration of 30 - 50% of Penn’s sponsored projects. Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications: Bachelor’s Degree in accounting or business required and 5 to 7 years of experience or equivalent combination of education and experience. Working with grants or research administration. Minimum of three years supervisory experience required. Experience working at the University of Pennsylvania strongly preferred. Ability to prioritize tasks, demonstrated strong communication and organizational skills; demonstrated proficiency with PC software (MS Word & Excel); knowledge of Ben Financials a plus.

PENNERA ASSOCIATE PROJECT LEADER
Grade 28
Duties: As a member of the PennERA (Electronic Research Administration) Core Team, to evaluate research business practices campus-wide as well as within Research Services and to recommend alternatives for improved practices and procedures. Provide functional leadership for specific initiatives or subprojects with PennERA and to serve as an interface between the project team and University organizations. Provide oversight of implementations and transitions of both electronic and business practice initiatives. Facilitate the design and delivery of research administration training.

Qualifications: A Bachelor’s Degree is required and 3 years to 5 years of experience or equivalent combination of education and experience. The position requires a strong and broad-based background in research administration in a university environment. Good personal communication and organizational skills are essential to success in position. Some knowledge and comfort working with software systems is desirable. Facilitate the design and delivery of research administration training. Special Requirements Background Check Required

For additional information or to submit an application, please visit Jobs@penn (https://jobs.hr.upenn.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/frameset/Frameset.jsp?time=1129302184971).
Did You Know.......??

The NIH has created a Communication Resource/Outreach web page specifically for the electronic submission of grant applications. This page contains slide presentations, brochures, and articles and is located at: http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/communication.htm

If an NSF proposal contains voluntary cost sharing in Line M of the budget it is masked from the reviewers so as not to influence the review of the proposal. If the proposal is awarded the cost sharing indicated on Line M would be considered voluntary committed and subject to audit. Voluntary cost sharing is discouraged by the University. See Sponsored Projects Policy No. 2119.

The dollars associated with vacation pay out for a terminating employee is not included in an effort report. Earnings type “VCT” used to identify vacation pay out is excluded from the effort reporting system.

ORS Newsletters are a great tool for learning about research administration policies and issues. However, when reviewing older newsletters, one needs to keep in mind that policies or requirements may have changed since the newsletter was originally issued. Please see the ORS Sponsored Projects Handbook for current requirements.

Training Opportunities:

Sponsored Programs at Penn:
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 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/).

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.
ORS Monthly Quick Quiz

1) If a PI is leaving the University and transferring an award to his/her new institution, when should ORS be informed to ensure that award can be closed out and funds transferred in a timely manner:

a) When the PI’s new institution requests the transfer of the funds.
b) As soon as possible. (At least 60 - 90 days prior to the transfer is needed to ensure timely closeout and transfer of funds.)
c) Any time prior to the PI’s transfer.

Answer B is correct. In order to ensure timely transfer of the funds, ORS should be informed early in the process. At least 60 - 90 days prior to the transfer is often needed to ensure timely closeout and transfer of funds. This is particularly important for NSF awards which often take longer to transfer due to NSF’s reporting process.

2) Federal awards issued under expanded authorities allow certain project changes without prior agency approval. Which of the following changes are generally allowed without sponsor approval on these awards?

a) Four month absence of the Principal Investigator.
b) Carryover of unobligated balance from prior period of award.
c) Need for small amount of additional funds.

For answer, visit http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/manual/sponsoredprojectshandbook.html#_Toc84300212

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.
Getting to Know......

Jennifer Mulhern
Senior Accountant, Data Management

Years at Penn: 4
Years in Research Services: 3
ORS Responsibilities: Letter of Credit Drawdowns and reporting. Data Management for ORS.
Hobbies/Interests: Music, reading and spending time with friends and family.
Favorite Restaurant: I love going out to eat! Seafood, Italian, Chinese are my favorites at the moment...
Favorite ways to spend a vacation: On an island in the sun... snorkeling, relaxing, and seeing new places.

What Co-workers say:
...Jennifer is a fantastic team player, always makes deadlines and is great to work with!
...Jen is a very hard working and pleasant person.
...Her personality has made working in ORS a more pleasurable experience.

November’s Contributing Authors, ORS Newsletter:

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Kerry Peluso, Director of Post Award Financial Administration, Office of Research Services
Alice Tangradi-Hannon, Institutional Compliance Officer, Office of Audit and Compliance
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
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.

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• Infectious Disease – SOM
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• Renal – SOM
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• Surgery – SOM
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• Genetics – SOM
• Hematology/Oncology
• Neurosurgery - SOM
• Orthopedic Surgery – SOM
• Pediatrics – SOM
• Physiology – SOM
• School of Medicine, Institute for Medicine & Engineering – SOM
• Radiation Oncology
• Radiology

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• Annenberg School for Communication
• Cell & Developmental Biology – SOM
• Center for Bioethics – SOM
• Dermatology
• Geriatrics – SOM
• Microbiology – SOM
• Ophthalmology – SOM
• Otolaryngology – 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. Contact Information for all areas is provided below.

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  - Medical School  
  - Ophthalmology  
  - Orthopedic Surgery  
  - Pharmacology  
  - Pediatrics Admin  
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- Wharton School  
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- School of Medicine Departments:  
  - Center for Bioinformatics, Institute for Medicine & Engineering

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- School of Medicine Departments:  
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- Law School  
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  - Institute for Research in the Cognitive Sciences Systems Engineering

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**Notes:**

- The contact information provided is for the Post-Award Administration Staff at the University of Pennsylvania. Each individual is associated with a specific department or role, and their contact details are listed accordingly. The contact information includes phone numbers and email addresses for various positions and departments across the university, such as financial services, compliance, and administration.

- The contact list covers a wide range of departments and schools within the university, including Medicine, Arts and Sciences, Nursing, and Social Work, among others.

- The contact information is organized by group and role, allowing for easy reference and communication with the appropriate individuals for specific needs or inquiries.

- The document emphasizes the importance of clear and structured contact information for efficient communication and service within the university's Post-Award Administration Staff.
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

Quick Contact List:

ORS General Phone Numbers:

215-898-7293 (General Information, Proposals, Awards)
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http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/ (see bottom right corner)