NURAP
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION PROFESSIONALS

The RAP UP

NURAP's Quarterly Newsletter

The Northwestern University Research Administration Professionals (NURAP) group is not just for staff with the title "Research Administrator." ALL NU staff from across the university who work in managing <u>any</u> aspect of sponsored research are welcome to join.

Membership in this organization provides research professionals the benefits of networking to become acquainted with different models of research administration.

Table of Contents

Northwestern | RESEARCH

Research Administration Training Tools

1. Are you thinking about changing your career to become a Research administrator?
2. Are you seeking additional training opportunities at no cost to your department?
3. Do you need refresher training courses to strengthen your skills?

Northwestern University offers a variety of training courses, tools and modules to help facilitate your RA career.

❑ Sponsored Project Online Training (SPOT) is the web-based training component resulting from a partnership between the Office for Sponsored Research and Research Administration Staff. **https://osr.northwestern.edu/training/spot (visit for more information)** Current Course offerings:
   - ✓ **Introduction to Sponsored Research**
   - ✓ **A Beginner's Guide to Sponsored Project Solicitations**
   - ✓ **Anatomy of an Administrative Shell**
   - ✓ **Budget Management Basics: Projections and Reconciliations**
   - ✓ **Proposal Budgets 101**
     - • Learning objectives 1) Define key terminology related to budgeting; 2) Explain how to calculate salary cost and fringe; 3) Explain how to chose the correct indirect rate and how to calculate indirect costs correctly; 4) Outline introductory strategies / process for budgeting

❑ Research Administration Training Seminars sponsored by Office for Research Integrity. Offered quarterly, and alternating campuses, each training includes four sessions. For research administrators or staff involved in research administration. **http://www.researchintegrity.northwestern.edu/research-administration-training-seminar/**
   - ✓ **Upcoming training dates: April 11, 13, 18, 20 – 2017, Evanston campus**

Award Setup Tips & Tricks

Waiting on an award for chart string establishment to begin project activity can be frustrating at times, and you might wonder "What can I do to help speed up the process?" Well, there are definitely some measures the proactive research administrator can take in order to get the ball rolling.

Awards arrive at Northwestern in a variety of ways, whether via an award notice being sent to the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR) solely, or being sent to a PI or department contact directly. There are even instances of checks randomly showing up at the Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP) offices, without any clear indication of their associated projects (despite everyone's best efforts!). If you ever receive an award directly from a sponsor, and it's clear that your OSR Grants Officer (GO) is not on the communication, promptly looping in your GO will immediately put the award on their radar so that they can begin working on it.

Also, if you've been sent the award document, feel free to review promptly (recognizing that a negotiation may still be needed by OSR) in case there is anything the GO might need from you or the PI.

Areas such as animal/human subjects often require IACUC/IRB approvals prior to finalizing the award; these approvals can take time to obtain if your PI has not already begun the process, so coordinating with faculty/department staff as early as possible will surely quicken the setup.

Additionally, if you see that there's been a substantial decrease in the budget from what was originally proposed (anything over 20%), you can start the revised budget ESPR that would be necessary to address potential changes in the scope of work and new budget. Or, if it's a more minor reduction in the budget from what was proposed (less than 20%), letting the GO know how you'd like the budget allocated/if it's to be prorated will steer them in the setup. Remember, delays on these pieces can have ripple effects, creating further delays all around.

Another thing to remember is that good pre-award influences good post-award. Ensuring all items are in place at the proposal stage will greatly assist when the award comes in; this may include (but is not limited to!) items like consultant letters, accurate equipment quotes, and account code clarity in budget items, which will assist OSR with the project setup. Avoiding after-the-fact proposals whenever possible will also lead to swifter setup.
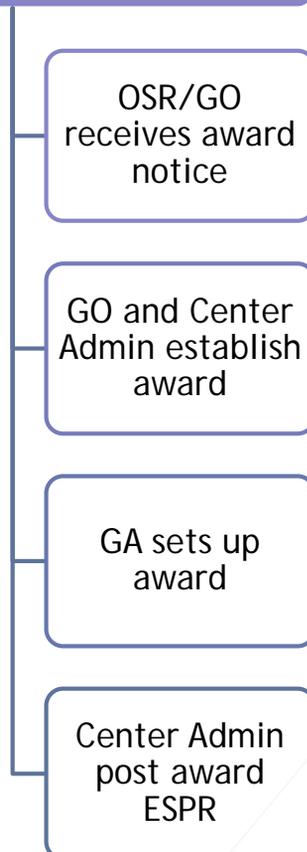
And last, thoroughly reviewing your award once it's finalized and distributed sets you up for successful management of that project over its lifetime. Paying attention to items such as reporting requirements, carryforward allowability and any unusual terms and conditions will help you streamline the award for future out years.

As always, if you see something out of the ordinary, say something! OSR is just as anxious as you are to properly get the award to the PIs and their team so that they can get back to the groundbreaking research we are all here to support.

Furthermore, stay tuned as OSR will shortly be unveiling some changes in the award setup process, aiming at increasing efficiency and transparency!

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Post Award Workflow

OSR/GO receives award notice

GO and Center Admin establish award

GA sets up award

Center Admin post award ESPR

Post Award Workflow

Fulfilling Sponsor Expectations

Award documents (e.g. Notice of Grant Award) will outline sponsor expectations and will generally reference terms and conditions, timelines for financial and technical reports and deliverables, compliance and other valuable information related to the project. They may also reference when sponsor approval must be sought for modifications/changes to budgetary/administrative or technical work. Knowledge of federal guidelines, sponsor referenced documents, and university policies are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator. The notification or award letter should be reviewed at the time of receipt by the Principal Investigator and his/her assigned research administrator. For questions related to the terms and conditions of the award, contact the assigned OSR Grant Officer.

Project Account Summary (PAS)

The PI and department will be sent a copy of the Project Account Summary (PAS) once a chart string has been established. The PI and department are responsible for verifying that the information provided in the PAS is consistent with the award documentation.

OSR should be notified if corrections need to be made. It is important to understand and review the NU structure to make sure only appropriate expenses are charged to the project. Questions about properly classifying expenditures should be directed to Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP).

Modifying Awards

The Electronic Sponsored Projects Requests (ESPR) system can be used to request changes to an award including rebudgeting, opening a new budgetary account, personnel changes, requests for no cost extensions, and endorsement of correspondence to a sponsor. ESPR is also used for requesting new, continuing, and modifications to subcontracts. Faculty and research administrators should review the terms and conditions of an award and sponsor policies regarding project modifications such as changes in work scope, changes in personnel or effort, or the extended absence of the PI. Modifications to an award can be discussed with the OSR Grant Officer to determine appropriate action prior to completion of the ESPR request(s). If ESPR does not allow for the requested modification.

Full Award management can be found at: https://osr.northwestern.edu/awards/award-management

Research Data Management

With increasing funder and journal mandates to share research data, data management is an increasingly important part of the research process.

Good data management can save you time throughout your research from gathering data through publication. Good data management will ensure that your data is usable and preserved for your future use or use by others.

Libraries can help you manage, share and preserve your research data. You can request a Data Management Plan (DMP) consultation. You can also use the DMPTool (https://dmptool.org/) to help create DMPs that meet funder requirements. The Library can also help you with best practices for data management, how to describe your data, and where to find an appropriate repository for your data, including Northwestern's institutional repository, Arch. Hosted by the Library, Arch will launch in early 2017.
 http://arch.library.northwestern.edu

We can offer workshops or training for your labs or work groups or come speak more informally about data management.

Libraries' guide to assist researchers in planning for data management and creating DMPs. Visit the guide at http://libguides.northwestern.edu/datamanagement

Types of data include:
➢ observational data
➢ laboratory experimental data
➢ computer simulation
➢ textual analysis
➢ physical artifacts or relics

Examples of data:
➢ Spreadsheets
➢ Scanned books and images
➢ Instrument data

For assistance or more information contact Cunera Buys.

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Announcements

Research Portal Updates

Northwestern Information Technology has recently added a new subcontract management feature on The Research Portal, a web-based tool that presents financial data for sponsored and non-sponsored research accounts.

The new feature will now allow researchers to view a list of all subcontracts for each award, including value, balances, and status in the negotiation process, and display of burn rate for each subcontract. The March release will be rounded out by additional enhancements gleaned from focus groups conducted over winter quarter.

The Research Portal is a collaborative effort between Northwestern Information Technology, the Office for Research, the Office for Sponsored Research, Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP), Financial Operations, the McCormick School of Engineering, Feinberg School of Medicine, and Weinberg College of Arts & Science. https://researchportal.northwestern.edu

OSR Grant Officers

Effective March 2017 OSR reassigned Grant Officers. Please visit the OSR website to determine if your department has been reassigned. https://osr.northwestern.edu/contact

NURAP at Noon

NURAP hosts monthly afternoon brown bag sessions to introduce and discuss important topics related to Research Administration. Please join the NURAP listserv to receive the NURAP at Noon meeting announcements.

Visit the NURAP websites!

http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1947804

https://twitter.com/nurapinfo?lang=en

https://www.facebook.com/NURAP-Northwestern-University-Research-Administration-Professionals-140980602731744/