Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP)

Research Accounting
To provide exceptional financial administration to sponsored research grants and contracts.

We are committed to the highest standards of financial stewardship and compliance with both University and sponsor regulations.
Other Related Northwestern Offices

President

Provost

Vice President for Research

Office for Research

Executive Vice President

Vice President of Financial Operations & Treasurer

Executive Director for Research Financial Operations

Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Projects (ASRSP)

Cost Studies
Key Functions of ASRSP

1. Financial Reporting
2. Collecting Revenue
3. Coordinating Audits
4. Transaction Review & Approval
5. Award Closeout
Why is ASRSP Important?

In Fiscal Year 2016 (between 9/1/15 and 8/31/16):

- $713 million in sponsored research expenditures
- $414 million in receivables created
- 3,500 financial reports submitted
- 5,200 invoices sent
Website Resources

ACCOUNTING SERVICES FOR RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS (ASRSP)

OUR SERVICES

The Office of Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP) helps university researchers with financial reporting, invoicing, collecting revenue, coordinating audits, and processing transactions related to their sponsored projects.

ASRSP reports to the Office of Financial Operations. Principal Investigators are encouraged to contact us with questions.

CONTACT

Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs (ASRSP)
Office of Financial Operations
533 Clark Street
Evanston, IL 60208-1112
Phone: 847-491-3385

UNIFORM GUIDANCE

Do you have questions related to the new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) which are replacing the eight different OMB Circulars? See our Uniform Guidance page for information on what the Uniform Guidance means for your awards.

QUICK LINKS

Effort Reporting

www.northwestern.edu/asrsp/
Spending and Payment Considerations
Audit Topics

- Consultant Payments and Sub-recipient Monitoring
- Travel Reimbursements and Visa Fees
- Equipment Purchases
- Procurement Card Purchases
- Computer Purchases
- Cost Transfers
- Overdrafts
Timeliness of Expenditures

General accounting rule: post expenses within 90 days of its occurrence

- Timeliness is an increasingly important part of managing sponsored awards
- Federal agencies giving us less time to closeout
- Important to create a spending plan, review it quarterly and reconcile to avoid a loss of funding
Dept./College Approvers

• When submitting transactions the department approver should
  – Audit Transaction …
    • is it following sponsored project regulations (Allowable, Allocable….)
    • Was the correct account code use
    • If a Service (Account code that start with 75***) always included a quote or attachment
    • Verify PI signature (required for some transactions)
  – Explanation provided is specific and mentions the benefit to the grant
    • Important for Expense reports, Consulting, Corrections journals, Equipment/computer purchases.
    • If there is a comment box please place benefit to grant there
  – ALWAYS attach backup if you have special circumstances
    • Special circumstances raise red flags at ASRSP you can expedite the approval of your transaction if you attach the budget page or email showing the sponsor allowed you to do something normally not allowed on typical grants
What is a Consultant?

An individual hired to give professional advice or services for a fee

- Person cannot be classified as employee or subcontractor
- A work plan must be in place before any work is completed
- Work must directly benefit the grant
- US residents and non-residents paid differently
Consultants: Work Plan

• Define the work scope, deliverables and payment terms before work begins*

• Payment terms
  – Flat fee for deliverable
  – Hourly rate and expected hours needed for completion of work
  – If the project is long, a monthly deliverable schedule should be worked out so that payment doesn’t exceed 90 days from the start of work for that period
  – Pay always based on receipt of **timely**, itemized invoice

* Note: May be asked for this work plan during an audit
Consultants: Speaker Fees

- Normally not allowable on sponsored projects
- Possible exceptions:
  - Presentation must relate to sponsored project and only individuals involved in project should attend

- Specifically included in the approved budget

- Conference Grants
- Training Grants
Consultants: Payment

- Determine if the payment will be made through HR or through Accounts Payable.
- Assuming the consultant is US Resident (A/P):
  - If consultant does not have a Northwestern University vendor code…department must complete an Independent Contract Questionnaire (ICQ) and submit it to HR for review and approval before a vendor code can be issued.
  - Department completes a Contracted Services Form (CSF requires vendor code) and consultant signs: must be after completion of the represented service period.
  - Department creates an online voucher, enters online voucher number on Contracted Services Form, uploads CSF and an invoice from the consultant into voucher in NuFinancials, and submits to ASRSP for review and approval.
- Remember missing information will delay payment
Contracted Services Approvals

Once form is completed and back up has been provided submit the form to ASRSP.

ASRSP will do the following.

1. Review and Audit the form and documentation
2. Submit the form to OSR for their review and approval of fundamental compliance
3. Form is returned to ASRSP we approve the Online Voucher

Account Payable will review and approve the voucher and payment will be made
Interactive Activity

Please work a partner.

You have 5 minutes to come up with your list of errors. We will discuss the results as a group afterwards.
## Contracted Services Form for U.S. Residents

**Requester:** Melody DeRosse  
**Department:** ASRSP  
**Voucher #:** 0000055555  
**Payee ID:** 0000055555

**Dept Code:** ASR  
**Request Date:** 2/28/2012  
**Check Handling:**  
- [ ] Mail  
- [ ] Mail with Enclosure  
- [ ] Hold for Pick Up  
- [X] Evanston  
- [ ] Chicago

**Phone:** 847-467-1239  
**Email:** m-gordon2@northwestern.edu

### Contractor Information
- **Name:** Joe Contractor  
- **Address Line 1:** 555 Mulberry Lane  
- **Address Line 2:** Act. 1  
- **City, State, Zip:** Evanston, IL 60208

**Description of Contracted Services:** (for sponsored project, also describe the benefit to the award):

- 10 hours of education outreach activities conducted for NURULES center in Jan. 2012. This includes the preparation and distribution of NURULES quarterly newsletter as required by the award terms of the Dept. of Education award.

**Contractor’s Acknowledgement**

I understand that payment will not be issued until performance and completion of the contracted services, and that the date of payment cannot be prior to the work completion date. I understand that agreed upon expenses will not be reimbursed unless I complete a Visitor Expense Report and attach original receipts.

I certify I have not been paid as an employee of Northwestern within the last twelve months. I understand that this payment does not include any employment benefits or tax deductions and that the payment of these is my responsibility.

**Contractor Signature:** Joe Contractor  
**Date:** 2/23/2012

### University Payment Request

**Services start date:** 1/1/2012  
**Services completion date:** 10/1/2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Item</th>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Dept</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>4555555</td>
<td>60055111</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>75010</td>
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<td>$500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimbursable Expenses</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>75016</td>
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<td>Other (description):</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Total Payment:** $500.00

### University Approvals

I approve the payment for services and expenses noted above. The cost was incurred in conformance with the current HR policy on Independent Contractors and Consultants on the Northwestern web site. If charged to a Sponsored Project account, it is understood and agreed that these expenditures are subject to review and audit and if found to be unallowable, they will be transferred to a non-sponsored departmental account. The payment requested includes only the expenses associated with the contracted services, is not in payment of honorarium or for subsistence, and is not in avoidance of immigration restrictions, Affirmative Action requirements, payment of fringe benefits, statutory taxes, fees, insurance premiums or any other applicable statutory employment regulation.

**Approver:**  
**Name (print):** P.I. Smith  
**Signature:**  
**Date:** 3/5/2012

**Principal Investigator or Hiring Representative:**  
**Name (print):**  
**Signature:**  
**Date:**

**School or Center:**  
**Name (print):**  
**Signature:**  
**Date:**

**OSR or Controller:**  
**Name (print):**  
**Signature:**  
**Date:**

**Address Line 2:** 555 Mulberry Lane  
**City, State, Zip:** Evanston, IL 60208
# Invoice from Services

## Joe Contractor

555 Mulberry Lane, Apt. 1  
Evanston, IL 60208  
Phone: 847-555-1212  
Fax: 847-555-1200  
joecontractor@nmail.com

TO: NURULES Center  
Northwestern University  
2145 Sheridan Road, M-111  
Evanston, IL 60208  
847-467-5555

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE OF SERVICE</th>
<th>JOB</th>
<th>PAYMENT TERMS</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1/2012 - 1/31/2012</td>
<td>NURULES548</td>
<td>30 days</td>
<td>3/6/2012</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>LINE TOTAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 hours</td>
<td>Editing, formatting &amp; creating winter quarter newsletter for NURULES center</td>
<td>$50/hour</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>E-mail and USPS distribution of winter quarter newsletter for NURULES center</td>
<td>$50/hour</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUBTOTAL:** $500.00  
**SALES TAX:** $0.00  
**TOTAL:** $500.00
Subcontracts Overview

PI/institution gets awarded grant or contract from sponsor

A portion of the project cannot be completed at Northwestern

Subcontract is written to a PI at outside institution or company to complete portion of the project

The sponsor requirements and terms & conditions must be passed down with the subcontract

The subcontract generally has a budget for salary, fringe, supplies, etc.
Sub-recipient Monitoring

• PI collects and monitors the technical performance of subcontractor

• Subcontractor should submit invoice to ASRSP regularly
  – Final invoice must be received on time

• PI must review invoices to insure that charges reflect the work being done

• ASRSP reviews A-133 reports for sub-recipient institution
Subcontract Payment Process

Department creates Requisition in People Soft + Receiver Required (Y)

ASRSP receives and forwards invoices to the Department

Invoices are certified by PI that costs charged are acceptable and work has been performed

Invoice returned to ASRSP from Department for processing with Accounts Payable

Department approves receiver required field in People Soft

AP sends check to ASRSP

ASRSP reviews and then mails check to vendor along with a copy of the invoice
Travel Allowability

- Travel must directly benefit the grant

- Professional development and networking expenses are not allowed on grants

- Costs must be within Northwestern University guidelines

- Travel must be allowed by the sponsor, within sponsor guidelines and award terms.

- Best practice is to read the award!
General Travel Regulations

• Travel must be completed within award budget period
• Working lunches and local meals are not allowable
• Reimbursement can only be made upon completion of travel
• $65 limit per person on meals, including tax and tip
• Alcohol is not allowable
• Original Itemized receipts required unless per diem option is selected prior to travel
• Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable and actual costs of lodging
• Penalties, fees, and upgrades are generally not allowable
Visa Fees

• Fees for visas are allowable when foreign travel is authorized as part of the budget, and a visa is necessary for travel

• NIH allows visa fees for employees only for recruitment purposes. Renewal applications are not allowable

• NSF does not allow visa fees for employees

• For other federal agencies, the determination of allowability is still pending
Fly America Act & Exceptions

Federal law prohibits use of a foreign air carrier when travel is paid for by federal funds, with limited exceptions

- US carrier does not service the route

- Excessive delays or layovers to use US carrier

- Medical necessity with sponsor pre-approval

- Use of foreign carrier puts travel at risk

- The grant is not funded by the Dept. of Defense and an Open Skies agreement exists
Open Skies Agreements

- US air carriers are the easiest option for foreign travel

- The Dept. of Defense does not allow an Open Skies exception to the Fly America Act

- Air carriers from European Union members states is allowable non-DOD federal grants

- Travel on an Australian, Japanese or Swiss air carrier may be allowable

- University preferred travel vendors are there to help
Equipment

**Capital Equipment**: $5,000+ and useful life 1+ years

- Uniform Guidance describes equipment use, title, inventory and disposal requirements
- Purchase within final 3 months of grant is audit red flag
- ASRSP reviews and approves equipment expenditures
- Government titled property is managed by ASRSP
Procurement Cards

A tool to streamline low value purchasing transactions. The card does not avoid or bypass appropriate procurement or payment procedures. The card is not used for travel and entertainment purposes.

• Include a detailed description of the item being purchased
• Be sure to keep all backup documentation, such as the pcard log and receipts, for audit purposes
• ASRSP reviews all charges at the end of a grant, including pcard charges, for unallowable items
Computer Purchases

• Must be necessary for and provide benefit to the project

• Only allowable in unlike circumstances

• Must be directly allocable to the project

• Must be reasonable

• Currently in a transition year
  • Stay tuned for Uniform Guidance updates on this topic
Cost Transfers

Expenses moved from one chartstring to another to correct an error

Support for cost transfers includes:

• Description of the expense item
• Explanation of how the expense benefits the grant
• If it is travel, who traveled, to where, for what and the date of the travel
• Detail why or how the expense was charged incorrectly
• No need to say “moving from project A to project B”
• **Timeliness** very important!
Overdrafts

Expenditures exceeding the awarded amount

• Overdrafts are an uncollectable cost

• Department is responsible for funding these costs

• Transferring overdrafts to another sponsored project is **not** allowable

• Overdrafts typically cannot be transferred to continuation award

• ASRSP will charge department or center chartstring if overdraft is not resolved
Administrative Systems Training

Grants

Sponsored Research Overview  5m

- FMS502 InfoEd Proposal Development
- FMS503 InfoEd Approvals
- FMS505 Managing Sponsored Projects

Before Class
1. The Grant Chart String  3m Overview
2. Grants Training Plan  Reference

Course Session
Register: FMS505 Managing Sponsored Projects - Classroom

After Class
1. InfoEd Proposal Tracking  20m Demonstration

Library
General
1. Managing Sponsored Projects  Presentation
2. Award Management Quick Reference Guide  Reference
3. Sponsored Research Checklist  Reference
4. Reading the GM045 Report  Tutorial
5. Reading GM045  Job Aid
6. Reading the GL008  Tutorial
7. Reading GL008  Job Aid

http://ffra.northwestern.edu/training/curriculum.html
What is Award Closeout?

A collaborative effort to coordinate the completion of a project to meet all requirements and deliverables established as a condition of the award.
Closeout

• Begins 90 days before a grant end

• A time to settle all expenses that belong on the grant and to send final reports due

• Reconciliation throughout the sponsored project period assists with a smooth close out

• Department should strive to post all expenses on a grant by the end date to avoid loss of funding
Closeout e-mail
PI and RADM will receive a closeout email and talk about closeout plans

Prespending?
Dept requests prespend chartstring for competing continuations

Effort Check
30 days before effort reviewed. Respond to emails that require corrections- ASAP

Award End Date
Grant has ended. No new expenses should post.

Finalize Expenses
Dept follows up on unposted expenses, and communicates status to ASRSP

FFR DUE
ASRSP reviews expense for allowability and will submit before deadline and close chartstring

No Cost Extension?
Dept either requests a NCE or begins final spending plan

Review Expense & Encumbrances
Dept insures encumbrances are valid, reviews expenses to insure they are allowed, and initiates final PO's or corrections

Internal Services Stop
Dept should inform lab staff & internal service centers to stop using chartstring

Final Progress Reports
PI prepares and submits
Dept should keep a copy in file ready for auditors' request

Final Invention Statement
PI should Submit through OSR

Final Effort Reports
PI & Dept certifies final effort reports.

Carryover Request
PI submits carryover request to OSR if terms require approval

Closeout Timeline
-90 to -60 days before
-30 days before
30 days after
60 days after
~ 90 days before grant ends, ASRSP sends a closeout notice.

Department contacts recharge center and lab staff of changes.

ASRSP GCFA contacts department about report. Includes an approved payroll journal on FFR.

A Recharge center expense posts for period after the grant ends. Somehow they didn’t get the message.

ASRSP sends an FCTR based on NUFIN information. Payroll is not showing up in NUFin but recharge cost is.

In the past, ASRSP would report corrected expenditures on future reports sent. NOW a Grant is closed by Payment Management after 120 days. Award is reduced to lowest number reported.

90 days before

Department discovers missing payroll, and old unpaid encumbrances

Grant ends

Department gets award ready except payroll journal over 90 days old (paper) being processed and moving through approval channels.

ASRSP processes the weekly LOC P subaccount draw within NUFin.

Payroll journal posts in NUFIN after NIH closes grant. Department will have to cover payroll and other unallowable items on department chart string.

120 days after

~ 90 days before

90 days before Grant ends

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Transfer or Relinquishment

• Complete ESPR request 90 days prior to transfer or close. Please note ESPR is a OSR system.
  ➢ You must also EMAIL –ASRSP GCFA about any transfer or relinquishments.

• Arrangements made for project personnel

• Work with INVO regarding any intellectual property

• Work with Accounting Services for equipment transfers

• Inform ASRSP to prepare financial report and close chartstring

• Follow standard closeout procedures
Federal Government Changes to Closeout

• Uniform Guidance requires reports due 90 days from the end date
• Federal Agencies are now enforcing those rules
  – Ex: Most Federal agencies will have a strict 90 day closeout window
  – NIH and NSF are the exceptions they are granting 120 days but no extension can be asked
• If ASRSP is unable to draw funds and submit the final report departments will be responsible for uncollected funds
• All expenses must be posted in NU Financials within 60 days of the end date to ensure payment
• Final subcontract invoices need special care when closing out