Tri-University Research Administration Conference

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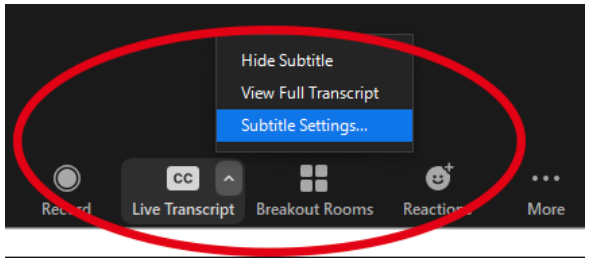

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Set Yourself Up for Success: The role of Unit Administrators in the Award Set-Up Process

Samantha Munguia
Grant + Contract Officer, Principal

- **Learning Objectives:**

- Understand the importance of establishing a unit-level new award set-up process

- Identify potential administrative roadblocks that could delay the start of a new award

- Develop a pre-award to post-award handoff process

- Develop a process to communicate new award restrictions/flexibilities to PIs.

The University Sponsored Projects Cycle

ASU

UArizona

Proposal Preparation

Build a Budget

Proposal Submission

Negotiation and Acceptance

Project Initiation and Setup

Managing Projects

Policy and Guidance

Project Closeout

NAU

The Award Set Up Process

- The award set up process is not exclusive to Central Office.
- Departments have a very important role in the Award Set Up process which ultimately ensures the success of project.
- Common tasks of departmental award set up process include:
  - Pre- to Post-Award Handoff
  - Kick Off Meeting with PI
  - Communicate salary appointments/changes for personnel involved in the project.
  - Establish plan to document and track cost share commitments
  - Initiate subcontract/consultant agreements
  - Design account structure

The Award Set Up Process

- When should the Award Set Up Process Start?

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Preparing to Receive an Award

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About Today's Session

The best way to prepare to receive a sponsored award is to identify any potential roadblocks that can delay investigators from starting work on the project.

- **Units should remember that:**
  - The clock of an award starts on the date listed on the award. A late start on the project due to administrative roadblocks ***does not*** reset that clock.
  - Administrative roadblocks can:

1. Delay the award activation
2. **Delay spending***

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DISCLAIMER

“The PI needs to start spending!”

Units Should Keep in Mind That:

- The goal of an award **IS NOT** to “*spend down*” the funds provided by the sponsor.
- For the sponsor (and administrators), **expenditure levels serve as a performance metric that helps gauge the progress on the project**.

Administrative Roadblocks to Award Activation

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Administrative Roadblocks

- **Why do administrative roadblocks happen?**

  Because people do not have everything they need to complete their tasks.

Administrative Roadblocks

- **What does the PI need?**
  - PI needs to start work on the project ASAP to fulfill project deliverables. For that, PI needs activated award and ability to access funds.

    - **What does everyone else need?**

Administrative Roadblocks

- **Central Office staff who receives the award or negotiates the agreement needs:**
  - Proposal in the university's system of record (ERA, Cayuse, UAccess Research)
  - The proposal in the university's system of record should have the following characteristics:

1. Must be fully routed (proposal and F&A waiver if applicable)
2. Must match the information provided to the sponsor

Administrative Roadblocks

- **Central Office staff who sets up the award needs:**
  - Data from the Funding Proposal to be accurate
  - Enough budget detail to load budget to account
  - If project includes special reviews, proper approvals should be in place
  - If project includes cost-share, cost-share tracking method

Administrative Roadblocks

- **The Least You Should Know:**
  - For most institutions, central office **cannot** activate an award that has **pending special reviews** for the following:

- Human Subjects
- Biological Materials
- FCOI/PHS FCOI
- Native American Involvement
- Stem Cell Research
- Export Controls
- Scientific Diving
- Lab Animals
- Hazardous Materials
- Radiation Safety

Administrative Roadblocks

- **Central Office Staff Managing Subagreements:**
  - All required subaward documents
  - Subawardees with active DUNS and SAMS
  - Subawardess registered as suppliers in Financial System
  - Active subaward account with enough funds to cover subaward
  - PI approval
- **The Least You Should Know**
  - Process to request DUNS, SAM or register in financial system can be extremely lengthy.

Administrative Roadblocks

REMINDERS FOR ASU RA'S:

- Upon receiving your notification that either the Contracts Group is reviewing the award or that AMT has received the NOA:
  - Verify **Compliance Review** matters that were checked in the FP and reach out to ORIA regarding their resolution ASAP, if necessary—most hold up activation
  - Verify the status of **COI** on Smartform 7.0/2.0– Review at Award, Management Review, Institutional Review—will hold up activation unless status = Review Complete or Review Not Required
  - For NIH/HHS award verify that the PI has completed the required **PHS-COI training** within the last four years—will hold up activation if not completed

Unit Level Check

Unit Level Check

- A unit-level check, is a targeted review of the Funding Proposal in the university's electronic grant system designed to identify and remove any administrative roadblocks that can prevent PIs from starting work on a sponsored project.

Unit Level Check

- Unit level check is an important process because it:
  1. Reduces administrative burden for both, the units and central office.
  2. Helps expedite the activation process.
  3. Minimizes activation inaccuracies.
  4. Reduces delays in spending.

Unit Level Check

- Units can conduct a unit level check at any time *prior* to the activation of the award.
- As best practice, units are encouraged to conduct a unit-level check:
  1. 60-90 days before the expected start of the project (depending on size and complexity); or,
  2. As soon as the institution receives a Post-Submission request from the sponsor.
- **The goal is to complete all needed administrative actions with enough time to allow work on the project to start on time.**

Unit Level Check – What Should Be Done?

1. Identify submitted proposals in a “non-terminal” status that are still being considered for funding.

- A Funding Proposal in considered to be in a “non-terminal” status if a funding decision has not been communicated by the sponsor.
- A Funding Proposal is considered to be in a “terminal” status if a funding decision has been made or the proposal has been canceled/withdrawn.

Unit Level Check – What Should Be Done?

2. If project includes special reviews, prompt PI to start required process to secure approval.
3. Verify that proposal information in your electronic grants system matches information submitted to the sponsor.

Unit Level Check – What Should Be Done?

4. **Identify and resolve any issues that delay award activations.**
   - Example: pending special reviews
5. **Identify and resolve any issues that delay spending.**
   - Example: issuing subawards, creating child account for Co-PI

Unit Level Check – What Should Be Done?

6. **Determine if an advance account (pre-award at-risk is necessary).**

Principal Investigator: _____ **Funding Proposal Number/Link:** _____

Anticipated Start Date: _____ **Assigned RA:** _____

ERA FP SITE – ADMINISTRATIVE DATA CHECK					
Field To Review	**Changes?**	**Notes**	**Field To Review**	**Changes?**	**Notes**
☐ Lead Financial Unit			☐ Internal PI		
☐ REC/RID/IIA Allocations			☐ Cost-Share Allocations		
ERA FP SITE – PROPOSAL DATA CHECK *(ALL SUBMISSIONS)*					
☐ Special Reviews			☐ Budget		
☐ Cost-Share			If Post-Submission budget changes have been made, has the most recent sponsor-approved budget been promoted to "Current" in ERA? ☐ Yes ☐ No		
ERA FP SITE – PROPOSAL DATA CHECK *(NON-S2S SUBMISSIONS)*					
☐ Is a copy of submitted proposal available in ERA? ☐ YES ☐ NO					
Field To Review	**Changes?**	**Notes**	**Field To Review**	**Changes?**	**Notes**
☐ Sponsor			☐ Project Title		
☐ Prime Sponsor			☐ Sub Institutions		
☐ Senior Personnel			☐ Project Dates		

OTHER UNIT LEVEL CHECKS			
Are department reviews complete?	☐ YES	☐ NO	If NO, send reminder to pending approvers
If F&A waiver required, is F&A waiver fully approved in ERA?	☐ YES	☐ NO	If NO, send reminder to pending approvers
Will a new ERA Unit be needed?	☐ YES	☐ NO	If Yes, submit New ERA Unit Request (Process takes 3-5 Business Days)

Unit Level Award Set-Up

Unit Level Award Set-Up

- Getting information to the right people. How do we do this?

1. Pre- to Post-Award Handoff
2. Project Kick Off Meeting
3. Award Overview Meeting with PI

Pre- to Post-Award Handoff

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS – The project budget includes:			
F&A Waiver**:	☐ Yes ☐ No	Cost-Share (*If **Yes** see allocations here:*)	☐ Yes ☐ No
Budget Categories with Additional Oversight***:	☐ Yes ☐ No	Applicable Budget Categories with Additional Oversight: ☐ Participant Costs ☐ Foreign Travel ☐ Subaward ☐ Capital Equipment ☐ CAS	

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS	
RAS Notes	[For complex or high profile proposals only: RA will include notes on any information that might be useful to post-award staff including PMO Involvement, summary of business decisions, additional pay, etc.]
Sponsor Limitations	[RA Checklist should include a list of sponsor budgetary limitations such as salary cap, restricted budget categories, F&A limitations, etc. This section should include that information from RA Checklist]

SPONSOR POLICIES ON AWARD CHANGES****	
Re-budgeting	
Carryforward	
No-Cost Extension	
Prior Approval	

PI Award Overview

Post-award management happens across multiple systems and portals which can make post-award confusing to some faculty. With a flurry of emails and system notifications, it is recommended that units also send a personalized email to their faculty to highlight key award information. Better yet set up a meeting with faculty to provide/go over the award.

For example:

- Provide a copy of the most recent detailed budget
- Provide a link to the notice of award or agreement
- Provide the grant account number
- Provide a summary of key terms and conditions (i.e. carryforward is not allowed, salary cap enforced)
- Provide a list of any upcoming deliverables due to the sponsor (i.e. technical reports, etc).

What Does the PI Need to Know?

CAN
CAN WITH PERMISSION
CAN’T
MUST
WHEN

What Does the PI Need to Know?

CAN (Examples) – What are we allowed to do?

Examples

- Carryforward of unspent balances from one year to the next
- First no-cost extension
- Re-budget between non-restricted categories
- Pre-Award spending within 90 days of award start date

What Does the PI Need to Know?

CAN WITH PERMISSION (What requires sponsor prior approval?)

Examples

- Change in Key Personnel
- Change in Key Personnel effort
- Change in Scope of Work
- Change in Subaward Institutions
- Change in Awardee Institution
- Re-budgets in excess of 25%
- Re-budget restricted categories (i.e. participant support)

What Does the PI Need to Know?

CAN’T (What I can I never do?)

Examples

- Tuition/Fringe
- F&A
- Salary in excess of Salary Cap
- Pre-award and/or post-period expenses
- Foreign travel
- Non-Capital Equipment

What Does the PI Need to Know?

MUST (What are our responsibilities to the sponsor?)

Examples

- Technical Reports (Annual and Final)
- Financial Reports (Annual and Final)
- Publication Requirements
- News Releases
- Cost-Share Obligations**

**Some sponsors do not mention cost-share commitments on the Notice of Award. However, grantees are still bound by any committed cost-share quantified in the proposal. Verify Funding Proposal if needed.

What Does the PI Need to Know?

WHEN (When are things due?)

Examples

- Period of Performance
- Technical Reporting
- Financial Reporting
- No-Cost Extensions
- Administrative Changes

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

Setting up Reminders

The best approach to proactive post-award management is planning. A simple way to plan ahead is to set up reminders to help you keep on top of your awards. These reminders can be added as events on shared calendar or as a task on a google sheet. Some examples of reminders that should be captured during the unit level award set-up are as follows:

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

Task	Scope	Timeline
Technical Reports	Oversight to make sure task is completed by PI.	Set reminder for 30 days prior to report due date and 15 days prior to report due date. If subawards are involved, set reminder to subaward contacts 45 days before report due date.
Funding Plans & Salary Projections	Set recurring appointment with PIs to create funding plans for every member of their research team.	Set reminder 90 days before the end of the academic term.
Capital Equipment Monitoring	Capital Equipment purchases should be made early in the award to ensure maximum usability in benefit of the project. A capital equipment monitoring task should be set up for all awards with capital equipment purchases.	Recommended timeline is as follows: end of 1st year. If capital equipment purchase hasn't been made, set reminder for every quarter until capital equipment has been delivered and installed.
Post-Award At-Risk	Submit at-risk request form via ERA.	Set reminder to 45 days before the end of the current award obligation.
No-Cost Extension	Submit OAF for NCE to notifications@asu.edu	Depending on sponsor, size and scope of the project: Set reminder first reminder to 6 months before the end of the project to review current burn rate and confirm with PI if the project will be completed within the time allotted. Set second reminder to 30 days before NCE's requests are due to the sponsor.
After-the-Fact Review Reports	Oversight to make sure task is completed by PI.	Set reminder to 45 days after the end of each academic term (spring, summer, fall)

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

- Communicate salary appointments for personnel involved in the project

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

- Request additional accounts as necessary, including cost-share and child accounts.
- We recommend creating child (sibling) accounts for restricted budget categories such as participant support and capital equipment.

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

- Initiate subcontract/consultant agreement if needed

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

- Manage effort commitment

Other Unit Level Award Set-Up Activities

- Document and track mandatory & voluntary committed cost sharing commitment

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Questions?

- Sam Munguia – Samantha.Munguia@asu.edu

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THANK YOU!