GRANT MANAGER'S HANDBOOK

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The purpose of the Grant Manager's Handbook is to provide answers to commonly asked questions by Principal Investigators and Project Directors related to key aspects of overall grant and contract administration and their responsibilities at Central Michigan University.

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BASIC GRANT QUESTIONS

- **What does PI/PD stand for?**
  A Principal Investigator (PI), also referred to as the Project Director (PD), takes the lead on a particular funded project. PI/PD's are responsible for the overall conduct of the project, along with the stewardship of all project funds.

- **As a PI/PD, what will the university hold me responsible for?**
  When a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement is received, CMU is the legal recipient. The Principal Investigator (PI/PD), on behalf of the university, is accountable for ensuring proper financial and programmatic performance within the sponsor's guidelines, CMU's guidelines, and other applicable regulations.

  A PI/PD's responsibilities include oversight for the conduct of the programmatic or research aspects of the project, the hiring and assignment of personnel, expenditure tracking and reconciliation within the sponsor approved budget, accurate and timely submission of narrative reports, time and effort validation, and other administrative functions.

BUDGET QUESTIONS

- **What are facilities and administrative costs (indirect costs)?**
  Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, also known as indirect costs (IDCs), are university costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity. For example, while the university incurs real expenses by keeping the lights on in a laboratory, it would be difficult to calculate and budget for the exact amount of the light expenses for each sponsored project. A federally negotiated F&A rate is added to the cost of externally funded sponsored project budgets to offset these expenses.

- **What are pre-award costs and can they be incurred?**
  Occasionally, purchases related to a funded project need to be made prior to the start date of the award. The allowability of pre-award costs varies by sponsor. Please contact ORGS at 989-774-2729 prior to making any purchases to determine sponsor guidelines related to pre-award costs.

- **The funding agency gave me some rebudgeting authority…what does that mean?**
  As a project moves forward, a PI/PD may determine a more efficient method for project management and need to transfer funds designated from one line item into another. Many sponsors give the university authority to make minor modifications to the budget without prior sponsor approval. This is considered the university's rebudgeting authority.

  Sponsors may place limitations on the rebudgeting authority as a percentage of each line item, the overall budget, or on specific line items. For example, a funding agency may require "prior approval" if making a new equipment purchase or modifying a line item by 10% or more. If a budget change will exceed CMU's rebudgeting authority, the university must make a formal request to the sponsor to change the budget.

  If you would like to request a budget modification, please contact ORGS at casza1sr@cmich.edu before making a purchase to ensure all necessary sponsor approvals have been received.

- **I would like to change a grant budget and I am not sure what to do next. Who can I talk to?**
    ORGS provides services to assist in budget analysis, modifications, and development. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 to review a funded project's rebudgeting authority and help in determining next steps.

- **I would like to know what the balance is on a grant/contract account, how do I do that?**
    CMU uses a Grant Management system within SAP (Systems, Applications, and Products) which enables PI/PD's to monitor their spending on grants and contracts. This system empowers you to view the sponsored project's budget, current expenses and encumbrances, along with the amount of funds unspent.

    If you do not yet have access to SAP, the first step is to talk with your department's IT support to request SAP access (the form to request access can also be found at https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/OIT/help/Pages/Forms.aspx). Once SAP is placed on your computer, contact Grant Accounting at 774-3707 for a one-to-one training.

- **I have cost share, or match, required on a sponsored project. How do I process these expenses?**
    Cost share, or match, is a portion of a project's costs which are contributed by the university or a third party. In general, the university will only contribute cost share when it is required by the sponsor. ORGS will assist you in determining the type and amount of cost share that can be included in a sponsor budget.

    For ease of monitoring, cost share is tracked in an account separate from the sponsor's awarded funding and can be viewed via the Grants Management system within SAP.

    Most cost share expenses (payroll, supplies, travel, etc.) will be processed similarly to other grant expenses. In-kind commitments are processed via an In-Kind Contribution Form available on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/OAC/Grants/Pages/Forms-Grants.aspx. Contact ORGS at 774-2729 or Grant Accounting at 774-3707 to discuss the best methods for processing cost share commitments on a sponsored project.

PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

- **Who should I contact with employment-related questions, such as hiring or re-hiring processes?**
- Faculty and Graduate Assistants – Contact Faculty Personnel Services at 774-3368.
- Office Professionals, Professional & Administrative, Senior Officers, Supervisory Technical, Temporary Employees – Contact Employment Services, Human Resources, at 774-2010
- Students – Contact Student Employment Services, Human Resources, at 774-3881
- Independent Contractors – Contact Contracting and Purchasing Services at 774-3118

- **Where do I go to process payroll forms to hire an individual to a sponsored project?**
  Personnel transactions for most employees can be completed using the online Personnel Transactions program. To access this, log into Central Link and then click on *My Account*; the **Personnel Transactions (NEW SYSTEM)** can be accessed under the *My Work Day* subject heading.

  Before processing a form, check with your department and college as they may have administrative support specializing in sending forward payroll transactions on your behalf. If you have questions about access to the system, contact Human Resources at 774-2010.

  If your questions are specific to the hiring practices for a particular employee subgroup, contact either Faculty Personnel Services at 774-3368, Employment Services at 774-2010, or Student Employment Services at 774-3881.

- **Is there a way to know the benefit amount that will be charged in addition to an employee's wages?**
  In collaboration with Human Resources and Faculty Personnel Services, ORGS can provide close estimations for benefit expenditures of current employees. ORGS can also provide average salary and benefit rates for employee groups (post-doctoral researchers, office professionals, lab technicians, etc.). Call ORGS at 774-6777 to learn more.

- **Who can I work with if I need to develop independent contracts for work on a sponsored project?**
  If you are hiring an independent contractor for a portion of the work on a sponsored project, and the estimated costs will be less than $2,500, ORGS can assist in the overall development and processing of the contractual agreement. If the cost estimate is $2,500 or greater, then Contracting and Purchasing Services will work with you to develop the agreement.

  The first step to developing an independent contract is going to the Contracting and Purchasing Services website on Central Link at: https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/cps/Pages/Independent-Contractor.aspx. By answering the questions on this web page, you will be guided to the correct form to begin the contract agreement request. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 to learn more.

  Please note, regardless of which department develops the contractual agreement, ORGS will need to review it before it is fully executed. Also, as it is in relation to an externally-funded project, often times the Vice President for Research and Innovation will need to sign the agreement on behalf of the university.

- **The grant/contract has funding to pay participant stipends. How do I process participant stipends?**
  The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and Student Account Services and University Billing (SASUB) or Payable Accounting will work with you to process participant stipends. Once individuals are set up to receive stipends, you will work directly with SASUB or Payable Accounting to determine dates of disbursement and stipend amounts. Contact ORGS at 774-2729 for a detailed description of the participant stipend process.

- **Are there work hour limitations for non-benefit eligible employees?**
  Yes! According to Human Resources, employees with a primary assignment in a non-benefit eligible position will be allowed to work a maximum of:

- For student employees, 40 hours per pay period during the fall and spring semesters including exam weeks, spring break and the holiday break in December and January; and 80 hours per pay period during the summer.

- For temporary employees, 48 hours per pay period during the fall and spring semesters including exam weeks, spring break and the holiday break in December and January; and 80 hours per pay period during the summer.

  Please note: the pay period limits apply to the combined hours worked for all non-benefit eligible assignments held by an individual employee. Employees working multiple assignments must inform supervisors of all CMU work and are expected to self-monitor their total hours worked per pay period, combined for all assignments, to ensure they do not exceed the limits.

STUDENTS

- **Why do I have to track the hours students work on the project, can the university "cap" their wages at a certain point to ensure I am not over-budget?**
  Hourly student employees receive their paycheck based on their rate of pay and number of hours worked. The university is required to pay students the wage their department determines appropriate, multiplied by their total hours worked. The only way to ensure students' earned wages stay within a budgeted amount is to track their total hours and plan ahead.

- **When do FICA benefits impact my budget for hourly student employees?**
  FICA is a percent of wage withheld and placed in the government's Social Security Trust Fund. FICA is calculated at 7.65% of wages earned. FICA expenses may be charged to your grant or contract, along with student wages.

  Students enrolled in courses at least half time during the period they are working will not have FICA withheld. In the summer, because many students are not enrolled half-time, FICA charges are more likely to be made on their wages earned.

- **What is the difference between a graduate assistant and an hourly graduate student?**
  Graduate students may be hired as either graduate assistants or as hourly student employees. Students hired as graduate assistants receive compensation for their work and a tuition and fee benefit. It is anticipated that a full-time graduate assistant works approximately 20 hours per week.

  Student hourly employees are paid on a per hour basis and do not receive a tuition benefit. CMU requires that student hourly employees work no more than 40 hours per pay period.

EFFORT COMMITMENT

- **I would like to pay myself over the summer for the time I put in during the academic year from a grant, is that allowed?**
  The short answer is no. Regardless of the amount of work completed during the academic year, compensation received for work on externally sponsored projects must directly correlate with the time in which the work was done. Personnel with time commitments on sponsored projects must request compensation for effort expended. Paying an individual for work in advance of their effort or being paid for a week of summer salary when the work is already completed is not allowed. Please call ORGS at 774-2729 with additional questions.

- **The sponsored project is paying for 10% of my effort. I was just offered to teach another course, it's not a big deal if I accept this teaching appointment…right?**
  Actually, it may be a big deal. When working on an externally funded project, an individual must not exceed 100% full time effort. If teaching the additional course is above and beyond the person's regular workload responsibilities, then this may be a concern to a sponsor. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 to look further into this question and determine next steps.

- **Can I pay someone supplemental pay with funds from a grant/contract?**
  In general, paying someone supplemental pay from a sponsored project's funds is not allowable; however, there may be some circumstances when this is acceptable. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 to review a specific supplemental pay situation.

MAKING PURCHASES

- **If I have questions about how to process an expense, who should I ask?**
  Payable Accounting processes payments to vendors and non-employees. For specific expense processing questions, contact Payable Accounting at 774-3118.

  Travel Services processes travel expenses and CMU employee reimbursements. For specific expense processing questions, contact Travel Services at 774-3525.

  If you are unsure about steps in processing expenses on a sponsored project, **Grant Accounting** can assist in navigating you through the university system. Call Grant Accounting at 774-3707 for assistance.

- **When should I complete a purchase requisition?**
  Purchase requisitions may be completed for purchases of $500 or more. They should be completed, regardless of the dollar amount for computers, software, and maintenance agreements. Contact Purchasing Services for more information at 774-3118.

- **How do I get a CMU business credit card?**
  The first step to receiving a CMU Business credit card is completing the CMU Business Card Agreement form with appropriate authorization. The Agreement is available on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/OAC/Travel-Business-Expenses/CreditCards/Pages/Forms-Credit_Cards.aspx or call 774-3797 for more information.

- **Who can I work with if I need to develop subawards for work on a sponsored project?**
    If you are subawarding a portion of the work on a sponsored project to another organization, ORGS can assist in the overall development and processing of this agreement. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 to learn more.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

- **What is the difference between equipment and supplies?**
    According to Contracting and Purchasing Services, the university divides equipment into two categories: Capitalized equipment and Non-Capitalized equipment.

    Capitalized equipment includes all tangible, non-expendable, movable assets having a useful life of more than one year and a value of $5,000 or greater or are plated vehicles, trailers, or boats.

    Non-Capitalized equipment includes assets less than $5,000. Computers, laptops, tablets, and servers are examples of non-capitalized equipment.

    Supplies are consumable items other than described above that usually have a useful life of less than one year.

    Some sponsors place special limitations on equipment and supply purchases; for information about sponsor guidelines, please contact ORGS at 774-6777.

TRAVEL

- **I will be attending a conference in a few months and the best airline rates are available now. May I purchase this ticket ahead of time and charge it to a sponsored project?**
    If you have received funding which supports travel and would like to make related purchases prior to the travel occurring, you should familiarize yourself with CMU's travel reimbursement policy. Please know that CMU does have restrictions on international travel and prior approval from the Provost is required.

    According to the Travel Services website:
    "Reimbursement prior to travel has been eliminated. However, employees who are CMU Business Credit Card holders may charge their pre-trip expenses to their CMU Business Credit Card if the expenses are to be fully reimbursed by the University. Employees without a CMU Business Credit Card may do one of the following:
    - Charge their airfare and/or conference fees only on a CMU Business Credit Card held by another employee within their department (if fully reimbursable), or
    - Pay out of their own pocket and seek reimbursement after taking the trip."

    Please keep in mind that this applies to all individuals who will be traveling, including students. If you have a question regarding the best way to process a travel expense, contact Travel Services at 774-3481 before incurring any travel related expenses.

- **What form should I use to be reimbursed for travel expenses?**

  As a CMU employee, you will use the *Employee Reimbursement Voucher Form* found on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/OAC/Travel-Business-Expenses/Pages/Forms-Travel.aspx. If someone has incurred travel expenses who is not a CMU employee or who is a student, they will use the *Non-Employee/Student Expense Reimbursement Form* found on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/cps/forms/Pages/default.aspx.

  If there are any questions related to travel reimbursements it is always best to call Travel Services at 774-3525 prior to making purchases to avoid problems after traveling.

- **I was told to charge my travel meals at the per diem rate. What is per diem and where can I find the rate?**

  Per diem is a daily meal allowance amount which the university reimburses to an individual when traveling. Per diem rates can vary by travel destination. Check the Travel Services website on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/fas/fsr/OAC/Travel-Business-Expenses/Employee_Reimbursement/Pages/Travel_Meals_Allowances.aspx for specific information about per diem rates.

- **Are there special restrictions associated with foreign travel?**

  Yes. If you are planning on traveling internationally, after ensuring this is allowable and budgeted for on the associated externally funded project, you will first need to complete the International Travel Approval Form found on CMU's website at for review:
  https://www.cmich.edu/search/Pages/default.aspx?k=International%20Travel%20Approval%20Request

  Once the International Travel Approval Form is approved, you can begin working with your department to make travel plans.

  When flying internationally on a sponsored project you must adhere to the Fly America Act by utilizing U.S. air carrier service for all air travel services funded, in part or in whole, by the U.S. government. For certain federal funding agencies, and under certain circumstances, there are also some foreign air carriers that can be utilized under "Open Skies Agreements. Please follow this link for more information:
  https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/policy/travel-management-policy/fly-america-act

RESEARCH SUBJECTS AND OTHER SPECIALTY AREA

- **I have animal subjects in a study I'm conducting. Who gives me the permissions I need for this research?**

  The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviews the inclusion of animals in research. Please contact IACUC at 774-7313 with additional questions.

- **Humans are involved in this research. Who gives me the permissions I need for this research?**

  The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews the inclusion of human subjects in research. Please contact the IRB at 774-6401 with additional questions.

- **I'll be using recombinant DNA and select agents in the research project. Who gives me the permissions I need for this study?**

  The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) reviews the use of recombinant DNA and select agents in

research. Please contact IBC at 774-3279 for more information.

- **I received a grant and just found out Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is required. What is that and how do I learn more?**

    RCR is defined as the ethical conduct of research. Many sponsors now require that individuals working on a sponsored project funded by their entity, participate in formal RCR training. CMU strongly encourages researchers to use the CITI training program to provide RCR training; this will meet most sponsors' requirements. CMU's Responsible Conduct of Research Plan can be found in Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/ORGS/ComplianceandResearchIntegrity/Pages/IRB-Training.aspx, or call ORGS at 774- 1226 for more information.

- **Because of the research I have completed on this sponsored project I have developed an invention, what is the next step?**

    An *Invention Disclosure Form* should be completed as soon as something new and useful has been created or when unexpected research results have been achieved. This form is used to evaluate whether the invention is patentable or whether commercial development is feasible. The *Invention Disclosure Form* can be found on Central Link at https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/ORGS/Pages/Technology-Transfer-and-Commericalization.aspx. Contact ORGS at 774-7719 for additional information.

- **The Whistleblower Protection Act applies to my grant. What does this mean, and how do I inform those working on the grant?**

    The National Defense Authorization Act Program for Enhancement of Contractor Employee Whistleblower Protections requires CMU to notify employees working on federal awards of the protections afforded to them under the act.

    To meet this requirement, whenever someone is hired onto a federally funded project, ORGS will send an email (with the grant's PI/PD copied in) with a link to CMU's policy: https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/ORGS/GrantsManagement/Documents/Whistleblower%20Policy%20Updated%20020618.pdf

- **Confidentiality restrictions apply to my project. How is this communicated to those working on the research?**

    ORGS will develop any necessary confidentiality agreements for externally funded projects with confidentiality restrictions. At the commencement of the project, this form will be sent out to the PI/PD with a request to obtain signatures from every employee/individual who will have access to the confidential information. The confidentiality agreement will need to be signed and dated to show that the individual(s) understand their obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the data obtained through the externally sponsored project.

    A signed confidentiality form will be required of all individuals *prior* to them being hired onto the sponsored project.

PROJECT CLOSE-OUT

- **I need more time to complete the funded project/research. How do I ask for additional time?**
  If you need additional time to complete a project or funded research, some sponsors will consider a no-cost extension request. This is a request that extends a grant period, but does not seek additional funds beyond the amount already awarded. Extension requests are generally made within at least 30 days of the end of a grant period. Please contact ORGS at casza1sr@cmich.edu for more information.

- **Who is responsible for completing project reporting? What about the financial report?**
  The PI/PD is responsible for completing all required technical and narrative reporting. Grant Accounting will complete required financial reports. Sometimes, a sponsor will require the signature of the Vice President for Research and Innovation or another authority to successfully submit a report. Please work with ORGS and Grant Accounting to ensure proper signatures are provided.

- **What is a record retention date? What types of materials should I hold onto?**
  The record retention date is a time period by which a Principal Investigator / Project Director should maintain all financial data related to a specific funded project. Generally, this date is five years from the submission of a sponsored project's final expenditure report. Sponsors may have varying retention dates. Please contact ORGS at 774-2729 with questions about a funded project's retention date.

UNEXPECTED EVENTS

- **What do I do in the case of an unexpected event (university closures, leave of absence, etc.)?**
  When unexpected events occur, the management and oversight of externally-funded projects will follow all CMU and sponsor guidance, guidelines, regulations and policies/procedures. As guidance can change daily, depending on the circumstance, it is important for the PI/PD and ORGS to stay up to date on revisions or changes as they become necessary.

  When an unexpected event occurs, please contact ORGS first at casza1sr@cmich.edu to help facilitate the process and communication plans with the sponsor.