

Pre-Award Budget Development Guidelines for COE grants and contracts
Guidance Document
Approval Date: May 30, 2017

Overview and Background

The College of Education (COE) is the UO's top per capita recipient of grant and contract funding. Not only are we highly successful in securing external funding, COE research and outreach activities have a national and international impact on the lives of children and families. As the UO's budget model changes, some UO services have become centralized (e.g., Information Technology and Communication services) and Development has always been centralized, resulting in less direct access by research units. In addition, the receipt of external funding is less predictable as more faculty at more universities compete for fewer research dollars. It is a high priority for the COE to ensure that our Grant Management Units (GMUs) are self-sustaining and continue to provide rigorous administrative support in the pre-award and post-award phases to our faculty.

To this end, effective July 2018, GMUs will begin receiving 90% of the Indirect Costs Returned (ICR) to the COE, compared to 70% to 75% in recent years, and will be expected to self-support their infrastructure. Outreach units will be charged an annual fee for services, sufficient to cover the COE administrative staffing they utilize. When possible, job sharing across units would continue to be encouraged as a means of reducing costs, thereby making more financial resources to research and outreach units to use for achieving their missions. The fact that many grant and contract mechanisms limit the indirect rate to be included in pre-award budgets, thereby limiting the amount of funds available to cover necessary administrative support for projects, remains a structural challenge to be addressed.

The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development was charged by the Dean with launching a taskforce to develop guidelines for GMUs and individual PIs for use in pre-award development that will guide post-award grant management, in order to facilitate self-sustainability. Examination of GMUs inside and outside of the COE suggests that the local unit's administrative costs (e.g., pre- and post-award support, HR support, accounting support, event planning and consultation, space maintenance, technology, and communications) for an individual award within a unit are approximately 10% of the direct budget expenses (on average).

The taskforce includes budget managers and PIs, with representation across a range of grants and contracts types (e.g., those that receive the full ICR, training grants, foundation awards, grants receiving some ICR but not the full ICR amount).

Guiding Principles

- GMUs should generate sufficient funding from active externally-funded grants and contracts, and other sources of funding (e.g., income or royalty accounts) to support both the pre- award grant submission activities for faculty affiliated with that GMU (e.g.,

proposal development and submission) and the post-award administration of those grants/contracts.

- Some units may develop administrative position descriptions that include specific research activity language in them, in order to be able to write in the budget justifications that travel, contracting with districts, data entry, etc. are above and beyond the typical administrative responsibilities.
- GMU directors may choose to develop guidelines for use of ICR funds to support faculty FTE to engage in grant writing activities for new projects.
- Submission of grants or contracts that have limited or no ICRs will be discussed by the GMU leadership to ensure that the unit can support the post-award activities and will prioritize them, if funded.
- Each individual grant/contract is not expected to be cost-neutral, but rather, the administration of the full set of grants within the GMU is expected to be cost neutral to that unit.
- Start-up funding, Underrepresented Minority Recruitment Program (UMRP) funding, and retention funding should not be used to subsidize grant management activities GMU-wide (unless specified as such in a written agreement), but rather, should be used to facilitate activities above and beyond typical grant administration activities provided by the GMU.
- GMUs must comply with all federal and state laws regarding the use of grant and contract funds.
- All COE faculty should have access to a GMU through which to submit and administer their externally-funded research.
- The financial burden of funding administrative support within a GMU should be shared in an equitable manner across GMU faculty members, as specified in the unit's governance policies.
- Each GMU is granted the autonomy to develop their own budget requirements and priorities, (within the assumption that they are self-sustaining), which must be shared at least annually with all faculty in the unit, the Dean and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, as well as the College Director of Finance and Operations.
- A menu of budgeting options will be developed to assist faculty members in selection of costs that will be generated by project activities and that are most appropriate for the specific grant/contract submission (see examples below). These options reduce the need for expenditure of ICR funds in coverage of expenses that would otherwise be absorbed by the GMU/unit.

Menu of Pre-Award Budget Options

The list below includes budget options that should be considered during budget development. If the entity receives funding that does not include full indirect costs, one or more of the options below should be considered and implemented in order to ensure that the grant is appropriately budgeting for costs incurred (pre-award) and that will incur (post-award). Examples of costs that should be considered include:

- A percentage of FTE for project-specific activities that will be completed by staff members who are supported by ICR (e.g., IT support, administrative program assistant, communications support, multiple contracts to school districts, frequent travel, participant stipends/reimbursements)
- Computers and software required for the project activities
- Project-related travel
- Research supplies, server costs, conference calls
- Furniture, space rental, and car rental if specifically required for the project
- Insurance, intellectual property, and legal costs
- Memberships in professional societies, or research collaboratives (e.g., Oregon Writing Project)
- Dissemination costs such as journal publication fees, reprint fees, editing and graphic design, statistical consulting, manual development, and travel for students to present at professional meeting related to project work)
- Delegate to an external subawardee (the handling of contracts, payments, etc if they are numerous and time-consuming
- Consultants and other collaborator time

Challenges and Special Considerations

- Need to consider how “rainy day” funds may or may not be included in the guidelines
- All faculty members, regardless of their FTE, are not permitted to use FTE that comes from federal funds to engage in grant writing activities for new projects. This means that a faculty member who is supported 100% on federal funding cannot use the grant FTE to engage in grant-writing activities for new projects
- Due to our increased faculty size, college commitments such as space and technology support need to be negotiated prior to grant submission