COAS TOWN HALL MEETING FAQ'S RELATED TO RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Category: Organization

1. OGM – Please describe the Office of Grants Management? What they do, who they are, where they are located?

   Response: The OGM was created in September 2012 to support Principal Investigators and other research staff members and facilitate processes that impact the execution and conduct of their grants.

2. How is OGM linked to RAS and the Provost Office?

   Response: OGM resides in the Office of the Provost. It is designed to interface with faculty while RAS has fiduciary oversight of grants and contracts including accounting, auditing and sponsor interface. RAS is the official signatory of applications and awards for Howard University. OGM will work with RAS by facilitating issues on behalf of the PI to affect a seamless "one-stop shop" and minimize administrative tasks for the PI.

3. Is there an org chart available online for the faculty?

   Response: Yes, there is an org chart available for Research Administrative Services. It will be made available online at http://www.howard.edu/research/about/index.html .

Category: Travel

1. What is the procedure for travel on research grants?

   Response: A Travel Authorization should be prepared and forwarded through your Dean's office to Financial Lead (Andre Powell for Academic Affairs/Daryl Jackson for Health Sciences) and then submitted to RAS. RAS will review for approval then forward to Accounts Payable.

   For reimbursements: Expense Reports and receipts should be submitted in Concur for University employees only. (Include copy of approved Travel Authorization scanned into Concur). For non-University personnel/students, a completed Payment Request Form (PRF) and original receipts should be submitted to RAS. RAS will review for approval and submit to Accounts Payable for payment.

2. How many days are required prior for travel authorizations?

Response: Travel Authorizations should be prepared at least 30 calendar days prior to travel.

3. What is the approval process and time required for travel authorizations by faculty?

Response: Completed (Financial Lead approved) Travel Authorizations are forwarded to RAS for review and approval. Upon approval, the document is forwarded to AccountsPayable@howard.edu for review. Total processing should be completed within 10 to 15 business days.

4. What is the approval process and time for international travel by faculty?

Response: The same process as noted in #3. Total processing should be completed within 10 to 15 business days. However, additional approvals are required.

5. Is it possible for a faculty member to track the approval process?

Response: For Travel Authorizations, this process is not currently available to electronically track. The faculty member should contact OGM for Travel Authorizations. For reimbursements through Concur, the PI is able to track the approval process.

6. If you are taking students for international travel, what is the process for students getting advances?

Response: There are no travel advances except in extreme cases. The general rule is spend the money and seek reimbursement. In those extreme cases a written request for an advance should be submitted to the financial lead that will coordinate approval with the CFO's office

7. Are faculty members with research grants eligible for advances?

Response: No, faculty members are not eligible for travel advances on research grants. Faculty members will be reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses through Concur.

8. Which office is responsible for advances and what is the approval process?

Response: See responses to Question 6 and Question 7.

9. How long does it take to be reimbursed once travel is put in Concur?

   Response: RAS requires at least 4 business days for review and approval. Total processing and payment should be completed within 10 to 15 business days. However, processing of payment may be extended if approvers do not review and approve the reimbursement in a timely manner.

10. If reimbursements are taking very long, which office or staff person should be contacted?

    Response: The status of your reimbursement can be view within the Concur system or by submitting an inquiry to the Travel&Expense@howard.edu email box or Accounts Payable at 202-806-2300.

11. Is concur the only way to receive a travel reimbursement?

    Response: For University employees, Concur is the University's official method of processing reimbursements to faculty and staff. For non-University personnel/students, a completed Payment Request Form and original receipts should be submitted to RAS.

12. Are all faculty members eligible for a travel card? What is the process for obtaining a travel card?

    Response: A needs assessment which is based on frequent travel (at least 6 times per year) is conducted by the Dean/Chairperson of the School/College and respective Financial Lead (Andre Powell – Academic Affairs; Daryl Jackson – Health Sciences) who will in turn coordinate with the CFOs office.

Category: Accounts Payable

1. Under what circumstances would accounts payable work with faculty members doing research?

   Response: Accounts Payable is available to assist and address all inquiries.

2. What is the process for hiring summer student interns on stipend?

   Response: If the student relationship is a student wage (represents compensation for work) relationship, then the student must follow human resources guidelines.

For student stipend payments (related more to assistantship/to defray living expenses for participation in a program), a Payment Request Form, W-9, ACH and a payment Schedule should be submitted to RAS for review and approval.

In accordance with University Student Stipends and Tuition Reimbursement Policy (600-019) " a stipend is "a payment made to an individual under a fellowship or training grant in accordance with pre-established levels to provide for the individual's living expenses during the period of training. A stipend is not considered compensation for the services expected of an employee." Students must be academically associated with the activities of the sponsored project to receive a stipend. Stipend recipients may work on the activities associated with the award, in pursuit of their academic goals, but are not required to perform services for the project in exchange for the stipend…"

3. What are the processes for reimbursement using payment request forms?

Response: Only students and non-Howard University persons are reimbursed using the Payment Request Form. The Payment Request Form is to be completed by the department/grant and include all appropriate signing authorities. All receipts associated with the travel must be attached to the form when submitted for payment to Accounts Payable@howard.edu. If the travel is associated with a grant, the Payment Request Form and receipts are forwarded to RAS prior to submission to Accounts Payable@howard.edu for processing.

4. What is the approval process using payment request forms?

Response: All Payment Request Forms must be completed and signed by the Requestor and an Authorized person. For all Payment Request Forms greater than $2,000.00, the Financial Lead must also sign the document. For grants, the document is forwarded to RAS for review and approval prior to submission to Accounts Payable@howard.edu for processing.

5. How does accounts payable notify or interact with the person handling your grant?

Response: Accounts Payable is available to assist and address all inquiries.

6. Is Accounts payable responsible for cash advances? If so what is the process?

Response: Howard University no longer issues cash advances. However, exceptions may be granted in extenuating circumstances. If an exception is granted, a written request for an advance should be submitted to the Financial Lead for review and forwarded to RAS for approval. If approved, the request is sent to the CFOs office for approval and processing.

7. What process does accounts payable have in place for wire transfers?

Response: "Special Payment Request" form/Wire Transfer form is completed by the department/grant, signed by the Department Head/Chairperson/Dean or PI when applicable and signed off by the Financial Lead. If the wire is grant related, then the Special Payment Request form/Wire Transfer form must also be approved by RAS prior to submission to Accounts Payable for processing. RAS approves within 2 business days of receipt. The document is then forwarded to the Accounts Payable email box for processing. Accounts Payable will forward the request to the Treasury Office to initiate the wire. Accounts Payable Processing time is within 2 business days upon receipt. Total processing time is 7 business days or less.

Category: Purchasing

1. What is the process for purchasing equipment?

Response: Requesting department should work with SSAM to obtain quotations from vendors and then submit an online requisition to purchase the equipment.

2. Are PIs contacted once the PO is generated?

Response: If the PI is the requester, an email will be transmitted from the Buyer once a PO is generated. Otherwise, the PI should contact the designated department requester for PO information or the PI can contact the SSAM department for assistance..

3. What is the PI responsibility after the PO is generated?

Response: If the equipment is not received by the promised date, PI should notify SSAM for follow-up. PI or requester is responsible for the inspection of received item(s) to ensure it is in good working condition. Supporting documentation evidencing receipt of product or service must be forwarded to SSAM.

4. Is there away online to determine if a vendor has been paid?

Response: Yes. Requester can access the Managed Requisition link in PeopleSoft to verify payments to vendor.

5. Is everyone with a grant eligible for a purchase card?

   Response: Yes. However, a PCard application form must be completed and approved by RAS and the Financial Leads of the requesting Department.

6. If one does not have a purchase card and needs to by materials/supplies or ship equipment is there an approval process?

   Response: Requesting department should work with SSAM to obtain quotations from vendors and then submit an online requisition to purchase the equipment.

7. If one does not have a purchase card, how does one get reimbursed if they buy materials/supplies or ship equipment?

   Response: Requesting department should work with SSAM to obtain quotations from vendors and then submit an online requisition to purchase the equipment.

8. What is the process for purchasing a computer/iPad from the Howard bookstore?

   Response: Requesting department should obtain a quotation from the Bookstore and submit a requisition in PeopleSoft.

9. What is the process for purchasing a computer/iPad from another vendor?

   Response: Requesting department should submit a requisition in PeopleSoft.. Computer/iPad purchases on grants also require prior approval from the sponsor.

10. Can a computer/IPAD be brought using your purchase card?

    Response: Computers/iPADS are not eligible to be purchased with the PCard.

11. If a vendor has not been paid, who should be contacted to rectify the situation?

    Response: Requesting Department should contact Accounts Payable. However, Requesting Department can also contact SSAM for assistance.

Category: Grants

Pre-Awards

1. Assuming that one uses DocuSign, what are the minimum number of days that the proposal must be submitted for approval?

   Response: RAS must receive the final and complete package in DocuSign at least 5 Business Days prior to the sponsor deadline date.

2. Can a proposal be submitted without the approval of the Chair/dean/provost… Because of a deadline?

   Response: Please see response in item 1. The proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Dean and respective Finance Leads (Andre Powell/Daryl Jackson). Exceptions require approval of the Provost. Exceptions require approval of the Provost.

3. Who is responsible for budget checks and can these be done prior to submission to DocuSign?

   Response: Please work with the Office of Grants Management and your Research Administrator (for specific issues) in RAS for budget formulation assistance. [

Post-Awards

1. What is the notification process once an award as been funded?

   Response: When the award is received in RAS, the Research Administrator will contact the PI to request additional information if required. If no additional information is required, then the PI will receive notification within 5 business days of receipt at the time of award set-up.

2. Who is responsible for notifying the PI and how long does this take?

   Response: RAS is responsible for notifying the PI when awards are received. In those instances where the sponsor forwards the award directly to the PI, it is the responsibility of the PI to forward the award to RAS.

   The Research Administrator will contact the PI to request additional information if required. If all required documentation and information is on file at the time of award receipt, then the PI will receive notification within 5 business days of receipt. (This is done at the time of award set-up.)

3. How long does it take to get the grant loaded so that the PI can begin spending using PeopleSoft?

   Response: If all required documentation and information is on file at the time of award receipt, then the award is loaded within 5 business days of receipt.

4. Can a PI spend on the grant prior to the official letter being sent to the university?

   Response: The PI can submit a Request for Advance Account for review. The request should include justification for advance spending, confirmation of funding from the sponsor of the Grants Management Office and anticipated award date.

5. How often is Peoplesoft budget items updated?

   Response: Expenditures (salary payment, vendor payments etc.) are updated in PeopleSoft nightly. Changes to the budget such as modifications, rebudgetting, etc are updated within 3 business days of receipt by RAS if sponsor prior approval is not required.

6. What is the notification process for out-year funding, no-cost extensions?

   Response: When prior approval from the sponsor for requests such as out-year funding and no-cost extensions is required, the PI must submit the request in writing through RAS to the sponsor. **An authorized official from the RAS must sign all requests to sponsors**. If "internal" (RAS) approval is sufficient, a brief memo requesting approval of the change and signed by the PI/PD only, should be sent to RAS.

   After a decision is made concerning the request, the PI is notified within 48 hours by RAS.

7. Why does Howard University have to direct bill against NSF funded grants? Is this permanent?

   Response: Due to issues noted within prior University NSF 2006and A-133 audits, the University was moved to a billing relationship with NSF. Since that time the University has worked and is working to resolve old outstanding questioned costs and issues to the satisfaction of NSF. It is anticipated that the University will be returned to former Letter of Credit Drawdown status with NSF within the fiscal year.

8. What is the HU faculty responsible for during the close-out part of a funded grant? Does the faculty member sit with RAS during this process?

Response: The HU faculty is responsible for submitting a Final Programmatic Close-out report, confirming equipment purchases, disclosing inventions, verifying and ensuring all final vendor/subcontractor/consultant payments.

A close-out meeting (in person or conference call) with the RAS Analyst should occur to ensure all award expenditures are accurately reflected in project financial data.

9. What is the process for hiring a graduate student or undergraduate student on your grant? How long does it take?

Response: For all appointments a position requisition must be created through manage self-service. If this is the first appointment for the student/Graduate Assistant/Post Doc Fellow etc. you would select new, if this is a reappointment then you would choose position change when creating the position request. No student is to begin work until the position requisition is fully approved. For new hires they cannot begin work until a representative from the Department of Employment contacts them to complete new hire documents.

RAS approves the request within 2 business days of receipt.

10. What is the process for hiring a post-doctoral fellow on your grant? How long does it take?

Response: For all appointments a position requisition must be created through manage self-service. If this is the first appointment for the student/Graduate Assistant/Post Doc Fellow etc. you would select new, if this is a reappointment then you would choose position change when creating the position request. No student is to begin work until the position requisition is fully approved. For new hires they cannot begin work until a representative from the Department of Employment contacts them to complete new hire documents.

RAS approves the request within 2 business days of receipt.

11. What is the process for receiving your summer salary?

Response: For all appointments a position requisition must be created through manage self-service (please provide a link here to PeopleSoft if possible). Summer salary should be processed as soon as possible prior to the start of the summer. Our goal is to get the position requisition fully approved prior the start date listed on the requisition. RAS approves the request within 3 business days of receipt. [Dana/Andre – what is the actual approval process – is the Dean/Chair and Provost approving before it goes to RAS?]

12. When should the paperwork be put in for obtaining summer salary?

Response: Paperwork for obtaining summer salary should be put in as early as possible, but please allow at least two weeks prior to the start date listed on the requisition.

Compliance

1. Please explain how the effort certification works for 9th month salary faculty who undertake research during the summer months only.

Response: For those faculty members who work during the summer months. The summer salary charged to grants is limited to the faculty members daily rate times the number of work days in the summer = approximately 65 (May 16 – August 15). Effort certifications are completed quarterly. Therefore, if summer salary is earned between May 16 and June 30th the amount charged to a project in this period will be part of the current year's 4th quarter effort certification (April 1 – June 30). If the summer salary is earned between July 1st and August 15th the amount charged to a project in this period will be part of the current year's 1stth quarter effort certification (July 1 – September 30). The percentage effort will be based on the amount charged to sponsored projects divided by the total salary paid over the relevant period (effort periods are quarterly).

2. Why is it required for faculty to take the 8-hour training sessions? Will they remember all of the items related to the test questions?

Response: In accordance with the requirement set forth by NSF and other federal sponsor's the University is required to provide training to faculty on certain areas related to regulations and knowledge gaps identified as a result of the 2006NSF Audit. The training modules address those areas identified. The PI is expected to retain this key knowledge and is provided with the resources to find information if he/she is unable to remember.

Indirect Recovery

1. What is the process for a PI to obtain their indirect recovery?

Response: The Office of the Provost will provide a report showing the IDC recovered for each project. Each PI that has earned IDC in accordance with the model will be notified of the total amount. The PI can write a brief memo, addressed to their respective Dean detailing the purpose and use of the funds to enhance/further their research. The dean will approve/deny the request. All charges will be allocated to the Office of the Provost.

2. What role does the dean play in distributing indirect recovery funds to the faculty member?

   Response: The memo clearly states "Deans will be responsible for reviewing and approving all spending in accordance with this model."

3. Line C570 shows the amount of indirect recovery in PeopleSoft. Are these the funds that the PI has access to?

   Response: No. The amount shown in C570 is the amount budgeted for indirect. The IDC model is based on revenue recognized and the percentage allocation articulated in the IDC memo. To be eligible the grant/contract must be awarded at the University's full IDC rate of 48%. Each month RAS will calculate the specific amounts earned by each qualifying grant in accordance with the University official reported accounting results.

4. A recent memo stated up to 7.5% of indirect recovery for the PI. What is the lower limit?? Why is it up to 7.5% and not just 7.5%?

   Response: The lower limit will be established based on affordability. The "up to" allows for flexibility in the first year of implementing the model. The memo goes on to state "It is anticipated that the model will be fully operational by July 1, 2013. For the rest of the current fiscal year, a portion of the funding that the model projects over a full fiscal year will be made available for distribution."