Michigan State University
Contract and Grant Administration
Post-Award Newsletter- Issue 4 – December 2013
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Contract and Grant Administration (CGA) Post-Award Newsletter – December 2013

A light-hearted collection of tips, hints and useful information to
help you better administer your sponsored projects.

NIH Account # Changes?

Have you heard the rumor that NIH is changing award numbers (which may result in new RC accounts for existing awards)? Are you having nightmares about SAP? Fear not….well, about the NIH part at least! While it is true that NIH is transitioning to a payment system that will result in new document numbers and closeouts on all existing non-competitive renewals (are you kidding me!!??), this doesn't necessarily mean that new MSU account numbers will need to be created. The goal of the new payment process is to provide real time expenditure information to NIH.

Effective October 1, 2014, NIH will be transitioning all non-competing existing awards to the new payment process system. As a result, NIH is expecting a complete closeout of the current document number, then transitioning to the new ones. While many of MSU's colleagues at other universities are planning to issue new accounts with the conversion, MSU is going to do our best to maintain current MSU account numbers.

You may be wondering how we think we can pull this off while other universities can't?

SPARTANS WILL, of course! If the football team can make it to the Rose Bowl, we should be able to win this battle too. Since the date of conversion for non-competing renewals is 9 months away, there's time to develop a game plan and clarify conversion requirements regarding closeout and financial reporting. You may not remember it, but about a year ago, NSF had the same conversion from a pooled account to individual accounts and the transition was practically seamless to PI's and department administrators. It's CGA's goal to have the same experience with the NIH transition.

Did you know….?

If you need a CGA account to stay open beyond the current end date, you can initiate an account edit document in KFS to request a hardship extension. Please include the hardship request memo as an attachment to the KFS e-doc to ensure the fastest approvals.

These documents should change the account expiration date to the requested date (typically a year) and CG account type code to 'hardship.' A hardship request memo signed by the department Chair should be attached to detail the reason for the request and any limitations (for example 'up to $25,000' or 'Hawaii trip only').

Wait! It's Friday afternoon and the Chair is out of the office and can't sign the memo! No problem. Another option is to add the details in the notes section of the KFS eDoc and ad hoc route the Department Chair for approval.

CGA's Awards Group will check for current compliance documents prior to approving the request and update Account Explorer. Questions or requests for further information can be sent to awards@cga.msu.edu.

 CGA Quiz Time

Answer the question correctly to win bragging rights in your department! Find the answer later in this newsletter.

When are NIH Progress Reports typically due?

We don't need any stinking cost sharing! What is Cost Share Anyway?

Let's see if we can clarify. Cost share is the portion of total project costs that are paid from sources other than the sponsor. Cost share is either *required, voluntary committed,* or *voluntary.* If the cost share was referenced in the award, then it's *required* cost share. If it was included in the proposal, but not mentioned in the award, it's *voluntary committed.* If you decide to cost share, but didn't include it in the proposal and it's not listed in the award, it's voluntary. Because voluntary committed and voluntary cost share are not required, they are discouraged. You can always check the AE notes to see if your award has cost share requirements.

Were you aware that all cost share has to follow the same allowability rules as if it were spent from the RC account? It's true!

 3rd party cost share (it's not really a party, but rather an entity/individual outside MSU that is providing the cost share): The 3rd party must certify that their cost share requirement was met, (usually in a letter or memo) that should be forwarded to CGA.

 Non-salary direct expense cost share (maybe the department is covering a portion of equipment costs on the project): The PI must certify that the non-salary direct expense cost share requirement was met and forward the certification to CGA (as an email or signed memo) along with operating statements highlighting the specific expense(s).

 Salary Cost Share (the most effective way to cost share): This is accomplished through Effort (the cost share is met by MSU faculty/staff's time on the project that is not directly charged to the project). The faculty/staff certifies this cost share as part of their semiannual Effort Report. CGA has access to these reports, so there is no need to forward additional information to CGA. Hooray!

*Documentation that voluntary cost share was met should be kept in the department. CGA may not require copies, but should be notified by the PI that the cost share requirement was met.

You can find more information about effort-related cost sharing and effort reporting in general here: https://www.cga.msu.edu/PL/Portal/DocumentViewer.aspx?cga=aQBkAD0AMQA0ADcA

Dates, dates, and more dates

Okay, I know these dates probably don't involve flowers and chocolate, so what should I know?

Project End Date: the anticipated project end date if the project runs the full time frame.

Budget End Date: the end of the period that has been officially funded/obligated.

Account Expiration Date: a control feature in KFS that limits some expenditures from being posted beyond this date.

CGA's procedure had been to set the KFS account expiration date to be the budget end date. However, your feedback told us that it would reduce paperwork and eliminate difficulties for hourly and grad appointments, as well as PO's and Pcards, if the project end date was entered in KFS as the account expiration date instead. So we did it! Look at Account Explorer for the budget end date.

Another important date in KFS is the **Salary Encumbrance Date,** which determines how far out appointed salaries are encumbered on your RC account. CGA believes the most useful date for this field is the budget end date. This would align the projected salary expenses with the funding. You don't agree? That's ok, CGA will let a department choose the date that best fits departmental practice.

Don't Forget – 2014 is right around the corner and that means all investigators for PHS and NSF funded projects need to complete their annual disclosures of significant financial interests! Stay-tuned to the MSU COI office website for more information: http://coi.msu.edu/.

Did You Get the Answer?

NIH Progress reports are due 45 days prior to the current budget end date, either through eRA Commons or on PHS 2598 forms.

Audit Corner

Do you think audits are just a scare tactic and never happen at MSU? We wish! We really do need that computer justification for auditors!

There have been more than 30 audits on sponsored program accounts in the past year and we're expecting our biggest audit ever in 2014. MSU has been selected (this is not like winning the lottery) for an NSF data analytics audit that will affect all directly funded NSF RC accounts within a 3 year period. Scared yet? Us too! Audit disallowances are real and have serious consequences. If we work together, MSU will be better able to prepare audit requests and prevent disallowances. We expect this audit to begin this spring and will keep those "lucky ones" informed.

Biggest audit lesson in 2013: have sign-in sheets at participant support events! Otherwise we may need to give auditors event photos to document participation (yes, this really happened).

Upcoming Training Opportunities!

Want to spend some quality time learning more about research administration? We do too!

It's time to sign up for the 2014 *Essentials of Research Administration*. The first session is January 14, 2014 so register soon! http://sprout.vprgs.msu.edu/

Looking for training in warm weather? You are in luck! The *Basics of Research Administration Conference* is January 29-31, 2014 in Houston, Texas. This conference provides a broad overview of research administration.

https://www.srainternational.org/sra03/index.cfm

Another option is the *NCURA Financial Research Administration Conference* held March 15-17, 2014 in San Francisco. There is something for everyone from basic to advanced classes.

http://www.ncura.edu/content/educational_programs/sites/fra15/index.php

Questions & Answers

I heard there are some mandatory changes coming for NIH related to eRA commons ID's; is this true?

Yes! While it isn't a mandatory requirement yet, NIH is warning us that if we aren't compliant your Notice of Award may be held! Anyone who contributes at least 1 person month of effort will need to have an eRA Commons ID listed in the All-Personnel section of the progress report. Recently, NIH expanded this requirement to all Undergrad and Graduate students as well. The CGA Awards Group will be happy to create ID's following a request to awards@cga.msu.edu with the person's name, role on the project, and MSU email address.

My award has subcontract(s). Should I send CGA a request to create their eRA commons ID's?

No! Although ID's are necessary for the subrecipient personnel, those ID's would be issued by their institution. Obtaining these ID's may take time; therefore, we recommend that you obtain the information prior to the Progress Report due date.

Which group in CGA handles my account?

We share it! Who you contact in CGA depends on what you need. For example:

No Cost Extension Request? Awards Group

KFS document approved? Transactions Group

Invoice sent to agency? Reports Group

Effort Reporting Help? Cash Management Group

A more complete list of group tasks can be found at https://www.cga.msu.edu/PL/Portal/DocumentViewer.aspx?cga=aQBkAD0AMQA5ADQA.

Still don't know who to contact? That's ok. Contact help@cga.msu.edu for guidance.

What in the world is a CGA Post-Award Newsletter? Why am I getting this? I love it/hate it/ have comments/questions, whom should I contact?

CGA is working to improve customer service, including improved communication with campus. If you have questions about anything you have read here, would like to make comments, have an idea for a future topic/question please contact Kristy Smith at smith@cga.msu.edu. Please include "CGA Newsletter" in the subject line.