ORS Newsletter

February 2023

CONTENTS

REMINDER OF FIVE BUSINESS DAY DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL REVIEW

The Office of Research Services (ORS) has seen a sharp increase of last-minute/incomplete proposals being submitted on the proposal due date, and some within hours of the proposal submission deadline. As a reminder, under AP 12.401, Procedures for the Preparation and Submission of Proposals to External Sponsors and the Review/Approval Requirements for Sponsored Agreements, proposals should be submitted to ORS at least five (5) business days prior to the proposal deadline.

ORS reviews proposals for completeness, including, but not limited to, review of institutional information; conformity of the proposed budget with applicable policies and procedures; identification of principal investigator (PI) and key person eligibility and conflict of interest issues; and whether necessary compliance approvals have been obtained. The request for proposal (RFP)/solicitation notice is also reviewed for eligibility and submission requirements such as limited submissions.

Submitting proposals to ORS for institutional review and approval well in advance of the proposal deadline enables ORS to ensure that questions, errors or major issues which could derail a proposal can be addressed. Notify your assigned ORS Contracts & Grants specialist of any upcoming proposal deadlines and once the proposal has been submitted to myGRANT workflow, please make sure that you are available so any issues can be addressed in a timely manner. If you are identified as a PI or key person on a proposal and know in advance that you will be unavailable during the week leading up to the proposal deadline date, please make sure your unit has your contact information, or plan to submit the proposal earlier while you are still available.

Compliance with the procedures above is vital to enhance the University of Hawaiʻi's chances of success and to remain competitive.

UPCOMING CHANGES TO ORS BUSINESS PROCESSES AND MYGRANT PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

ORS is emphasizing the University of Hawaiʻi (UH) policy guideline of receiving complete proposals for review at least five (5) business days prior to the sponsor's submission deadline to improve the quality of submissions. Current statistics show that over fifty percent (50%) of proposals are received "late", or with less than five (5) business days available for review, and many of those are coming in on the same day that they are due to the sponsor. Even within those submitted with five (5) or more business days to review, attachments are not always complete or are missing (e.g., the attachments are blank placeholders).

Late submissions to ORS are becoming so commonplace that the ORS specialists are having difficulty balancing their workload priorities. As a result the ORS proposal review process and myGRANT features are being revamped, including making the proposal attachment types more intuitive, and requiring budgetary, facilities and equipment information to be included upon submission to workflow routing so that fiscal administrators, department chairs and deans will be provided with a clear picture of project requirements to make an informed decision upon approval. If the proposal is missing critical information necessary for approval (e.g., budget information or cost-sharing commitments), upon reaching the ORS workflow level, it will be returned, which will require another round of full workflow routing.

Other upcoming changes relate to extramural award notices. Effective July 1, 2023, ORS will be sending extramural award notices to only the PI and fiscal administrator (FA). Any special routing to a shared account or other project staff should then occur at the unit level by the PI and/or FA. Extramural award notices are also in the process of being updated to include links to various compliance requirements such as human trafficking, unmanned aircraft systems, whistleblower, and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 12, rather than issuing individual memos.

ORS will continue to assess existing business procedures and myGRANT features to see if there are changes that can be made to streamline processes and reduce administrative burden.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Mike Morimoto, ORS Information Systems Services Manager, at mcmorimo@hawaii.edu or (808) 956-4908.

PROJECT UPDATE—TRANSFERRING UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I (UH) REVOLVING ACCOUNTS AT THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I TO UH

The University of Hawai'i (UH) Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) is continuing its work on a project to transfer UH Revolving Accounts at RCUH into UH KFS accounts. We are working with a consultant to develop training; review policies and procedures and develop rate setting templates. UH and RCUH are also currently working on the electronic feeds to ensure that accounting information are recorded properly, similar to extramural accounts. Announcements will be made as information and instructions are finalized.

If you have further questions, please contact the Revolving Fund Committee by sending an email to orscomp@hawaii.edu.

FISCAL YEAR 2022 SINGLE AUDIT

The FY2022 Single Audit and Consolidated Financial Statements were presented to the Board of Regents in early December 2022. The reports have been posted to the Budget & Finance page at https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/budget-finance/.

There were eight (8) Federal Award Compliance Findings identified in the report. Seven (7) findings were classified as a control deficiency and one was a significant deficiency. A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of federal compliance requirement on a timely basis. Six (6) of the control deficiencies were related to the Student Financial Aid program and one was for the TRIO Cluster. The significant deficiency, involved a federal compliance requirement, was related to documentation of stipend payments under the Title VII Native Hawaiian Education program.

Once again, we thank you for your cooperation and timely responses to our audit requests and inquiries. This has allowed us to issue the Single Audit report in advance of the March 31, 2023 deadline.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dawn Kim, ORS Financial Compliance Manager at dawnkim@hawaii.edu or or (808) 956-0396.

In conducting the annual Single Audit, our external auditors prepare an Internal Controls and Business Issues Report (ICBIR), which includes comments and observations related to instances of noncompliance with University of Hawaiʻi policies and procedures. These comments and observations are not required to be reported as findings in our annual Single Audit but are presented to the BOR and management for internal use. The fiscal year 2022 ICBIR is scheduled to be presented to the Independent Audit Committee scheduled for April 6, 2023.

The following two (2) issues are identified year after year. Efforts must be made to comply with the applicable UH and Research Corporation of the University of Hawaiʻi (RCUH) policies and procedures.

Untimely Execution of Purchase Orders

An executed and approved purchase order serves as an indication that a formal agreement between the vendor and UH regarding the nature and price of the goods or services has been reached. The lack of an executed purchase order creates an undue risk for the misuse of public funds.

Untimely Submission of Travel Completion Report

According to AP 8.851, Employee Out-of-State and Intra-State Travel, travel completions must be submitted to the traveler's business office within 21 calendar days from the end date of the trip. Failure to submit travel completions in a timely manner exposes UH to the untimely receipt or disbursement of public funds; increasing the risk of misuse. In addition, if an employee fails to substantiate expenses within 60 days of the return date of the trip, under Internal Revenue Service regulations, UH may report advance amounts as income to the employee.

In addition to the above, the auditors noted instances in which the RCUH Authorization for Payment (AFP) form for Employee Business Expense Reimbursements was utilized to procure items in excess of RCUH's established allowable thresholds without prior approval from the designated fiscal administrator. Failure to adhere to RCUH's polices and procedures with regards to the use of an AFP form exposes UH to an undue risk of the misuse of federal funds.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dawn Kim, ORS Financial Compliance Manager at dawnkim@hawaii.edu or (808) 956-0396.

ORS BLANKET APPROVAL FOR FISCAL ADMINISTRATOR-INITIATED KUALI FINANCIAL SYSTEM EDOCS

ORS blanket approves Kuali Financial System (KFS) Account eDocs that it creates to establish the initial account for each extramural award. However, the automated KFS eDoc routing does not currently permit ORS Extramural Funds Accounting (ORS Accounting) to blanket approve account eDocs that are initiated outside of ORS.

As a workaround, ORS asks fiscal administrators and other program employees who initiate KFS account eDocs to ad hoc the UH ORS Accounting group as an approver on KFS account eDocs that they initiate. Adding the UH ORS Accounting group as an ad hoc approver will allow ORS Accounting to blanket approve non-ORS-initiated account eDocs.

To add the UH ORS Accounting group as an ad hoc approver, scroll down to the ad hoc recipients section of the eDoc. Under Ad Hoc Group Requests:

Under * Action Requested, select APPROVE;

Under * Namespace Code, enter KFS-SYS;

Under * Name, enter UH ORS Accounting;

Under Actions, click the "add" button.

Alternatively, rather than entering the * Namespace Code and * Name, click the magnifying glass next to the * Name field, enter 20007 in the Group ID field on the Lookup screen, click search, then click "return value" for the one item retrieved.

If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please contact Suzanne Efhan, ORS Extramural Funds Accounting Manager at efhans@hawaii.edu or (808) 956-4061.

I am working a proposal document and encountered an HR Status issue for one of the personnel. What does this mean and how do I fix it?

The HR Status feature pulls basic human resources (HR) data to allow ORS and the field to check for investigator and key personnel eligibility. The issues you can encounter are when there is no HR data found, an appointment has expired, or when the appointment's department does not match the personnel's myGRANT unit.

If there is no HR data found or an appointment has expired, coordinate with your unit's personnel officer/HR representative to ensure that all personnel have a valid appointment with the indicated unit. If the appointment is not with the same unit as shown myGRANT unit, you may work with your assigned ORS pre-award specialist to help assess whether changes need to be made through HR or in myGRANT.

A guide to help you with the new HR Position Status feature is available through the myGRANT home page under User Guides. Click on the "User Guides" button, then on "Key Personnel" on the left menu, then on "HR Position Status". In the alternative, the direct link to the guide is here: https://research.hawaii.edu/mygrant_help/keypeople_hrstatus.php.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned ORS pre-award specialist or file a ticket with ORS at http://go.hawaii.edu/eVP.