

Responsibilities of Project Director

The project director is the primary administrator of grant-funded activities and thereby the budget. Since responsibilities associated with these obligations rest with the project director, s/he must initiate expenses and plan for and implement the activities funded by the award. Whether a grant is awarded from internal funds or from an external funder, the following provide a brief overview of what this entails:

Monitoring an account – Soon after an account for an externally-funded award has been established, the project director should meet with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and budget unit manager or representative to outline a spending plan. This meeting has the purpose of reviewing responsibilities and answering questions for a timely use of funds. The ORSP will request financial system administrators to set-up a read-only access for the project director to the University accounting system, and assure that the project director receives budget reports to help monitor the budget. Whether a project is supported by internal or external funds, non-salary accounts, especially, should be almost entirely spent by the end of the third quarter of the project period.

Drawing on an account – Once the award has been assigned a number, the project director can initiate expenses and draw on that account. Critical to managing a budget, is the staff person in each school/division and budget unit assigned to budget-related tasks. This is the person who will support the project director by actually processing paperwork. Most often paperwork is processed electronically through the University accounting system. When initiating payments or purchases of any kind, it is the responsibility of the Project Director to make certain that that the following has been considered and when appropriate, the paperwork includes:

- Proper account number;
- Project budget allows the expense;
- The expense falls within the grant or contract period;
- Required signatures are in order, including PD's and
- Cost is reasonable and necessary.

If during the budget period a **reallocation of the funds** is required and allowable within the terms of the award, the project director should request such changes in writing to the ORSP grants financial analyst when externally funded, or to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, when internally funded. The memo should specify a) the item cost, b) how the purchase relates to the goals of the project, c) the budget categories affected by the reallocation, d) effects on the goals of the project, and e) any specific information required by the funder. Any changes made against a grant must be valid according to the rules of the funder, relate to the scope and purpose of the funded project and be as accurate as possible. Sometimes a funder will require "prior approval" of budget changes of a certain amount which must be obtained in writing from the funding agency before any activity or commitment of funds can be made. Changes in the allocation of a budget can occur if they are in accordance with the contract/award and meet the funder's guidelines and/or approval.