UCSD School of Biological Sciences
Service Level Agreement

Statement of Purpose

Within the School of Biological Sciences, the Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) Pre-Award and Post-Award teams deliver an array of services and expertise to support faculty in soliciting, securing, and managing sponsored project funding. Our commitment is to provide a quality of service that exceeds the research administrative needs of our faculty.

Objectives

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) is intended to describe the nature and standard of services provided by SPA, describe the course of action in cases when SLA goals are not met, and establish the foundation for a cooperative partnership between SPA staff and faculty.

Proper award management cannot be achieved without active participation from faculty and staff. This agreement establishes the points where faculty and SPA staff must collaborate to achieve stated service-level objectives.

To summarize, this document:
- Provides a clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles, and responsibilities
- Presents a measurable description of services provided
- Clarifies services and support delivered by the Pre-Award and Post-Award teams
- Reconciles expected service delivery with actual service delivery

Guiding Principles

The SPA teams are committed to:
- Communicating effectively, responding to communications within 2 business days
- Being flexible and responsive to meet business needs consistent with agreed upon service levels
- Proactively identifying issues and addressing them timely with escalation as needed
- Keeping faculty and administrators informed through email and web communications on updates to policies and procedures
- Encouraging collaboration and continuous improvement of services to BioSci faculty
- Welcoming feedback that would help us to review and evaluate our processes
- Maintaining written standard documentation and encouraging training and professional development opportunities

Pre-Award Research Administration

The goal of the Pre-Award team is to provide world-class research administration services from research project conception through award. The Pre-Award team focuses on all non-financial administrative aspects of grant management including, but not limited to, proposal preparation, proposal timeline and content review, Just-in-Time (JIT) requests, and progress reports.

The Pre-Award team is comprised of one lead and three Research Administrators. A Research Administrator is assigned to each department.
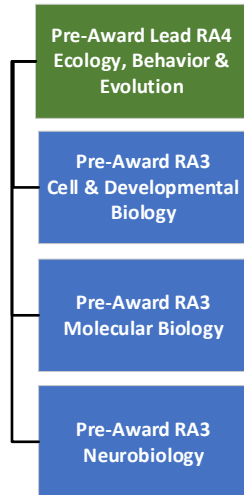
Pre-Award Roles and Responsibilities

The SPA Pre-Award team guides faculty through several campus and extramural processes, which are outlined below.

Spectrum of Responsibility	Definitions
P = Primary	Responsible for ensuring the function is completed
S = Secondary	Secondary responsibility: works closely with P and owns parts of the function but not all
A = Advisory	Provides guidance and information to those responsible for the task completion; not responsible for the completion of the function
M = Ongoing Monitoring	Monitors function to ensure completion; low level of involvement

Function	Other Units	PI	Pre-Award	Post-Award	OCGA	SPF
Pre-Award						
Proposal development – scientific preparation		P	S			
Proposal submission preparation			P		A	
Cost Share approval – Department Chairs/Dean's Office/CFO	P					
New space request approval – CoC/Associate Dean of Research	P					
PI exception requests	S		P			
Conflict of interest management		P	M		A	
Conflict of effort commitment management	A	P	M		A	
Budget development		P	P			
Request subaward documents (proposal phase)		A	P			

Proposal review and approval					P	
Contract budget and development	S	P				
Contract review	A	P				
Contract negotiation, and approval		A			P	
Just-in-Time (JIT)	A	P				
Award acceptance	A	S			P	
Account setup					P	P
Progress reports - technical (RPPR etc.)	P	P	S			
Grant Transfers	P	P			A	
Subcontract budget and request	S	P				
Subcontract/subaward review, issuance, negotiation, and approval				S	P	
Award rebudgeting	A	S	P			

Services Provided

If engaged early in the proposal development process, the Sponsored Projects Pre-Award Team will assist faculty with multiple elements of the proposal process, including, but not limited to:

- Review and interpretation of funding announcement and solicitation guidelines
- Budget development
- Full coordination of proposal in sponsor system including assistance with online registration if needed
- Review of required subcontractor information and communication with sub-recipients
- Clarification of compliance criteria
- Review of biosketches and other non-scientific documents
- Assembly of proposal and text review for compliance issues and agency requirements
- Communication with Office of Contracts & Grants including routing in Kuali, incorporating changes into proposal, and facilitating submission.
- Rebudgeting and other post-submission requests
- Contract submission, negotiation, and finalization in partnership with OCGA
- RPPR facilitation

Services Not Provided

The Sponsored Projects Administration Pre-Award Team does not provide the following services:

- Assistance with development of scientific documents
- Development of IRB and IACUC protocols
- Accessing electronic accounts directly through PI login. PIs should work with their Pre-Award Research Administrators (RA) to set up delegate access.
- Contacting the Dean's Office for letters of support, cost share approval, or new space requests. The PI must coordinate with the Dean's Office directly in these instances with support from the Pre-Award RA.
- MTA submissions
    - PIs or their lab personnel are responsible for submitting their own MTAs through Kuali. Please contact your Pre-Award RA for instructions and guidance.

Staff Expectation and Commitment

- Each faculty member will be assigned a Pre-Award RA based on their primary department with a back-up available in case of time out of the office or heavy workload.
- Pre-Award RAs will respond to requests and other emails within 2 business days.
- Pre-Award RAs will reach out to faculty to coordinate preparation and submission of RPPRs at least two weeks prior to the due date.
- Pre-Award RAs will meet with their assigned faculty no less than once per quarter via Zoom to discuss upcoming proposals, personnel and effort changes, and other issues pertinent to pre-award research administration. The assigned Post-Award Fund Manager for each PI will also participate in this meeting.
    o One summary email will be sent to the PI with topics discussed and next steps
    o Ad-hoc meetings can be requested by directly contacting the assigned RA

PI Expectation and Commitment

In order to have ample time to triage, prepare, and thoroughly review all proposals, we ask all PIs to adhere to the 14/5/2 UCSD Proposal Submission Timeline:

- AT LEAST 14 business days or earlier before published deadline: PI notifies research administrator of intent to submit a proposal.
- 5 business days or earlier before published deadline: proposal is routed to OCGA. It is a requirement that all proposals be routed through OCGA.
- 2 business days or earlier before published deadline: PI provides final draft to research administrator so that proposal can be submitted.

Post-Award Research Administration

The Post-Award team is responsible for all elements of award management from the time of award through closeout. The team is comprised of Fund Managers who are responsible for providing each PI and their lab personnel with day-to-day oversight, assistance, and support in the financial administration of grants, contracts, and other funded support.

The Post-Award Team is comprised of three RA4 leads and 6 Fund Managers: 3 RA3 and 3 RA2.
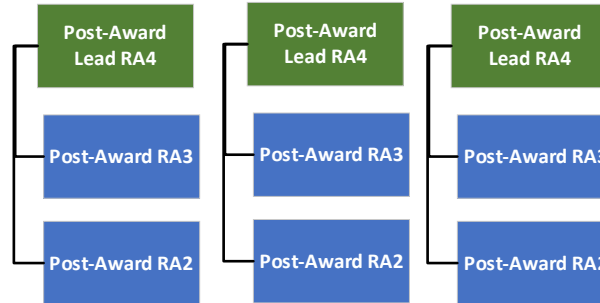
Post-Award Roles and Responsibilities

The SPA Post-award team performs all tasks related to financial management of grants and contracts as outlined below:

Spectrum of Responsibility	Definitions
P = Primary	Responsible for ensuring the function is completed
S = Secondary	Secondary responsibility: works closely with P and owns parts of the function but not all
A = Advisory	Provides guidance and information to those responsible for the task completion; not responsible for the completion of the function
M = Ongoing Monitoring	Monitors function to ensure completion; low level of involvement

Function	Other Units	PI	Pre-Award	Post-Award	OCGA	SPF
Post-Award						
Determining expenditures allocable to award (scientific)		P		A		M
Reviewing expenditures for allowability		S		P		M
Cost transfers		A		P		S
Letter of credit draws						P
Sponsor invoicing				S		P
Cost sharing				P		M
Ongoing budget monitoring and reconciliation		P		P		
Account overdrafts		P		A		M
Award cash management / budget monitoring				S		P
Award direct charging (review of allowability)				S		P
Subrecipient monitoring		P		S		P
Effort reporting		P		A	A	
Sponsor financial reporting				S		P
Award accounts receivable (AR) management						P
Award accounts payable (AP) management						P

No cost extension request / management	P	S	P	S	
Auditing	A		A		P
Compliance reporting					P
Financial reconciliation and closeout	A		P		S
Award closeout			P		P
Record retention / storage		S	P		P
Final report (financial)			P		S
Final report (scientific)	P		M	S	

Services Provided

The SPA Post-Award Team will assist faculty with all aspects of financial management for sponsored projects and general projects after an award has been issued, including, but not limited to:
- Annual budgeting and projections
- Personnel appointments
- Approval of Concur reports prepared by Faculty Assistants
- Review and approval of Oracle requisitions
- Periodic fund reports
- Coordination with Sponsored Projects Finance (SPF) to complete annual and final financial reporting
- Issuing subawards
- Effort and salary planning and processing, including:
    o Faculty Salary Exchange Program (FSEP)
    o General Campus Compensation Plan (GCCP)
    o Summer Salary
- Award closeout
- Deficit monitoring and resolution
- Other post-award services included in the above table

Services Not Provided

The Sponsored Projects Administration Post-Award Team does not provide the following services:
- Procurement assistance beyond approval of requisitions in Oracle
    o Procurement support resources and FAQs can be found here.

Staff Expectation and Commitment
- Each faculty member will be assigned a Post-Award Research Administrator. Post-Award contacts by faculty name can be found here.
- Post-Award Fund Managers will respond to requests and other emails within 2 business days.
- Post-Award Fund Managers will meet with their assigned faculty no less than once per quarter via Zoom to discuss project balances, current effort, and other issues related to post-award administration. The assigned Pre-Award RA for each PI will also participate in this meeting.
    o One summary email will be sent to the PI with topics discussed and next steps

- Ad-hoc meetings 30-minute meetings can be requested by directly contacting the assigned Fund Manager

PI Expectation and Commitment

While Post-Award Fund Managers are available to answer questions related to funding balances, faculty are expected to review their Faculty & Researcher Dashboard between meetings to understand the current state of their portfolio.

To Access the Dashboard through the Business Analytics Hub:
- Navigate to **bah.ucsd.edu**
- Select **Budget & Finance**
    - If using the *List View*, look for **Faculty and Researchers Dashboard** in the list or use the search bar at the top right and click the dashboard name
    - If using the *Card View*, click the **Faculty and Researcher** tab and click Launch on the **Faculty and Researcher Dashboard** tile
- Use your **Active Directory credentials** to sign in, if prompted.
- ***Please only use the Project & Portfolio Management (PPM), NOT the General Ledger (GL), for the most accurate project balances.***

Faculty can visit the [Faculty & Researcher Dashboard on Blink](#) to understand how to use the data and to view answers to frequently asked questions.

Operations and Issue Resolution

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

SPA teams are committed to providing high quality, consistent, and effective service to the research community. Under this SLA, all parties are committed to identifying ways to enhance the quality of the internal operational processes, assessing different ways of delivering services in the future, and increasing the overall value of end-to-end processes. This commitment to continuous improvement will require regular re-evaluation of our processes by stakeholders to ensure SPA is meeting the needs of the research community.

Pre- and Post-Award leadership will manage a continuous improvement process via the following activities:
- Documenting issues and problems (e.g., surveys, faculty meetings, etc.)
- Managing teams to generate solutions and develop other improvement opportunities
- Validating suggested solutions
- Devising a clear action plan to achieve results and disseminate to stakeholders
- Monitoring initiative progress and effectiveness

Escalation Procedure

The Sponsored Projects Administration Pre- and Post-Award leadership agree to implement and oversee an issue resolution process to identify, track, resolve, and report issues which impact their staff's ability to deliver services, business area satisfaction, or stakeholder relationships. The resolution model is designed to deal with issues in a prompt and effective manner, and to assist in preventing recurrence in the future.

There are four guiding principles to the issue resolution process:

1. Identification is the timely determination that a customer or process issue exists. Issues should be identified and communicated promptly to speed resolution.
2. Processing is the accurate classification and timely resolution of a customer or process issue. Unresolved issues should be routed via the escalation path.
3. Reporting is the process of documenting the resolution and an appropriate timeframe for issue completion. As items are escalated and resolved, any assigned activities supporting issue resolution should be communicated to impacted areas as well as to the issue originators to maintain process transparency.
4. Prevention is the proactive management and addressing the root cause of the identified issue to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. Pre- and Post-Award teams and faculty should be equally responsible for preventing issue recurrence once agreed-upon mitigation steps are executed.

Items not resolved by the CFO should be escalated to the Assistant Dean

Items not resolved by the director should be escalated to the CFO

Items not resolved by team leads should be escalated to Director of SPO

Pre-Award or Post-Award Lead is engaged for direct management collaboration

Faculty and staff member work together to resolve