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To: Research Faculty and Staff in the College of HEST
From: Michael C. Hout, Associate Dean of Research, College of HEST
CC: Rick Marlatt, Dean, College of HEST
CC: Juanita Hannan, Director of Research Operations Center, College of HEST
Date: 6/30/2025; updated 7/25/2025
Subject: Formalization of Policies Surrounding Sponsored Research

Hello HEST researchers. The purpose of this memo is to inform you all of the formalization of policies surrounding procedures and expectations for funded research.

Why the changes and why now?

HEST is still a relatively new college, and the office of the ADR has only been a permanent position for just under a year. That means there is still much that can be done to streamline procedures, increase the quality of record-keeping and accountability, and generally improve process efficiency. Like any college, solid procedures and expectations form the foundation of good business practices and responsible fiscal management. This is more important than ever during a time in which grant funding (and overhead cost billing) is increasingly difficult to acquire. We are formalizing policies and procedures now that will hopefully lead to positive outcomes for the College of HEST at large, and that will allow us to continue to grow our thriving research enterprise.

What specifically is changing or being formalized?

Two things. First, prior to submitting any grant proposal (external or internal), the College of HEST requires that the PI fill out a brief pre-authorization form. This should take only a few minutes to complete, and it will provide us with information about the personnel working on a project, where they are submitting their grant, and more. It will also ensure that departmental supervisors are aware of grant proposals in process in their units. This is not an onerous task, and our offices will ensure that these documents are reviewed quickly and moved through the pipeline efficiently. Once departmental signoff occurs, the formal routing process will start with the office of the ADR, it will then move to the Research Operations Center (ROC), and it will then be moved on to Research Administration Services (RAS; when appropriate).

The second thing that is changing is that we're clearly articulating policies surrounding what constitutes appropriate sponsored research activities. Some of these policies are currently implied,

so the College of HEST is making them more explicit. Many of them are things that most researchers are already doing, and so their formalization won't change your work in any way. Lastly, some of them are reasonable requirements that ensure the College of HEST is able to function and serve its research faculty and staff effectively.

How will this help the College of HEST and its faculty and staff?

These policies will help in two primary ways. First, they will increase the quality and depth of record-keeping. By having a store of pre-authorization forms, for example, the office of the ADR will have a fuller understanding of who is working on a proposal, and the pertinent details of the project. That allows the ADR to better target efforts to reach out and offer assistance, follow-up with PIs, and so on. It will also help the ADR gain a fuller understanding of what types of funds are being applied for so that the ADR's office can craft more opportunities and resources that fit the needs of the College (e.g., by tailoring workshops to relevant areas of focus).

Second, the policies will better help ensure fiscal responsibility and long-term financial stability for the College. Here, I am speaking specifically to the requirement that external grants seek indirect costs (IDC) as part of their budget. The overwhelming majority of grants submitted by the College already do this, of course. But this is more important than ever because IDC is used to cover the costs of staff, initiatives that come from the office of the ADR (e.g., mini-grant programs), start-up funds for new faculty, operating costs (e.g., electricity, software, maintenance), and much more.

What do I have to do differently?

Not much. PIs will now have to fill out the pre-authorization form whenever a new grant proposal is started, and they will have to make sure that they are following the policies outlined below.

Where can I find the new pre-authorization form?

The pre-authorization form can be found on the HEST ADR homepage (https://hestresearch.nmsu.edu/forms-policies/home.html). In that location can also be found a timeline of the research process (so that PIs can better understand the steps that need to be taken from start to finish), and waiver authorization forms.

What are the specific policies that are being implemented?

The new or newly formalized policies are the following:

- All PIs are expected to maintain university stewardship and accurate representation in all sponsored projects.
- Prior to the pursuit of an external funding opportunity, all PIs will submit the HEST Grant Proposal Pre-authorization Form.
- The budget and FTE distribution for all grant proposals must be approved by RAS and ROC before HEST will accept the project and begin processing.
- When a project is structured as a fixed-price or reimbursable based on deliverables, and the majority of expenses are labor-related, a recommended approach is to evenly distribute salary

expenses across the project's period of performance. This should be adjusted only if there is a specific reason, such as the bulk of the work being concentrated in a particular timeframe.

- The recovery of indirect costs (IDC) is determined by the sponsor's policies, the applicable Request for Proposals (RFP), legal statute, or the type of funding that will be used to fund the project. Research Administration Services (RAS) is the office responsible for asking the sponsor about IDC; this is to maintain uniformity and consistency across the NMSU system and to avoid any confusion or misunderstandings. Once a proposal submission is identified and approved by the ADR and ROC, RAS will be notified and will contact the sponsor if IDC recovery is not clearly outlined in the RFP. The sponsor's response will be shared with the PI, ADR, and ROC.
- A final report summarizing activities and deliverables within the scope of work should be submitted within 30 days of project completion by the PI to their supervisor. Where applicable, this can merely be a copy of the final reporting that is being provided to the funding agency (i.e., it does not have to be a new report).
- All PIs are expected to support RAS as the official contact for all funding agencies and must follow all instructions and guidelines provided by RAS.
- The PI's department is responsible for ensuring the scope of work is carried out.
- Contracts for the next fiscal year, whenever possible, should be executed by May 15th to ensure adequate funding sources (unless approved by the Dean's office). In the event that an exception is needed, the PI will reach out to the office of the ADR to discuss the reasons for this exception.