News

Wellcome Trust change in guidance

The Wellcome Trust has made two changes to their guidance:

**Ring-fenced budgets**

Ring-fencing budgets will no longer be included on conventional grants from Tuesday 1 December 2015. The ring-fenced budget on existing awards is no longer applicable. There are exceptions (both grant calls and expenditure categories) to this, please read the guidance here: Managing grant budgets.

Ring-fenced budgets set-up using separate tasks on Oracle Projects can remain in place, but are no longer required in-terms of controlling expenditure.

Grant holders will be able to move funds into and out of budgets, but any significant transfer of funds between cost headings must be agreed with Wellcome. This means that costs can be reported appropriately and any virement that meets the guidance will not be questioned. In the case of existing ring-fenced budgets, the Oracle rules can be ignored for reporting purposes.

The Wellcome Trust guidance regarding significant transfers of costs between budget headings is helpful but please note that it is subjective. Ensuring that costs are coded correctly now becomes more important as significant mis-coding can give the impression of significant virement. Contact your Research Accounts advisor in the first instance if you are unsure whether significant transfer has occurred.

Any transfers must be identified in advance and the Wellcome Trust notified. If a significant transfer is reported on an End of Grant Spend Report without agreement in place they reserve the right to not pay for these costs.

Financial reporting
Wellcome are clarifying their arrangements for closing grant accounts and introducing new processes to ensure all conventional grant accounts are closed on a timely basis.

Departments are expected to ensure that each End of Grant Spend Report is submitted within three months of the end of the grant as outlined in the guidance: Closing grant accounts. Research Accounts advisors will now be working to the three month deadline. Any reminders from Wellcome will be directed to Research Accounts and will be followed up promptly.

Where reporting is not completed in-line with the expectations, the 10% retention held by Wellcome will not be paid. This change effectively brings in a 10% sanction for non-compliance with the reporting deadline. Where you have specific concerns about meeting the deadline you must contact your Research Accounts advisor and where appropriate the situation will be raised with Wellcome.

**National Institutes of Health (U.S.) change in guidance**

All annual budgets starting from 26 December 2014 onwards will now operate under the updated federal guidelines and refreshed NIH Grant Policy Statement (GPS).

One major change is that VAT is now an eligible cost for NIH projects. This is included in 7.9.1 of the NIH GPS: this table has been updated to be consistent with the federal ordinances.

Additional flexibility in award management has been allowed for sections 8.1.1.3 through 8.1.1.8 of the NIH GPS. These changes are unlikely to affect projects being run here.

Despite thoughts to the contrary, the F&A (indirect cost) rate remains eight percent.

**Research collaborator invoices**

Collaborator invoices cannot currently be processed through Oracle Purchase Orders because it is not possible to raise purchase orders with a negative PO value for price adjustment. In order to overcome this, departments can send the original invoice to the Payments team without a PO and they will post the invoice to the project and make the required payment.

To ensure that the Payments team can complete the transaction, the department must provide the Sub Task number along with the invoice and match the expenditure as identified on this to the amounts allocated against each Oracle expenditure type. The expenditure types should be the Non-Oxford expenditure types.
If the invoice is for more than £100k then it also needs to be authorised by the Divisional Financial Controller.

**Principal Investigator set-up**

There have been difficulties at Research Accounts recently when setting-up projects with new Principal Investigators. Departments need to notify their Research Accounts advisor when a new Principal Investigator needs to be set up on Oracle since there is no interface between HRIS and Oracle. Your Research Accounts advisor will then make sure the PI is set up. Also note that all PIs must be set-up in CORE even if they are not being paid (for example, honorary or retired Professors).

**Horizon 2020: Timesheet update**

Please be aware that the hybrid Horizon 2020-FP-7 timesheet has been updated [here](#).

**Studentships**

The Studentships team within Research Accounts is now able to create projects for internally funded students. This will commonly be used for top-up awards which are commonly managed either through departmental projects or the departmental GL. This function is available for departments at their discretion. There are a few forms that need to be completed if you wish to set-up these projects; they will have the award type ‘Studentship-Internal’ and the project numbers sequentially linked to the main award (for top-up funding).

If you have any student funds which are being topped up by a department, please contact Studentships Research Accounts on [studentships-ra@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:studentships-ra@admin.ox.ac.uk) and they will send you the relevant forms.

**Audit feedback**

**National Institutes of Health (U.S.) Foreign Organisation System Review**

The University has recently received a Foreign Organisation Review. A grant was selected from the university portfolio for review: The approach assesses the University systems for the management of research projects from a financial, administrative and a small amount of science operations. The questionnaire which formed the basis of the review requested a significant volume of information from across the University to evidence our compliance with NIH rules. The audit provided positive feedback for the University systems as designed and presented, and a clean report has been taken back to the
NIH. However, very limited testing of compliance with processes and procedures was undertaken and the testing itself was not as robust as the annual audit.

**European Commission Court of Auditors**

A Marie Curie ITN was reviewed by the Court of Auditors. No material issues were identified and therefore nothing reported back to the European Commission.

However, they did identify 15 Euros of tax included as part of the management costs and they also noted the lack of signed offer letters or employment contracts for the fellows. In this instance, the auditor was relaxed about this personnel compliance but Departments should endeavour to ensure that as a minimum there are offer letters signed before the official start date on file.

**InnovateUK audits**

We are seeing more InnovateUK projects across the University, so please remember that InnovateUK financial reporting (and audits where required) must be completed within 30 days of the end of each reporting period. Audits are required at different times depending on the award value and this is detailed within each contract.

In practice, the financial reporting is submitted within 30 days, and then the audit certificate is provided within 60 days of the end of the reporting period; except when it is the final reporting period where the certificate is also gained within 30 days.

**Training**

**National Institutes of Health (U.S.)**

A refresher of National Institutes of Health (U.S.) funding rules will be running on Wednesday 20 January 10am – 12pm in Room A of the Richard Doll Building (WTCHG – Churchill Road). This will cover feedback from recent audits and the new guidance that has been issued.

Please contact Samuel Hannis (samuel.hannis@admin.ox.ac.uk) if you would like to attend.