



JOB TITLE: Research Finance Coordinator
REPORTS TO (job title): Research Resource Manager
JOBS REPORTING (job titles): None
DEPARTMENT: Electrical & Computer Engineering
SALARY GRADE: USG 7
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2017

PRIMARY PURPOSE:

The Research Finance Coordinator is responsible for post-award financial administration of sponsored research funds. The Coordinator provides financial administrative support and monitors the use of research funds (internal and/or external), for an assigned group of faculty members.

These research grants include but are not limited to any federal, provincial, municipal, Institutional, corporation/business, association/society, foundation, or any other agency/organization. The grants/contracts can include but are not limited to internal awards, standard grants (e.g. Tri-council e.g. SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR), and non-standard sponsored research funds whose guidelines/requirements are unique to each research project (e.g. CFI, CIDA, NCEs, OCEs, etc.) and finances are often complex.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1.	<p>FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifies research project revenues received to ensure that funds are available for the expenses;• Verifies expenditures are in compliance with Agency guidelines and the terms and regulations set out in the grant, contract or agreement, and ensures that Research Accounting business processes and University policies are adhered to;• Reviews research staff contracts, USRA, URI, URA payments, and salaries to ensure eligibility of expenses in accordance with granting agency guidelines/requirements;• Reviews journal entry transactions, including Interdepartmental Billings, ensuring that the transaction is in compliance with fund transfer rules, applicable HST tax rules and that the appropriate expense transfer approvals are in place;• Investigates discrepancies and follows-up with Principal Investigators and/or designates as needed;• Interprets Agencies' guidelines and University policies to ensure that the administration and the use of the funds are in compliance;• Prepares complex reconciliations of research accounts, reviews budgets, monitors deposits of funds, and project end dates;• Reviews journal vouchers, exercising judgment in determining appropriateness of transaction in relation to University policy and Agency terms and conditions;• Submits purchase requisitions as needed;• Identifies problem accounts and recommends corrective action to be taken in consultation with the Research Resource Manager;• Monitors over expenditures on research accounts and ensures appropriate authorizations are in place or future funding will be available before approving charges on research projects;• Monitors financial status of all projects and ensures expenditure is controlled within budget, milestones are met and all claims/invoices are provided in a timely and accurate manner;•
2.	<p>SUPPORT TO PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaises with granting agencies, industry, Office of Research, Finance, Human Resources and the other UW departments;• Provides guidance to Principal Investigators (PIs) and other research staff on financial rules and policies relevant to their grants and contracts;• Advises and informs research faculty and staff on financial matters;• Monitors spending levels in research project grants and provides PIs with budget and financial information enabling them to manage their accounts;• Notifies Principal Investigators and/or designates of discrepancies and follows-up to resolve on a timely basis;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice to Principal Investigator and/or designate concerning University and/or granting agencies policies and procedures (e.g. eligibility of expenses, preparation of forms) and comprehension of financial reports; • Contacts individuals, granting agencies, on sensitive matters in order to obtain, provide, and/or clarify information; • Runs queries, reviews, and interprets financial data to answer queries from Principal Investigators and/or designates. • Answers non routine enquiries concerning research and follow-up on granting agencies additional questions/requirements.
3.	<p>OTHER DUTIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as backup to Research Resource Manager for deficit resolution to work with Principal Investigators and/or designates to correct overspent accounts. • Acts as backup to Research Resource Manager for grant application submission during absences. • Acts as backup to other Research Finance Coordinator(s) during absences or as required. • Provides training assistance to the department research community. • Assists internal and external auditors as required. • Stays up to date on changes in granting agency regulations, University policies and procedures, research and trust administration practices, and new technology or programs. • Maintains procedures and documentation pertaining to the responsibilities of the position; • Attend all training on new systems and procedures, and meetings as required; • Performs other duties related to the requirements of the job or as assigned by the Research Resource Manager and/or Administrative Officer.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

Education

- Post-secondary accounting related diploma or equivalent combination of education and experience with a strong financial background. Accounting designation preferred.

Experience

- Post-secondary accounting related diploma or equivalent education and experience with a strong financial background in a research environment. Accounting designation preferred.
Minimum 3 years' progressive financial experience
Working knowledge of federal and provincial funding sources and related guidelines for institutional awards is preferred
Proven ability interpreting terms and conditions of grants/contracts to resolve discrepancies
Experience with large collaborative projects is an asset
Strong negotiation and conflict resolution skills needed to effectively resolve issues and work strategically with faculty members
Advanced MS Excel, intermediate MS Word, and databases
Recent working experience with budgets, financial management and online financial reporting systems
Strong analytical, judgement, and problem solving skills
Strong interpersonal and communication skills, tact and diplomacy are required to provide professional advice on accounting and process issues
Excellent organizational, prioritization and planning skills
High attention to detail with extreme accuracy is required
Proven ability to manage a large volume of work, conflicting priorities and deadlines
Understanding of University of Waterloo's culture, policies, procedures and business systems an asset
Demonstrated ability to work independently in a team environment and handle confidential information

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Recent working knowledge of budgets, accounting and financial management preferably in an academic environment
- Strong analytical, judgement, and problem solving skills
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, tact and diplomacy are required to provide professional advice on accounting and process issues.
- Excellent organizational, prioritization and planning skills
- High attention to detail with extreme accuracy is required.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently in a team environment and handle confidential information

MS Word	Excel	PowerPoint	Other
Intermediate	Advanced	Not required	Concur or other online reimbursement system PeopleSoft Financial System, Unit 4 or equivalent (advanced) Online purchasing Databases e.g. FileMaker Pro – Intermediate Sharepoint

NATURE AND SCOPE:

Interpersonal Contacts:

The Coordinator must effectively liaise with the campus community and external partners, and must be able to build excellent working relationships with key persons both inside and outside the department.

Type: Principal Investigators (and/or designates).

Purpose: Obtain/provide and/or clarify information with Principal Investigators. This can involve instructing, enlisting the cooperation and advising Principal Investigators on University and/or granting agency policies and procedures. Communicate detailed financial information.

Type: Granting Agencies, Auditors.

Purpose: Obtain and/or clarify additional information with granting agencies on guidelines and/or requirements. Convey detailed financial information.

Type: Office of Research, Centre Coordinators, Other Universities.

Purpose: Obtain/provide and/or clarify additional information on University and/or granting agency policies and procedures, guidelines and/or requirements. Obtain/provide and/or clarify information on grants/contracts for/from Faculties or Centres when needed. Interact with Principal Investigators and/or departments of other universities (e.g. Office of Research Services, Research Accounting) to administer sub-agreement requirements.

Type: Faculty Financial Officer/Analyst, Finance, Co-operative Education, or Payroll.

Purpose: Obtain/provide and/or clarify financial information or assistance.

Type: Research/administrative personnel, students

Purpose: Act as a resource to University staff in research compliance and eligibility matters by providing effective advice, information and assistance to a wide range of customers (University departments, research administrators, research personnel and project holders) regarding Granting Agency rules and regulations, University policies, procedures and financial systems and Research Accounting processes for charging expenses to research projects.

- **Level of Responsibility:**

Responsible for consistent application of the University's financial regulations, policies and procedures as they apply to research and consultancy activity. Non-compliance with contractual terms and /or Agency guidelines could result in the return of agency funds, loss of future funds, and /or inability to collect funds owed to the University. Incorrect interpretation of Agency and University policy provided to Faculty can result in non-compliance with agency terms on the use of funds. Incorrect analysis, financial reporting, invoicing to contract/granting agencies, or misrepresentation on use of funds, would affect the University's credibility in administration of research funds. The Coordinator is responsible for the financial review of research transactions to ensure compliance with granting agency guidelines or sponsor regulations, research governance and University policies. Review of these research transactions requires extensive knowledge of the various funding agency guidelines combined with understanding of applicable University policies and processes. A high degree of accuracy, a thorough understanding of policies and practices, the ability to anticipate, investigate and resolve problems, and the ability to meet conflicting demands are expected. Failure to do so may result in overpayments, duplicate payments, payroll delays, deficits or inappropriate charges, to prevent using operating funds to cover these shortages.

- **Decision-Making Authority:**

The Coordinator uses knowledge of the granting agencies, available funding streams, applicable granting agency guidelines, approved budget for the research project, and the university policies and procedures. S/he establishes own priorities in accomplishing job duties, and seeks advice only on unusual problems. As part of the administration of grants/contracts, s/he will identify issues, resolve if possible, and/or escalate to Manager for resolution.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands:**

The job entails judgment and knowledge of University, granting agency, and accounting policies and procedures. This position handles sensitive materials and deals with complex situations. It requires mental concentration and the incumbent must listen carefully to client concerns or circumstances, and read into and between the lines of emails or correspondence to identify issues or problems daily.

- **Working Environment:**

This role involves minimal psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to disagreeable situations and deals with distressed clients. Provides information or explanations that may not be well received by the recipient. There may be ambiguity of situations and shortcomings in data, and some internal clients may be demanding, may request breaking policy, and some situations may require escalation. This role responds to situations where there is a lot of pressure to find a solution quickly.