

Approval Authority Policy

POLICY SUMMARY

This policy provides guidance on the delegation and assignment of authority to approve transactions managed and executed by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs; identifies the circumstances under which approvals are required by the president, provost, vice-presidents, deans, department chairs, The Research Foundation operations manager and The Research Foundation deputy operations manager; and requires that transactions requesting payment to an individual be approved by the next higher level of authority.

POLICY

BACKGROUND

SUNY Buffalo State (the college, institution) and as SUNY's partner, The Research Foundation (RF) enters into and executes many transactions which obligate institutional resources. A sound internal control environment requires that only authorized individuals or their designees approve transactions. Internal controls help to ensure that transactions are:

- legitimate, appropriate, and allowable
- executed in accordance with institutional policy and relevant financial, legal, and contractual requirements and
- reviewed for errors prior to execution.

POLICY STATEMENT

Only authorized individuals may approve transactions that obligate the institution to receive or spend RF funds, provide or receive services, and/or otherwise commit RF resources. Individuals may enter into these transactions only if they have the appropriate level of authority. Approval authority may be applied to actions and/or transactions such as, but not limited to: proposal submission, signing employee time reports, requests for hiring, performance appraisals, extra service requests, purchasing and payment requests, expense and travel reimbursements.

All transactions requesting payment to or benefiting an individual require approval by the next higher level of authority. No approver may authorize a payment to oneself or benefiting oneself, including but not limited to, personnel transactions, employee expenditure reimbursements, petty cash, and travel reimbursements. This standard of 'two sets of eyes' reviewing transactions promotes accountability as well as the appropriate use of the institution's resources.

Delegation of Authority

In the scope of sponsored program operations, the principal investigator (PI) will have approval authority on their awards. A PI may designate approval authority to a co-PI or other individual.

Where permitted, individuals may delegate authority to other qualified individuals as appropriate to improve operational efficiency. However, delegation of approval authority does not absolve

the delegator of responsibility for oversight of transactions. Final responsibility for expenditures authorized by a designee will rest with the delegator.

Delegations of approval authority must be documented and:

- clearly identify parameters and scope of the delegation
- provide maximum dollar limits
- specify the duration of delegation - i.e. time limitations, permanent or temporary status
- be kept current
- maintained in the departmental files, and
- a copy provided to the Sponsored Program Operations (SPO) office.

Guidelines for delegating approval authority:

- approvers should be those individuals who know enough about the transaction to verify its accuracy, allowability, and consistency with policy
- approval authority should be delegated to improve operational efficiency of essential business needs, and add value to the transaction, such as being a final control.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Research Foundation accounts managed by the Sponsored Programs Operations office.

DEFINITIONS

Approval Authority is the permission to approve transactions for execution. This approval attests to the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the transaction within the college's program objectives and budgetary authorizations. Transaction approval may be performed electronically in accordance with system requirements or manually with a handwritten signature.

Research and Sponsored Programs Office **was** formerly known as The Research Foundation for SUNY at Buffalo State

The Research Foundation operations manager is the Vice President of Finance and Management at SUNY Buffalo State

The Research Foundation deputy operations manager is the Associate Vice President of Sponsored Programs Operations at SUNY Buffalo State

RESPONSIBILITY

Approver

- Verify you have the authority to approve the transaction.
- Verify the transaction conforms to institution and sponsored programs policies; and federal, state, and local laws.
- Confirm that funds are available and expenses are allowable.
- Verify that there is no real or apparent conflict of interest on your part or on the part of any other individual or organization involved in the transaction.
- When required, obtain additional review and approval.

Delegator

- Individuals who have signing authority may delegate the approval authority to another individual as appropriate, ensuring the delegate, understands the rules relating to the type of actions/transactions.
- Individuals with delegated approval authority may have different levels of authority than the delegator.
- Final responsibility for expenditures authorized by a delegate will rest with the designating official.
- Maintains a written delegation plan documenting the name and signature of the approver and the scope of delegation.
- Provides the SPO office with the most current listing of delegations.
- Reviews the written delegation plan periodically and update as appropriate.

PROCEDURE

The following charts list the transactions which require the signature of the president, provost, vice president, and/or RF operations manager.

HUMAN RESOURCE TRANSACTION APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

APPOINTMENTS, REAPPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND LEAVES	PI or Designee	Provost or Vice President (non-academic)	President	And /Or	SPO Human Resource
All RF appointments, reappointments, promotions or leaves for Principal Investigators (PI), faculty and administrative staff require approval by the NEXT HIGHER LEVEL of authority AND SPO HR.					

SALARY CHANGES AND ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION	PI or Designee	Provost or Vice President (non-academic)	President	And /Or	SPO Human Resource
All RF salary increases, including over-the-maximum increases, require approval of the Principal Investigator	X	X	X	And	X
All RF salary increases with a new salary above the maximum for the grade/rank	X	X	X	And	X
Requests for extra service compensation must be approved in advance and adhere to the RF extra service policy for PI, faculty and administrative employees on RF /sponsored funds	X	X		And	X
OTHER HUMAN RESOURCE TRANSACTIONS	PI or Designee	Provost Or Vice President (non-academic)	President	And /Or	SPO Human Resource
Time and attendance records for PIs, faculty, and administrative staff on RF/sponsored program funding require approval by the NEXT HIGHER LEVEL of authority AND SPO HR.					

JOBS APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS – RESEARCH FOUNDATION APPOINTMENTS

JOBS - RESEARCH FOUNDATION APPOINTMENTS	Principal Investigator	Chair	Dean Or Director	Provost or Vice President	Research Foundation OM/DOM	And /Or	SPO Human Resource
Classification and Recruitment Approvals	X	X or	X or	X		And	X
Hiring Proposals	X	X or	X or	X		And	X
Exception Approvals	X	X or	X or		X	And	X

OTHER UNIVERSITY TRANSACTION APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

OTHER TRANSACTIONS	PI or Designee	RF Operations Manager	Or	Provost or Vice President (non-academic)	And/or	President	SPO Grants Mgmt
RF funded travel to any country identified by the US Department of State with a travel warning (requires advance written approval from the RF operations manager and president, with written notice to RF Central)	X	X				X	X

AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN CONTRACTS OBLIGATING UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

CONTRACTS AND SERVICE AGREEMENTS	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
<p>Contracts and Service Agreements must be signed by an authorized signatory. No other signatures are legally acceptable. Unless otherwise noted, only one authorized signature is required.</p>	
All RF contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for Finance and Administration • Director Pre-Award and Contract Services • Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations • Purchasing Services Manager
All RF/SPO leases, revocable permits, and academic agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Pre-Award and Contract Services • Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations
RF Procurement-related contracts for goods, services, and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for Finance and Administration • Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations • Purchasing Services Manager
RF consultant contracts only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for Finance and Administration • Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations • Purchasing Services Manager • Director Pre-Award and Contract Services
RF Intellectual property-related contracts only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for Finance and Administration • Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations

AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN PURCHASE REQUISITIONS & PURCHASE ORDERS

REQUISITIONS & PURCHASE ORDERS	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
Requisitions and Purchase Orders must be signed by an authorized signatory. No other signatures are legally acceptable.	
No approver may authorize a payment to oneself or benefiting oneself.	
Initiate e-Requisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal Investigator or designee
Approve e-Requisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal Investigator or designee
Sign purchase orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Authorized personnel in Procurement Services
Stipends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal Investigator or designee · Purchasing Services Manager
Sub – recipient payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal Investigator or designee · Purchasing Services Manager
Travel Transactions (advances, reimbursements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal Investigator or designee · Purchasing Services Manager

OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS NOT REQUIRING PRESIDENT or PROVOST APPROVAL

ACTIVITY	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
RF bank accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Associate VP for Sponsored Programs Operations

RELATED LINKS

SUNY Buffalo State Organization Charts (to identify the next higher level of authority)
[linear version](http://hr.buffalostate.edu/organization-chart-linear) (<http://hr.buffalostate.edu/organization-chart-linear>) **OR**
[graphic version](http://suny.buffalostate.edu/administration) (<http://suny.buffalostate.edu/administration>)

REVISION HISTORY

6-28-2014 Added **Related Link** to SUNY Buffalo State Organization Charts

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Date established: July 2014

Category: Sponsored Programs

Date Last Revised: June 28, 2014

Responsible Office: Sponsored Programs Operations

Date Posted to Library: June 20, 2014