

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY
Administration of Contracts and Grants Policy

Preamble

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) pursues an aggressive program to obtain resources from federal agencies, state government, foundations, organizations and individuals to support teaching, research and community projects. This section contains ECSU's policy to guide program implementation when a proposal or request for external resources becomes an award.

A. Award Acceptance

When a proposal is funded, an authorized agent of the sponsor grants an award to ECSU. The acceptance of the award commits ECSU to the conditions of a contractual agreement. The conditions of the agreement are described within the context of the proposal, contract and related documentation. All new or continuing awards or contracts shall be registered with SPCG before an account can be established with the Office of Business and Finance. Awards for proposals not authorized by ECSU and not having a fully executed Internal Processing Form may be turned down by the university. In all cases, ECSU reserves the right to reject an award.

B. Post-Award Meeting

After ECSU receives the official contract or grant award notification from the sponsoring agency, SPCG, in conjunction with the Office of Business & Finance, shall convene a post-award meeting with the PI and other parties relevant to the implementation of the grant or contract (i.e. Human Resources, Purchasing, Facilities Management, Academic Affairs representative, etc.). The PI, not a representative, must be present at the conference before an account number for the project will be issued.

The PI shall also present all contract requests, signed by Academic Affairs or other appropriate unit, related to the project prior to or at the convening of the post-award meeting. This will facilitate the expeditious processing of requests and timely implementation of project objectives that require the services of external contractors. Contractors shall not commence any work or provide any services before receiving a fully executed contract.

C. Sub-agreements

A sub-agreement may be either a subcontract or a sub-award, each of which is an agreement between ECSU and a third party to transfer a portion of ECSU's obligation on a sponsored project to that third party. Federal agencies often require a separate cost and pricing proposal and appropriate Subcontractor Certifications, in accordance with the Truth-in Negotiations Act. Sponsor approval normally constitutes approval of the sub-agreements. If a proposal includes the use of sub-agreements, the sub-agreement shall not be executed until the grant or contract has been awarded and a fully executed agreement received. Hence, upon award

notification, the PI shall submit his/her request for the preparation of the agreement to SPCG at the post-award meeting (if the work needs to begin soon after the award is received) or a minimum of three weeks (21 business days) prior to the start date. The sub-agreement request shall include the scope of work to be performed, the budget, budget justification, and any flow through terms and conditions identified by the sponsoring agency. See ECSU's Sub-recipient Monitoring Policy 300.4.1.8.

D. Negotiations

SPCG and the PI are responsible for negotiating the technical content and financial arrangements of the proposal with the sponsor. If negotiations result in major contractual or technical changes in the original proposal, the revised proposal shall be resubmitted through the established process for internal signature approval (See SPCG Sponsored Programs Proposal Development Policy, 300.4.1.1, Section A). ECSU reserves the right to determine the extent to which it will continue or terminate negotiations with any sponsor.

E. Property Control

Title of ownership of capital equipment purchased through sponsored funding is subject to ECSU Property Control. Under federal contracts, the government owns equipment over the dollar amount specified in the contract. Under grants, ECSU retains title to ownership. Since title to equipment is vested in ECSU, the PI shall not dispose of equipment without the approval of the respective department chairperson, dean, division/unit head, and the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance.

F. Equipment

Insurance coverage purchased on equipment awarded under a sponsored project shall be deemed an indirect cost, unless otherwise stipulated in the terms and conditions of the award.

G. Drug Free Environment

ECSU is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of illegal drugs and drug abuse. ECSU complies with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, as well as special Drug-Free Work Force rules issued by the U. S. Department of Defense and other federal agencies. A PI working on federally-sponsored projects has a responsibility to help ensure a drug-free workplace and work force. Each ECSU official working on a federal project shall sign a consent form. The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires that ECSU notify the federal contracting agency within 10 days after learning of any employee's criminal drug conviction in the workplace.

H. Change of Principal Investigator

During the course of a sponsored project, circumstances may arise to warrant the designation of a new PI. This appointment shall be made only with the approval of the department chairperson, dean, the vice chancellor, and the sponsor. The request for designation of a new PI must state the reasons for such a change and include the curriculum vitae of the proposed PI.

I. Transfer of Contract or Grant

A faculty member coming from another institution may wish to transfer a sponsored project to ECSU. Such a transfer requires the approval of the home institution and the sponsoring agency. To initiate the transfer process, a new or revised proposal shall be prepared and sent through the normal routing process pursuant to SPCG Proposal Development Policy 300.4.1.1, Section A. A PI transferring from ECSU may wish to continue his or her sponsored project at a new institution. ECSU may elect to retain the project. The Chancellor, with a recommendation from the appropriate dean and Vice Chancellor, shall make the final decision. Approved transfers shall occur only after a final accounting and release from the Office of Contracts & Grants, certifying the funds remaining and available for transfer.

J. No-Cost Extensions

The completion of grant or contract work may sometimes require more time than originally specified. If no additional funds are necessary, a no-cost extension may be requested from the sponsor. The PI shall notify SPCG in writing of the need for a no-cost extension at least 45 days prior to the project expiration date so that SPCG may obtain the sponsor's approval. The notification shall include a justification for the request, revised scope of work, revised budget and budget justification. This documentation, along with the approval for the no-cost extension, shall then be forwarded to the Office of Contracts and Grants.

K. Changes in Research Plan

Research shifts that create a redirection of the statement of work described in the original proposal must be discussed with the sponsor, except in cooperative agreements where the agency is already involved in the project. Otherwise, the PI shall obtain the approval of the dean and SPCG as well as provide a letter to the sponsor explaining the proposed change. If the changes necessitate rebudgeting, the project brief (both the summary of agreement and the budget) shall be revised and filed with the sponsor and SPCG.

L. Carryover Funds

Sponsor policies vary regarding the management of remaining funds at the end of a budget period. PIs should work with SPCG and external sponsors to avoid potential losses. Requests for carryover funds shall be routed through SPCG to the sponsor with a justification that explains why such funds exist and how they will be used during the next budget period. This documentation shall be shared with the Office of Contracts & Grants.

M. Supplemental Funds

Requests for supplemental funds should include a budget showing how the funds will be used and an explanation of why they are needed and relevant to the research. Such requests shall be approved by the department chairperson, dean and the vice chancellor and processed through SPCG. The PI must complete the process for any additional funds received. Final budgets must be forwarded to the Office of Contracts & Grants for updating in ECSU's accounting system.

N. Cost Overruns

Since PIs serve as the budget managers for sponsored projects, it is their responsibility to ensure that project expenditures are within the budget limits. If it appears that costs will exceed the budget, the PI shall contact the Office of Contracts & Grants.

O. Termination of Project Personnel

Personnel whose employment ends with a sponsored project shall be notified by SPCG prior to the end of the project. A Request for Personnel Action indicating the employee's formal separation from ECSU must be submitted by the department chair or appropriate unit head. The termination date shall not extend beyond the completion date of the sponsored project. Payroll payments shall automatically cease at the specified termination date. ECSU may elect to withhold the final payroll payment until the PI provides evidence that all technical reports have been received by the agency with copies to SPCG including documentation that other closeout procedures have been completed. ECSU will not pay for accrued annual leave beyond that date.

Employees must use accrued leave prior to project completion or forfeit it, if they are not to remain on the ECSU payroll after project completion. Employees remaining on the payroll (with ECSU rather than sponsored funds) do not have to use or forfeit such leave accruals. Should the employee's appointment be renewed, a Request for Personnel Action indicating renewal of appointment shall be submitted by the department chair or appropriate unit head.

P. Project Closeout

SPCG's award management system reminds PIs of project close-out dates. At contract or grant termination, the PI shall handle all necessary negotiations regarding property disposal or transfer, while the Office of Contracts & Grants prepares the final report including all charges to date. The PI shall also notify the Office of Contracts & Grants of pending financial charges so that appropriate arrangements can be made for billing the sponsor. Charges received after the financial report have been submitted to the sponsor may be charged to the PI's unit.

Q. Records Retention

Records generated by a sponsored project are retained by the Office of Contracts & Grants for a period of five (5) years beginning from the final audit. The PI shall be responsible for providing the supportive documentation necessary to ensure that the Office of Contracts & Grants retains a detailed set of records. Sponsor requirements for records retention may vary.