

Assumption College

Grants Handbook: Resources, Policies, Procedures August 2009

Director of Grant Development:

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Services of the Research Office

This handbook is designed to guide grant seekers and to inform them of the policies and procedures that must be followed in order to apply for and receive external funding. The purpose of the Research Office is to provide support in securing funds for faculty research, institutional programs and initiatives, capital projects, and general operations and to insure the proper administration of grants.

The Research Office provides the following services:

- locating funding sources and alerting faculty and administrators to funding opportunities that match College priorities
- assisting grant seekers in editing proposals and preparing budgets
- organizing interested faculty to work together on interdisciplinary projects
- conducting workshops and providing coaching on proposal development
- interacting with funding agencies on behalf of the institution or individual
- overseeing production of individual, departmental and College-wide grant proposals
- preparing the final proposal package including proofreading, copying, assembling, and mailing or electronic submission
- maintaining records of grant-related activities and compiling award statistics
- facilitating the post-award administration of grants in collaboration with the Controller
- collaborating on and insuring timeliness of evaluation, interim, and final reports required for funded projects
- working with administrators, legal counsel, and the Institutional Review Board to insure regulatory compliance and to protect the interests of the College
- providing information to Public Affairs for suitable publicity

Locating a Funding Agency

The Director of Grant Development is available to assist grant seekers in locating, contacting, and applying to potential funders. Those interested in pursuing grant opportunities are required to

contact the Director to indicate their area of interest before contacting potential funding sources. Pre-proposal communication should eliminate the possibility of different College personnel contacting the same funder for different purposes. In addition, it is important to determine that what you intend to propose matches the funder's areas of current interest. Many foundations will only consider one proposal from an institution during a given funding cycle. Uncoordinated proposals can harm institutional credibility and interfere with strategic planning and priority setting.

Federal agencies and most private foundations encourage you to call them to discuss the nature of your proposed work. Do not hesitate to call - it is the job of the program officer or foundation staff to help you determine if your project is appropriate. By calling in advance of proposal submission you and the funding agency can invest your time most wisely. The officer may even help shape your ideas to be in line with what is currently being supported or may recommend another agency that is more appropriate for your area of interest. If you have questions about particular aspects of a proposal, agency or foundation staff can save you from making mistakes. That is their job. In some cases, program officers may also be willing to read proposal drafts. Speak with the Director of Grant Development before making a call; Assumption may already have a relationship with the funding agency and it may be appropriate for someone else to call, or for someone to bring you up to date on the most recent communication with the agency.

Proposal Preparation

There is a series of in-house and funding agency certifications that must be obtained on all proposals prior to submission. Federal grants require certain certifications in order to complete the application package. The same general principles apply to non-federal grant requests.

Federal grants require you to sign a cover sheet. By doing so, you certify that: (1) the statements of the proposal are true and complete; (2) the contents of the proposal are your original work (unless otherwise indicated) or the work of those under your direct supervision; (3) you agree to accept responsibility for the proper conduct of the project; and (4) required progress and final reports will be made.

The Director of Grant Development, as Authorized Organizational Representative for the College, generally signs proposals on behalf of the Provost. By signing the proposal cover sheet, the institution certifies that: (1) the statements contained in the proposal are true and complete; (2) the institution will comply with award terms and conditions; (3) the College is not delinquent on any federal debt; (4) the College does not have principals who are presently debarred, suspended, ineligible or excluded from transactions with any federal department or agency; (5) the College will not use federal funds for lobbying federal employees; (6) the College will not use non-Federal funds for lobbying federal employees without proper disclosure; (7) all subcontracts, subgrants, etc. shall adhere to the federal policies; and (8) the College complies with federal drug-free workplace requirements.

Strict federal guidelines must be followed which ensure the welfare of human and animal research subjects. The Assumption College **Institutional Review Board** oversees the adherence to federal guidelines. Researchers undertaking projects that involve human or animal research

subjects must contact the IRB to ensure compliance and to secure approval in advance of proposal submission. The Director of Grant Development can facilitate this process. From time to time, additional Federal requirements are added. It is the policy of Assumption College to comply with all Federal requirements.

A **grant proposal approval form** has been designed to collect in-house signatures indicating that a proposal has received the necessary scrutiny and approval of administrators. The form can be obtained online or from the Director of Grant Development by e-mailing a request to Landy Johnson at lajohnson@assumption.edu. The form must be signed by the Project Director and Director of Grant Development. The Project Director is responsible for obtaining the Department Chair's signature; the Director of Grant Development will obtain any other signatures required. The signatures of the Provost and the Executive Vice President for Finance/Treasurer are required if College funds are to be committed to the project. Project Directors must submit their finalized proposal to the Research Office at least two weeks prior to deadline to ensure proper review. The grant proposal approval form should be submitted much earlier, while the proposal is still in draft form, so that any issues can be identified while there is still time to address them, particularly if there is likely to be any expense on the College's part or any request for release time. This also allows time for the Director of Grant Development to consult with the Provost regarding any proposals involving issues the Provost has requested be brought to his attention.

The Director of Grant Development will prepare a cover letter from the President or other college official if one is needed, and will obtain their signature. She will provide a letter of support if requested.

Budget Preparation

Applicants are urged to consult the Director of Grant Development or the Controller to ensure accuracy in budget preparation. Any uncertainty may also be clarified by calling a program officer or foundation staff. Mistakes, such as not requesting indirect costs where they are allowable, can result in the loss of funds that represent real costs to the College.

The following descriptions should help to clarify the budget preparation process:

Direct Costs are those expenses needed to undertake the project:

- Salaries, wages, stipends for project director, student assistants, consultants, or secretaries
- Permanent equipment and maintenance
- Supplies
- Experimental subject cost or payment
- Construction and renovation
- Travel
- Telephone, fax, photocopy, postage, and other communications
- Benefits (sometimes known as fringe benefits) on salaries and wages are sometimes considered a direct cost (according to individual proposal guidelines)

Indirect Costs (also called Facilities and Administrative Costs or F&A) are less obviously related to the project but are nevertheless real expenses. Indirect costs are customarily billed as some fraction of the budgeted direct costs (guidelines may indicate the appropriate percentage). Indirect costs may include:

- Heating, air conditioning, cleaning, and maintaining your office and/or laboratory
- Cost of books and journals for maintaining library collections in your project's area
- Cost of running the administrative offices involved in supporting your project
- Benefits on salaries and wages are sometimes considered an indirect cost (according to individual proposal guidelines)

Negotiations between the Office of the Controller and an agency of the federal government result in a federally-approved indirect cost rate. This rate is used to determine indirect costs on many, although not all, federal grants (you must check the guidelines). The current Assumption College indirect cost rate is 71% of salaries and wages and certain fringe benefits. This rate, negotiated with the Department of Health and Human Services (but applicable to most federal proposals) extends through 5/31/10. This means that if you request a grant of \$100,000 in salary (a direct cost), an additional \$71,000 would be added as indirect costs. If the proposal does not request any salary or wages (e.g. an equipment proposal), no indirect costs are included in the budget. Some federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, place a limit on the percentage of indirect costs that can be requested. Assumption College follows whatever stipulations the funding agency dictates.

Private funding sources do not permit use of the federally negotiated rate. Some will allow an **administrative fee** (usually 10-15% of all direct costs) to cover part of the actual costs to the College. In this case, benefits are listed as a separate direct cost. Employee benefits are calculated as 28% of salary. Therefore, if you request faculty salary of \$50,000, the next line item would list benefits at \$14,500. The Director of Grant Development can provide assistance with determining the indirect cost rate, the administrative fee, or the benefits rate.

Student assistants receive stipends that equal the wages paid to Work Study students at the College regardless of whether the student is on the Work Study list. The student rate is tied to the minimum wage, currently \$8.00/hr. for Massachusetts (higher than the Federal minimum wage). Students may be paid hourly or by a stipend for a long period of work (such as \$3,000 for 10 weeks of summer employment). The overall dollars would be the same but the stipend approach is often favored.

Equipment pricing, purchasing and bidding may be part of some grant proposals. Getting quotes from potential suppliers can prove to the funding source that you have done your homework. Applicants may choose to work with the Purchasing department on preparing this part of the budget. Since the grant is made to the College, equipment purchased as part of a grant belongs to the College and not the individual. Equipment must be labeled as Assumption College property. Purchases of fixed assets (value of \$5,000 or more) will be tagged and reported for inventory by the Purchasing Department after invoicing and payment. If a Project Director leaves the College during the period of the grant, the Project Director must petition the College in order to transfer any grant-funded equipment. Such a transfer of ownership would be subject to any guidelines or agreements that exist between the funding source and the College.

Maintenance of equipment is a real cost to the College. The cost of maintenance is generally 10% of the list price annually. Funding sources will not generally fund these costs but when they do it is important to include this budget line. Applicants requesting equipment should consult with their Department Chair to identify support for maintenance. Warranties and maintenance programs may be available from a supplier and this should be considered in the purchasing process.

Benefits apply to employees of the College (faculty, administrators, and students). Benefits are calculated as a percentage of salary (28%) regardless of specific offerings. Some general rules follow:

- Consultants are paid a flat fee and receive no benefits, social security (FICA) deductions or withholding.
- The negotiated indirect cost rate (71% of salaries and wages) should be used whenever permitted. When using this rate, benefits are not included as direct costs, rather they are subsumed in the indirect cost figure.
- When the negotiated indirect cost rate cannot be used, benefits are listed as a direct cost at 28% of salaries.

Certain grants may require **cost-sharing** contributions from the College. These grants require the College to commit additional resources and must be approved in advance by obtaining the signatures of the Provost and the Executive Vice President for Finance/Treasurer on the Proposal Approval Form. The following types of cost sharing are most common:

- Matching grants require the College to share in a certain percentage of the costs of a project. Generally, funds from the College's operating budget are used.
- Challenge grants are offered as a way to leverage alumni, friends, corporations, or other foundations to help an institution reach a goal. The Office of Institutional Advancement is charged with raising funds to meet challenge grant requirements.
- In-kind cost sharing means that rather than commit cash toward a project, the College commits the equivalent amount in services (secretarial time, telephone, release time, copy costs, meeting room charges, computer time, etc.)

Release time for faculty during the academic year and **summer salaries** are commonly requested in budgets. The College or funding source may require the following:

- Faculty can never make more than 100% of their contracted salary during the academic year (this figure does not include activities done outside of contractual College responsibilities, i.e. consulting). On federal grants there is a mandated *time and effort* reporting procedure to monitor this; the form is available from the Director of Grant Development. If a faculty member has multiple grant requests, the combined effort on all grant projects, plus regular responsibilities, may not exceed 100%.
- Summer salary is not included in the 100% figure. For summer salary, funding sources vary on the maximum amount that can be requested. Generally, this maximum is 2/9 or 3/9 of the academic year salary.

- For course reductions during the academic year, consult with the Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding the budget figure to be used. Release from courses requires written approval of the Department Chair and Dean.
- For full-time leave, faculty must request and receive the salary and benefit costs of a full-time replacement from the granting agency.

Post-Award Administration

When waiting to hear whether your proposal results in an award, be aware of any advertised notification date. While it may be appropriate to call on occasion, it is important to use prudence regarding when and why you are calling. Call only when there is a specific, important question. Inform the Research Office about any contact with the funding source. Provide copies of correspondence for the Office's files.

Award letters are usually sent to the Project Director or the President of the College. The Research Office must be informed upon receipt of an award or rejection letter. Copies of correspondence should be forwarded to the Research Office. When support is declined it is often possible to learn the reasons behind the decision, or what would be required to make a proposal more competitive for a future submission. Government agencies will often provide copies of reviewers' comments. Some private funders will discuss the reviews by telephone and will make recommendations for improving the proposal. Use this as an opportunity to learn. In the case of a successful outcome, be sure to send a letter of thanks to private and corporate foundations.

Once a grant has been awarded, the Controller's Office becomes part of the grant process. In regard to the grant process, the Controller's Office:

- Maintains and retains accurate financial records,
- Files regular financial reports to the granting agencies as required,
- Assists grantee in understanding the budgetary implications of decisions made on grant spending.

Upon receipt of an award notification, the Project Director is required to meet with the Director of Grant Development to go over policies and grant administration procedures before a **grant file** and an **account number** are established. This will ensure careful record keeping and compliance with regulations, and will be important when the College undergoes audits. The Project Director must provide the Director of Grant Development with a copy of the award letter, the approved grant budget, any required financial filing forms, financial filing timetables, and any other paperwork relative to administering the grant.

The Director of Grant Development will set up an expense account to track the grant. The expense account will have a budget that reflects the approved grant budget. Expenses should be reported to the Director of Grant Development and substantiated by receipts or logs of work time indicating that the expense conforms to the approved budget. Once satisfactory substantiation has been received, the Director of Grant Development will approve a request to the Controller's Office for payment.

Assumption College is in the process of transitioning to a new financial computer software system. When fully implemented, Project Directors will be able to see their grant balances and track expenses as part of their Assumption home page. In the mean time, the Research Office will send monthly Budget to Actual Reports and expense detail by e-mail or interoffice mail. The current balance on any grant is always available by phone or e-mail from the Research Office upon request.

When the grant time period ends, the Director of Grant Development will verify that any equipment (valued at \$5,000 or more) purchased through the grant has been appropriately identified and added to inventory. The Project Director will be responsible for verifying that all financial information is correct and for compliance with budget limitations.

The Director of Grant Development will assist Project Directors in submitting any required non-financial reports, such as performance reports, in a timely fashion.

Compliance

Assumption College complies with all federal policies, circulars, and directives of the U.S. government. Acceptance of a grant by the College commits the associated faculty member(s) to compliance with the regulatory requirements of the funding agency. This may mean, particularly for federal grants, a requirement to complete time and effort reporting documents, conflict of interest disclosure, and to provide sufficient documentation of all expenditures. Time and effort reporting forms and conflict of interest disclosure forms are available from, and should be submitted to, the Director of Grant Development.

Professional research conduct, including adherence to the same academic honesty standards expected of our students, is expected of all Assumption College faculty. Professors are to set an example for students in the responsible conduct of research.

In the event of non-compliance by a Project Director, the Director of Grant Development will refer the matter to the Provost for possible sanctions that could include formal admonition, a letter in the person's file, ineligibility for grants or for release time, non-renewal of appointment, or dismissal. All applicable Human Resources policies will be followed.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Grant Development if there is any uncertainty regarding the appropriateness or legality of an action relating to a grant. Inadvertent non-compliance can often be avoided and the Research Office exists to assist in these matters.

Publicity

The Director of Grant Development shares information about successful proposals with the Provost, who in turn shares the information with the Cabinet. The Director of Grant Development also sends summary information to Public Affairs for possible press releases or inclusion in College publications. A successful proposal is a cause for pride and celebration, as well as eager anticipation for the work ahead.

**Assumption College
Proposal Reference Sheet
2009-2010**

Organizational Information:

Institution Name & Address: Assumption College
500 Salisbury St.
Worcester, MA 01609-1296

Applicant Type: Private College

Congressional District: Third

County: Worcester County

Employer Information Number: 04-2105776

Massachusetts State Vendor Code: VC6000157267

DUNS Number: 075352815

Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate:

Period: 6/1/06-5/31/10 Rate: 71% of salaries and wages in grant budget

Date of Current Rate Agreement: 10/30/06

Cognizant Agency: Department of Health and Human Services

Fringe Benefit Rate: 28% (use when indirect costs are not allowed)

This rate applies to the salaries and wages of faculty and staff. The rate does not apply to student employees.