

APPROVAL AUTHORIZATION POLICY FOR TRANSACTIONS IN SPONSORED PROGRAMS POLICY

Division: Academic Affairs
Responsible Office: Sponsored Programs

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POLICY SUMMARY

This policy provides guidance on the delegation and assignment of authority to approve transactions managed and executed by the Sponsored Program Operations Office; 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 STATEMENT

Only authorized individuals may approve transactions that obligate the institution to receive or spend Research Foundation (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 programs, 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

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- be kept current
- be maintained in the departmental files, and
- copied 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.

The following charts list the Sponsored Program Operations (SPO) transactions which require the signature of the president, provost, vice president, and/or RF operations manager.

SPO 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

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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.					

SPO JOBS APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS –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 SPO 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

CONTRACTS AND SERVICE AGREEMENTS	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
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.	
All RF contracts	• Vice President for Finance and Management • Director Pre-Award and Contract Services • Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing
All RF/SPO leases, revocable permits, and academic agreements	• Director Pre-Award and Contract Services • Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations
RF Procurement-related contracts for goods, services, and equipment	• Vice President for Finance and Management • Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing
RF consultant contracts only	• Vice President for Finance and Management • Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing • Director Pre-Award and Contract Services
RF Intellectual property-related contracts only	• Vice President for Finance and Management • Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations

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AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN SPO PURCHASE REQUISITIONS & SPO 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	• Principal Investigator or designee
Approve e-Requisitions	• Principal Investigator or designee
Sign purchase orders	• Authorized personnel in SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing
Stipends	• Principal Investigator or designee • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing
Sub – recipient payments	• Principal Investigator or designee • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing
Travel Transactions (advances, reimbursements)	• Principal Investigator or designee • Manager SPO Accounts Payable/Purchasing

OTHER SPO AUTHORIZATIONS

NOT REQUIRING PRESIDENT or PROVOST APPROVAL

ACTIVITY	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
RF bank accounts	• Associate VP for Sponsored Program Operations

DEFINITIONS

Approval Authority -- the permission to approve transactions for execution. This approval attests to the

accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the transaction within the university's program objectives and budgetary authorizations. Transaction approval may be performed electronically in accordance with system requirements or manually with a handwritten signature.

The Research Foundation operations manager -- the Vice President for Finance and Management at SUNY Buffalo State.

The Research Foundation deputy operations manager -- the Associate Vice President for Sponsored Program Operations at SUNY Buffalo State.

Sponsored Program Operations - formerly known as The Research Foundation for SUNY at Buffalo State.

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SCOPE & PURPOSE

SUNY Buffalo State (the university, institution) and, as SUNY's partner, The Research Foundation, enter into and execute 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

RESPONSIBILITIES

Approver

- Verify you have the authority to approve the transaction.
- Verify the transaction conforms to institution and sponsored program 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 updates as appropriate.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all accounts managed by the Sponsored Program Operations Office.

RELATED PROCEDURES

SUNY Buffalo State Organizational Charts (to identify the next higher level of authority):

[linear version](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPROVAL

Prior to 2016

REVISION HISTORY

Date of change: 03/02/2015

Brief description of edit: Adapted to standard template

Date of change: 05/04/2026

Brief description of edit: Adapted to ADA compliant template