

Procedure for USA-funded research projects

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Description:

The procedure applies to research projects funded from the USA, federal and private funders, where Stockholm University enters into an agreement with the funder or with a main applicant, including subawards and subrecipient awards.

Introduction

The procedure applies to research projects with grants from the United States of America (USA), federal as well as private, where Stockholm University enters into an agreement with (i) the funder (grant agreement/contract) or (ii) a main applicant (e.g. Pass-Through Entity, PTA, usually a US university). This includes subawards / subrecipient awards.

Research funding from federal authorities in the United States is subject to a wide-ranging common regulatory framework (notably the "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"), but also to rules which are specific to a given authority and to a certain grant agreement. Most major foundations and other private funders also refer, in whole or in part, to the federal regulations. Private funders also have their own regulations to a greater or lesser extent. It is Stockholm University as a legal entity that signs the agreements. This has prompted the University to establish a special administrative procedure for funding from the USA and to develop administrative support in the implementation of the projects. The procedure aims to ensure good quality and good routines in the administrative support.

In addition, the decision-making and delegation policy of Stockholm University and the provisions of the University's governing documents are applied.

Procedure for USA-funded research projects

Pre-application support

The Head of the Department involved must approve all research applications. Approval is obtained in writing by a Research Officer and kept at the Research Support Office.

A Research Officer at the Research Support Office assists the researcher and the department in preparing the submission of the application. To ensure that support can be provided, the researcher must contact a Research Officer at the Research Support Office at least ten (10) working days prior to the final date for submission providing complete information on the requirements for the application.

The Research Officer at the Research Support Office shall inform the responsible researcher of the importance of determining whether an ethical assessment of the research project is needed. If needed, the Research Support Office offers support on research ethics issues.

The researcher completes the application and submits a declaration, a PI assurance (PI = Principal Investigator), confirming that the content is correct. The Research Support Office submits the application when it is complete, for example by approving it in the funder's digital system. The application must be ready to be submitted no later than one (1) working day before the last day for submission.

Support when handling agreements

When funding has been granted, a phase will be initiated in which contracts are processed. A Research Administrator at the Research Support Office is responsible for handling these agreements.

Contract and subcontract

The researcher informs the Head of Department that the project has been granted and the Research Officer at the Research Support Office obtains and saves written approval from the Head of Department that the grant will be accepted and consults with the Vice-President concerned.

The Legal Office at the Office of the President examines the contract proposal from (i) the funder or (ii) the PTA (main applicant) at the request of the Research Administrator at the Research Support Office. Comments from the review are communicated with researchers, the department and the funder (or main applicant) by the Research Administrator at the Research Support Office.

The approved contract proposal results in an agreement with (i) the funder or (ii) the PTA (main applicant) and is signed by the head of the Research Support Office. In cases where there is no applicable delegation in the decision-making and delegation policy, a written approval from the President must also be obtained before signature.

The Research Support Office archives the agreement.

Support during an ongoing project

The Research Support Office assists the researcher and the department during the funding period in administrative and legal matters. The daily work during the project is carried out at the department. A Financial Officer at the Research Support Office provides a project identification number in the University's financial system in consultation with the department's administration.

Amendment

If changes occur within an agreement or subcontract, it must be amended. This is initiated (in most cases) by the funder or the PTA (main applicant). In most cases, multi-year projects are also renewed annually through an amendment. The Research Support Office handles the University's administrative contributions concerning a change of agreement or subcontract with the responsible researcher and in consultation with the department and the Legal Office at the Office of the President.

Changes to agreements and subcontracts are filed in the same way as the agreement (linked to the agreement's reference number).

Financial reporting and auditing

A cost report must be prepared at the involved department, in consultation with the researcher, and, if necessary, with the support of a Financial Officer at the Research Support Office.

The cost report must be reviewed and checked by the administrative staff responsible for the project's finances at the department. Cost reports are signed by the Head of Department unless otherwise required by the funder or the PTA (main applicant).

In the event that the University receives \$750,000 (or more) per year in federal funding, the University must either (i) undergo a so-called "single audit" (covering the entire academic institution) or (ii) submit a grant-specific audit report to the funder or the PTA. A properly contracted external audit firm must perform both audits. The funder can also initiate a review of the institution (for example, the Foreign Organization System (FOS) Review). A Financial Officer at the Research Support Office assists the University and the department in such cases.

Project shared between two departments or more

If, at the time of the application, it is established that the project is to be shared between two or more departments, the heads of all the departments involved must approve the application. Furthermore, all the Heads of Department involved must approve the receiving of the external funding if granted. The Heads of Department are also responsible for establishing agreements between the involved departments on the allocation of responsibilities, tasks and budget. A Research Officer at the Research Support Office assists the departments in this work.

A project identification number is provided by a Financial Officer at the Research Support Office for each department engaged in the project, where the sum of the external funding of all departments corresponds to the total amount granted in the contract.

Ethics reports

A Research Officer at the Research Support Office, responsible for research ethics, assists researchers and department if ethical reporting is needed.