
The purpose of this survey

Dear Colleague:

As part of our ongoing effort to strengthen grants administration across Boston University, we have created this survey to gain a better understanding of your role in proposal development, application review and submission, and post-award management. We hope that you will participate in this endeavor and help us create a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of department and school grants administrators.

The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. We ask that you answer the questions honestly and completely. We will not share the results with anyone not involved in the process, nor will the information you provide in this survey be used in any review of your performance. Ultimately we hope to use this information to create a stronger research administration community and find opportunities for training and knowledge sharing. This data will also help us ensure we are communicating regularly with the right contacts when new information becomes available. At the end of the survey there is space for you to share your feedback or suggestions for improvement or any other thoughts you'd like to share with us. We greatly value your input and look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us by emailing research@bu.edu.

Thank you for your help,
Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research
Diane Baldwin, Associate Vice President for Sponsored Programs

A few quick tips for working with this survey format:

- For best results, please use Firefox
- Answers cannot be saved without completing the survey; please complete the survey in one sitting
- To skip or return to questions, please use the arrow buttons in the bottom right corner
- Questions marked with * at the end are required
- The last section of this survey will ask you for your feedback regarding current road blocks and suggestions for training
- If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact research@bu.edu

1 If you believe that you have received this survey by mistake or someone else in

your unit should be completing this survey, please list the appropriate contacts here.

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

2 What is your full name? *

3 What is your title? *

4 What is your email address? *

5 In which School/College do you work?

Please type the name of your school and highlight your selection, or use the arrow on the right to reveal the drop down menu.

If you work in a center or institute, please select the last option ("University-wide center or institute".)

Oops! You must make a selection

6 If you work in a specific department, center, or institute, please provide its name here.

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

7 Pre- and post-award definitions *

In this survey, we will ask you to answer a series of questions about your roles in the pre- and post-award processes. **Pre-award** responsibilities include finding funding, preparing, reviewing, and submitting proposals, and award acceptance and set up. **Post-award** tasks address ongoing financial management of the award, including processing expenditures, monitoring spending levels, and compliance monitoring. Award close-out can be a shared pre- and post-award responsibility.

Not every staff member participates in both processes. If you are involved in only **one** of these two steps in the award lifecycle, please indicate so here to skip questions not pertaining to your role.

- ☐ I perform pre-award tasks only ☐ I perform post-award tasks only
- ☐ I am involved in both sets of tasks
- ☐ Another person supports me in either or both of these tasks

8 Pre-award responsibilities

In this section, you will answer a set of questions to help us understand your role in the proposal development and submission processes.

9 Is your role school/college-wide, department/center/institute-specific, or Principal Investigator-specific? *

- ☐ My role is school- or college-wide ☐ My role is department-, center-, or institute-specific
- ☐ My role is PI-specific

10 Overall application

When working with a principal investigator on an entire application, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Assembling all pieces of application and/or assisting with data entry and completing BU and sponsor forms
- ☐ Reviewing to ensure that institutional and sponsor guidelines are met
- ☐ Submitting final versions of all administrative components to Sponsored Programs
- ☐ Submitting final versions of all technical components to Sponsored Programs
- ☐ I am not responsible for any of these tasks ☐ Other

11 Do you review each solicitation to understand sponsor administrative requirements?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12 Are you ever responsible for assistance with the **scientific content** of an application?

We define scientific content as the **what, how, and why** of a proposal. If you're involved in drafting project goals and objectives, technical narratives, methodology/project design, evaluations, or similar sections, please indicate so below.

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

13 Proposal format

Do you currently review the following to verify compliance with sponsor required standards?

- ☐ Formatting on all documents
- ☐ Page/character limits for all documents
- ☐ Margins on all documents
- ☐ I do not currently review any of these requirements
- ☐ Other

14 Administrative content

When creating an application's administrative content, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Filling in any sponsor forms or documents with requested administrative information
- ☐ Reviewing all administrative information for adherence to institutional and sponsor guidelines
- ☐ I do not work with principal investigators on administrative content ☐ Other

15 Budgets

When creating an application's budget, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Assisting the principal investigator in developing draft budgets
- ☐ Ensuring the correct indirect cost and fringe rates are applied and all values are calculated correctly
- ☐ If there is cost share, ensure it has been incorporated into the Proposal Summary Form
- ☐ Ensuring budget follows sponsor/solicitation guidelines and BU policy (e.g. allowability standards)
- ☐ Ensuring everything totals properly on all pages and in all years
- ☐ Ensuring all line items are listed in the budget justification and that the budget justification numbers match the numbers on the budget
- ☐ When finalized, entering information into the Proposal Summary Form
- ☐ I do not work with principal investigators on budgets ☐ Other

16 Communication

Please tell us about your communication with relevant contacts throughout the application process.

- ☐ I communicate with the principal investigator during preparation to complete the administrative portions of the application and to answer any questions about administrative items

- ☐ I contact subcontractors for administrative documents
- ☐ I communicate with my Research Administrator in Sponsored Programs during the review process to address any administrative concerns
- ☐ Other

17 Submission

When a principal investigator is submitting an application directly to the sponsor, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Assisting the principal investigator in addressing any submission errors resulting from electronic systems
- ☐ I do not work with principal investigators on submissions directly to sponsors
- ☐ Other

In the next few questions, we will ask you to describe your time commitment to pre-award responsibilities. We ask you to consider what percent of your entire role/FTE is dedicated to pre-award tasks as opposed to other tasks (including post-award responsibilities, if applicable).

18 In the past year, how much effort did you spend on pre-award tasks versus your other responsibilities? Please estimate.

Please type a number and highlight your selection, or use the arrow on the right to reveal the drop down menu.

Oops! You must make a selection



19 Please describe how you determined the percent effort you spent on pre-award tasks versus your other responsibilities.

20 Principal investigator support

Are there specific principal investigators whom you support in pre-award tasks? If so, please list them below.

21 What are the other, non-pre-award components of your job? What total effort do you dedicate to these tasks?

22 Other information

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your involvement in pre-award tasks?

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

23 Post-award responsibilities

In this section, you will answer a set of questions to help us understand your role in ongoing financial management of awards, including processing expenditures, monitoring spending levels, and compliance monitoring.

24 Is your role school/college-wide, department/center/institute-specific, or Principal Investigator-specific?

- ☐ My role is school- or college-wide
- ☐ My role is department-, center-, or institute-specific

☐ My role is PI-specific

25 When a principal investigator receives an award, do you currently review the budget and award set up fields (cost center, sponsor award number, etc) in Business Warehouse to ensure accuracy?

☐ Yes ☐ No

26 Post-award communication

How do you communicate with relevant contacts and offices throughout the award notification and set up processes?

☐ I participate in regular meetings with the principal investigator to review Business Warehouse reports, expenditures, financial reports, and closeouts

☐ I follow-up with Post Award Financial Operations (PAFO) if there are questions about Business Warehouse reports, expenditures, financial reports, and closeouts (including but not limited to over expenditures)

☐ Other

27 Account monitoring and reconciliation

When reconciling accounts and monitoring expenditures, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

☐ Running Business Warehouse reports on a regular basis e.g. monthly or quarterly

☐ Reviewing salary and non salary expenditures to ensure accuracy

☐ Track the rate of spending on the grant, forecasting expected future expenses, and alerting the PI to expected over- or under-expenditures of grant funds

☐ I do not work with principal investigators on account and expenditure reconciliation

☐ Other

28 Cost transfers

When submitting cost transfers, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Submitting cost transfers on a timely basis
- ☐ Filling out appropriate forms in entirety based on greater than/less than 90 day rules
- ☐ Facilitating principal investigator approval when appropriate and required
- ☐ Submitting re-certified Personnel Activity Reports (PARs) when needed
- ☐ I do not submit or manage cost transfers ☐ Other

29 Equipment

When addressing a principal investigator's equipment needs, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Ordering equipment using the appropriate General Ledger account based on equipment cost dollar threshold (i.e. using 571400 for items greater than \$5K)
- ☐ Ensuring old, outdated equipment is disposed of accordingly based on Property Management guidelines
- ☐ Notifying both Sponsored Programs and Post Award Financial Operations (PAFO) when a principal investigator is leaving the institution
- ☐ I do not address equipment needs of principal investigators ☐ Other

30 Personnel Activity Reports (PARs)

When assisting with completion of a principal investigator's Personnel Activity Reports (PARs), for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Reviewing all PARs as needed ☐ Sending PARs to appropriate individuals for certification
- ☐ Ensuring all PARs are submitted to Post Award Financial Operations (PAFO) prior to due date
- ☐ I do not assist with PARs ☐ Other

31 Financial reports

When assisting with a principal investigator's financial reports, for which tasks are you currently responsible?

- ☐ Reviewing Business Warehouse reports for accuracy and appropriateness of salary and non salary expenditures
- ☐ Ensuring all expenditures have properly posted to the account
- ☐ Confirming all salary has posted and is within the project period of performance
- ☐ Working with the appropriate central office to close out all commitments
- ☐ Working with Post Award Financial Operations (PAFO) when Small Business Plans are required and if/when vendors are not registered
- ☐ I do not assist with financial reports ☐ Other

32 Are you ever involved in drafting non-financial reports, like Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPRs), etc?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

33 Subaward invoices

Do you assist in coordination of sub-award invoice review, approval, and signature?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

In the next few questions, we will ask you to describe your time commitment to post-award responsibilities.

We ask you to consider what percent of your entire role/FTE is dedicated to post-award tasks as opposed to other tasks (including pre-award responsibilities, if applicable).

34 Principal investigator support

Are there specific principal investigators whom you support in post-award tasks? If so, please list them below.

Please enter "N/A" if you do not support specific PIs.

35 In the past year, how much effort did you spend on post-award tasks versus your other responsibilities? Please estimate.

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53 Other information

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your involvement in pre-award tasks?

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

54 Suggestions for improvement

In this section, you will have an opportunity to provide feedback about what works and what doesn't, as well as provide suggestions for future trainings.

55 What are current pain points for you in completing pre- and/or post-award tasks?

56 Is there anything in either process that works well for you currently?

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

57 Are there any training topics pertaining to pre- and/or post-award tasks you would like to see offered at BU?

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

58 Please share any other feedback and/or suggestions for improvement.

Please enter "N/A" if not applicable.

Submit