SU FINANCIAL GRANTS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

VERSION: 1

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This document aims to provide a step-by-step overview of the financial management processes related to research grants managed via the SUNFin P&G module, from application through to project activation phase[1].

It is primarily intended to help grant awardees—Principal Investigators (PIs) or their nominated Project Managers (PMs)— to follow the new procedures for establishing a "project container" (previously referred to as a cost centre) in SUNFin's Projects & Grants (P&G) module to implement their projects once an award was confirmed (**Section 2**).

Additionally, it outlines key requirements, verifications, and available support during the pre-award phase (**Section 1**), which will ensure more effective post-award grant and contract management. The document also details the current processes for budget adjustments, journal requests and reporting in SUNFin P&G (**Section 3**).

Note:

i. Processes may sometimes differ for applicants/PIs from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) - such variations are highlighted where relevant.

ii. This document will be updated as additional faculty-based research grant finance support hubs are rolled out.

iii. The document will be updated over time as more efficient SUNFin processes are implemented. Kindly always ensure that you use the latest version (all versions will be date stamped).

Contact email for advice regarding the onboarding process: researchacc@sun.ac.za

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[1] Developed as part of the Senate SUNFin Working Group, by a subgroup of staff members from the DRD and Finance Division, and with valuable input from academic staff members. It represents the "as-is" process and serves to guide current applicants and PIs/PMs. Further developments to optimise SUNFin P&G processes are underway and will be incorporated into the document over time.
This document is **V1**, created on **29 August 2025**. Please always check that you are using the latest version.
For general enquiries or comments on this document, please contact Dr Therina Theron, ttheron@sun.ac.za.

<u>**SECTION 1**</u>

Proposal Development Support (Budgeting Assistance)

1. Applying for a funding opportunity

➢ Research funding opportunities are often identified (and advertised) by the DRD, but also sometimes by individual applicants and/or their collaborators, or via other SU entities.

➢ At the outset of an application, SU applicants should contact the Project Accountants in the DRD (note: exception for FMHS) for support with budget development. This can be done by logging a JIRA via: https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35 Select **Projects and Grants** Select **Full Cost Budgets** Select **Assistance with Budget Setup (pre award)** under **Full Cost Budget Activity** **For FMHS researchers**, contact the FMHS Grants Management Office by email: fmhsgmo@sun.ac.za

➢ At a **minimum** all applicants must verify at this stage:
  ▪ the funder's formal rules on indirect cost recovery;
  ▪ the VAT rates that need to be used;
  ▪ the appropriate exchange rates to be used (if foreign currency) and the appropriate option to select for exchange rate management in SUNFin;
  ▪ the correct amounts to use for remuneration (including HR overhead costs);
  ▪ how to follow SU's basic full costing budgeting guidelines, as all contract budgets (in the case of an eventual successful award) are tested against full cost.

➢ Applicants should preferably (where feasible, and as far as possible) utilise SU's **full costing template** at this point already to simplify the eventual full cost check. (template available on the SUNFin Service Desk)

➢ If a tender process is followed or if funders have specific requirements around intellectual property ownership (for example), the proposal may need to be checked by a legal advisor already at this stage.

Email for checking of proposal by DRD legal advisor: contracts@sun.ac.za

Note: If in doubt, please ask.

2. **ICRR deviation requests**, if applicable, must be logged via JIRA

URL: **https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35**

Select **Projects and Grants**

Select **Indirect Cost Recovery Rates (ICRR)**

Select the required **ICRR Activity** and provide the necessary supporting documentation as per the **ICRR – Supporting Documentation Checklist**

Contact person for ICRR enquiries: Ilse Griffiths wilters@sun.ac.za

This includes funder-specific restrictions or deviations from SU's indirect cost recovery rate (ICRR) of **25% on direct costs**. Where funders' restrictions are already part of the institutional list (e.g. NRF; NIH) this step is not needed.

Note: If in doubt, please ask.

3. **Grant Award Stage**

(Applicant has received a grant letter, draft contract, or any other type of confirmation of award. Applicant is now referred to as the **Principal Investigator (PI)** on the project)

➢ Contract Registration is required, to ensure legal compliance

This is done via email to the DRD Research Contracts Office.

Email: contracts@sun.ac.za

This email will lead to the assignment of a Legal Advisor to the contract.

➢ Should ICRR deviation approval still be outstanding at this stage, it needs to be obtained via JIRA as per the process detailed in Section 1.2 above, before the contract can be finalised.

URL: https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35

Contact person for ICRR enquiries: Ilse Griffiths wilters@sun.ac.za

➢ After registration of the contract, the Full Costing (FC) budget must be submitted for review and approval, via JIRA.

URL: **https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35**

Select **Projects and Grants**

Select **Full cost budgets**

In this process the awarded budget is reviewed by one of the FC Accountants (Audrey Erasmus; Chantal Hugo; Maverick Wade) and tested against the full costing template. Enquiries regarding the full cost budget check can be submitted to researchacc@sun.ac.za.

➢ If FC compliance is in order, the FC Accountant issues a formal approval – the PI will be notified through an **e-mail (via the JIRA system**), with the relevant legal advisor copied therein.
Note: Full cost deviations other than ICRR or other previously approved funder restrictions (e.g. NRF, which doesn't allow salary costs), will be subject to approval by the relevant RC Head. An e-mail will be sent by the FC Accountant to the RC Head specifying the deviation, request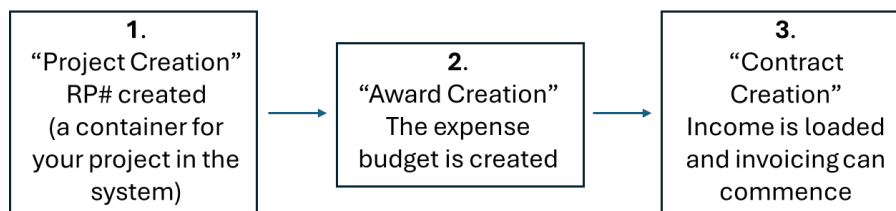ing approval and acceptance of the risk. Unauthorised deviations may have to be addressed with the relevant funder at this stage, e.g. if legislative compliance is compromised. The appropriate course of action required will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

➢ The legal advisor in the DRD will provide a signed Fully Executed Agreement (contract) when this is finalized. This will be confirmed via email to the relevant PI, who can then start the "Project creation" process in the SUNFin system.

➢ Together with the fully executed agreement, the FC Accountants will issue a **summary of the award's basic financial management and reporting requirements**. This will include advice on the broad budgeting categories to be used in the SUNFin P&G module.

SECTION 2

The post-Award SUNFin P&G "onboarding" stage

Preparing for expenditure against the award involves a **3-tiered process** with specific SUNFin system terminologies, which are explained below.

1. "Project Creation" RP# created (a container for your project in the system)	→	**2.** "Award Creation" The expense budget is created	→	**3.** "Contract Creation" Income is loaded and invoicing can commence

1. "Project Creation" – a "container" for your award is created. This generates a unique RP number which will be used throughout for the specific award, in all communication via the system or otherwise.
2. "Award Creation" – where the expense budget is loaded. The budget categories used here will be guided by the funder's requirements for financial management and reporting, as summarized by the FC Accountant during the FC approval process (see Section 1).
3. "Contract Creation" - where the grant/contract income reflects and invoicing can be performed/requested.

Note:
  i) The turnaround time for this process to be completed: **10 working days.**
  ii) This period starts **when the PI logs a request for project creation via JIRA** as described below.
  iii) Note that the **PI will be required to perform certain approvals** as described below to ensure that the process proceeds between the various stages.
  iv) Where a PI appoints a project manager (PM), this person can undertake the below actions on behalf of the PI.
  v) **FMHS PIs** will be supported by the **FMHS GMO** in this process. For enquiries contact fmhsgmo@sun.ac.za.

2.1 Project Creation

➢ PI logs a request via JIRA (or faculty hub process – in the relevant faculties e.g. FMHS, this will be clarified to faculty applicants).
For JIRA use URL link below:
https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35/group/140

➤ Under **Projects and Grants** the PI chooses the ''**Project Creation**'' option and under **Project Type** select the specific project type that needs to be created.

➤ PI to attach the following relevant supporting documentation as specified in the **Project Creation – Supporting Documentation Checklist**:

- FEA (Fully Executed Agreement – Signed)
- Full Cost Budget approval by FC Accountants, which includes the approved project budget and summary of financial management considerations
- Project Application Form which will include details as stipulated below:
    - Project Name;
    - S00_number of contract;
    - Name of PI or Project Manager (PM) (the PI can assign this to a Project Manager who will then receive all notices and alerts);
    - The environment's Organisational Unit (OU) code (this code will be known by the line manager or administrator in the environment e.g. academic department or research entity).
- ICRR waiver/reduction approval (if applicable)

Process following the logging of request:

2.1.1   A JIRA ticket with a unique number is first created, and a notice of the ticket is sent to the PI or PM. This represents an unassigned JIRA ticket.

2.1.2   The ticket is then assigned (**within one working day**) to a P&G Accountant in Finance. The PI will be able to see to whom the ticket has been assigned via the JIRA portal.

2.1.3   Within **7 working days**, a Project RP number will be generated.

2.1.4   The SUNFin system will **require the PI/PM to approve this step** by physically logging into the system as no email notification will be generated in this regard. The approval request will be visible via the bell icon for the user to interact with. Notification of this requirement will be sent to the PI/PM via JIRA by the P&G Accountant.

2.1.5   Once the unique RP number has been generated, the PI/PM must NOTE DOWN this RP number for future reference as it will be used throughout.

The P&G Accountant (Finance) will receive notice of the PI/PMs approval of the project creation within SUNFin.

This completes Step 1 of the 3-step process.

Project (RP) number is now active, and step 2 (Award Creation) can commence.

2.2 Award Creation

This is done within the Finance division, but the **PI must approve** the final budget

2.2.1   Budget is loaded on SUNFin under the RP number according to the pre-agreed budget-lines (so-called "Tasks" in SUNFin)

2.2.2   For foreign currency budgets, due consideration must be given to the options for exchange rate management – this needs to be advised by a project accountant (see Section 1)

2.2.3   PI/PM will receive a notification from the SUNFin system **via email** that this has been completed and that approval can be provided.

Note: The budget will be created against the below standard categories unless otherwise stipulated by the contract or requested by the PI/PM.:

- Remuneration
- Bursaries
- Capital expenditure
- Operational Expenses (OpEx)

In Projects & Grants on SUNFin, budget checks are only performed between the four categories but not between subcategories within them.

This completes step 2: Budget creation, and Step 3 (2.3 below) can now be done by the P&G Accountant in Finance.

2.3 Contract Creation

This is done within the Finance Division

2.3.1   The Contract dates are listed on the system

2.3.2   Invoice dates are listed (if these appear in the contract)

2.3.3   Values of invoices are listed (if available)

2.3.4   Project Accountant now informs PI/PM **via JIRA** that the process has been completed and that expenditure can commence.

2.3.5   Depending on contractual stipulations and upon **instruction from the PI**, the first invoice can now be raised via the process detailed in 3.2 below.

Note:

i.   The same JIRA (unique number) serves as the communication channel for a project throughout the above processes apart from specific actions detailed below.

ii. Once the project budget and contract are approved the P&G accountant informs the PI via JIRA that the process is complete and the JIRA is resolved.

iii. **The project is now up and running.**

SECTION 3

Note: FMHS researchers are supported by the **FMHS GMO** with the below processes. Contact email for enquiries: fmhsgmo@sun.ac.za

3.1 Budget Adjustments (P&G) during the award period

Types of adjustments typically include:

➢ Adjustments between categories in the budget

➢ For roll-overs/carry-forwards

➢ No cost extensions

➢ **If the budget requires adjustment**:

Log a JIRA request via

https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35

- Select **Projects and Grants**
- Select **Project Maintenance**
- Select **Budget adjustments**

Supporting documentation required to action this request:

i. Funder approval of budget adjustment (if required according to contract)

ii. No cost extension approval

iii. RP (SUNFin project) number

iv. Updated budget reflecting the adjustment needed.

3.2 Invoice and credit note requests

Log a JIRA via:

https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35

- Select **Projects and Grants**
- Select **Project Invoicing**
- Under **Project Invoice Activity** select **Request for Invoice or Request for Credit Note**

- Complete **Request for Invoice Template** or **Request for Credit Note Template** based on the selection made above. Each template will have specific fields that need to be completed.

3.3 Journal requests

General examples of journal transfer requests during an award period would include:

- Expense corrections (Some supporting documents must be attached to indicate this)
- Salary recoupment,
- Interdepartmental payments
- Project closures

Log a JIRA via:

https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/35

    i.   Select **General Ledger**

    ii.   Select **General Journal**

    iii.   Supporting documentation as required (these will depend on the reasons for the request).

3.4 Reporting (Periodic or Final) (current process, under further development)

    i.   E-mail one of the **Project Accountants**

        Project Accountants: **zenkosinonzinzi@sun.ac.za** **or melisham@sun.ac.za.**

        Note: **FMHS researchers** to contact the relevant **FMHS GMO accountant**.

    ii.   RP number/ cc number required.

    iii.   Specify period under review needs to be stipulated.

All templates and required supporting documentation are available via the JIRA portal on the links above under the "Templates and Supporting Documentation" tile within Projects and Grants.