Investigator Research Portal

User’s Guide

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# Table of Contents

1. What is the Investigator Research Portal? ................................................................. 1
2. How is the Portal accessed? ....................................................................................... 1
3. Proposal Information ................................................................................................. 2
   3.1 Proposal Selection ............................................................................................... 2
   3.2 Proposal History ................................................................................................. 3
4. Account Information .................................................................................................. 3
   4.1 Account Selection ............................................................................................... 3
   4.2 Account Budget Transaction Detail ...................................................................... 4
5. Investigator Forms & Certifications .......................................................................... 5
   4.3 Current and Pending Report ............................................................................... 6
   5.1 Investigator Certifications .................................................................................. 7
   5.2 Effort Certification ............................................................................................. 7
6. Approval Routing ........................................................................................................ 8
   6.1 Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS) ...................................................................... 8
   6.2 General Design ................................................................................................... 8
   6.2 Documents ......................................................................................................... 9
   6.3 Cost Share .......................................................................................................... 10
   6.4 Safety and Protection ........................................................................................ 11
   6.5 Conflict of Interest ........................................................................................... 11
   6.6 Investigator Approval ......................................................................................... 13
   6.7 Supervisory Approval ......................................................................................... 14
7. Notifications ................................................................................................................ 15
   7.1 Notification Tiers ............................................................................................... 16
   7.2 Reminders Notifications .................................................................................... 17
   7.3 Overrides ............................................................................................................ 18
8. Additional Information .............................................................................................. 18
1. What is the Investigator Research Portal?

The Investigator Research Portal is a browser based portal to the basic information contained in the Office of Sponsored Programs’ (OSP) database system and basic expenditure information from the University’s Banner Information System. The investigator has direct access to some of the general information involved in proposal submission, account authorizations to spend, account expenditure summaries, in vestigator forms and certifications, and document approval routing.

2. How is the Portal accessed?

The Investigator Portal is accessed through the Banner Self-service web portal (See the Information Technology Solutions’ (ITS) website for instructions on logging into Banner Self Service). The “Investigator Research Portal” link is found approximately two-thirds of the way down the page on the Employee tab.

![Employee Tab in Banner Self-Service](image)

The hyper-link takes the investigator to the secure portal website (https) and displays the individualized Investigator Portal page that is customized for the investigator. All communications are encrypted using secure socket layer (SSL) encryption.
The portal main page should display the investigator’s name centered across the top. There are four rounded rectangular regions with selection opportunities for the investigator. These choices are Proposals, Awards, Forms & Certifications, and Approvals.

![Investigator Portal Main Page](image)

**Figure 2. Investigator Portal Main Page**

### 3. Proposal Information

On the rounded rectangular region labeled “Proposals,” a list of the currently pending proposals that the investigator is included on as either the Principle Investigator or as a Co-investigator is displayed in rows of up to four proposal numbers. Each proposal number is a link to a coordination page for the specific proposal. These pages will be described in more detail in Section 6.1, Internal Coordination Sheet.

#### 3.1 Proposal Selection

Below the rows of pending proposal numbers are two additional selections. First a link is provided that will display a tabular listing of all proposals that have been submitted by UAHuntsville for the investigator as either the Principal Investigator or Co-investigator. Figure 3 shows a typical proposal history listing for an investigator. The second selection allows the investigator to search for a specific proposal submission by entering the proposal number in the type-in box provided and selecting the “Find” button. Proposals that do not include the investigator as either the Principal Investigator or as a Co-investigator are NOT accessible through this search.
3.2 Proposal History

The tabular summary listing of the investigator’s proposal history lists each proposal’s identification number, status, submission date to the funding agency, funding agency and title. Each proposal identification number is a link to a coordination page for the specific proposal. These pages will be described in more detail in Section 6.1, Internal Coordination Sheet.

![Figure 3. Tabular List of Investigator’s Proposal Submission History](image)

4. Account Information

4.1 Account Selection

On the rounded rectangular region labeled “Awards” there are links that allow the investigator to review information regarding accounts listing them as the Principal Investigator or as a Co-investigator. There are currently two options to choose from to display account information. The investigator can either display a listing of currently active accounts or the complete account history. Active accounts are based on the period of performance of the account and are no longer listed on the active account list the day following the end of the period of performance. This is different from an account being closed out since it has nothing to do with the final billing of expenses incurred on the account.
Both listings produce similar output. The contract number, Banner organization number (5-xxxxx numbers for pre-Banner accounts), period of performance, funding agency, and title are displayed. The Banner organization number is a link to a detail page for that particular account.

### 4.2 Account Budget Transaction Detail

The “Account Budget Transaction” detail screen gives a quick overview of the research account. It lists some of the basic information regarding the account such as the associated contract or grant the account is funded under, the title and funding agency.
Of greater interest are the two different financial summaries that are provided. Under the general information listed above, a table lists the authorization to spend history for the account. This information includes awards, budget transfers to and from other accounts, and de-allocations. The date the authorization occurs, type of authorization, and comments that have been entered by the Contract Administrator assigned to the account are displayed.

A second table, located below the authorizations, is provided that lists the account expenditure summary. This information is organized by expenditure account codes and shows the year-to-date (YTD) and inception-to-date (ITD) expenditures that have been charged to the specific research organization number. The information is pulled directly from the Banner Operational Data Store (ODS) tables and represents expenditures that have been entered into the Banner Financial System by Contracts and Grants Accounting. The data is refreshed each night and is no more than twenty-four hours old. There is no further detail or breakout provided of the information. For a detailed breakout of the expenditures, the investigator must use the Banner Financial System.

![Account Budget Transactions](image)

5. Investigator Forms & Certifications

On the rounded rectangular region labeled “Forms & Certifications” are links that allow the investigator to produce reports and check certification status and dates. At this time there are three links available; however, others will be added as the reports are developed.
4.3 Current and Pending Report

A Current and Pending Report is required by many funding agencies as part of the proposal submission process. These reports list all active accounts on which an investigator is listed as either the Principle Investigator or as a Co-investigator. If the investigator has charged time to an active account, it will NOT be included in the list. The pending portion of the report lists all proposals that have been submitted to agencies for consideration of funding. As with the active accounts, only those proposals that list the investigator as the Principal Investigator or as a Co-investigator are included.

Until now the Office of Sponsored Programs has generated these reports for the investigators when needed. A link is provided that will now allow the investigator to generate their current and pending report. The report appears in the web browser and can be printed or saved as a PDF file (usually by selecting the PDF printer option from the available printers list). Occasionally, the current and pending report requirements must include proposals that have not yet been submitted to the funding agency. If this situation arises, the Contract Administrator will be able to produce the report for the investigator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current and Pending Support for Dr. Michael Anderson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task Order No. 44 (VA/AJA/UTC/A/Characterization of Non-Ducment Adverse Compaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Order No. 59 (VA/AJA/UTC/A/Characterization of Non-Ducment Adverse Compaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Order No. 45 (UTC/A/4/Aluminum Public Transportation Rapid Valley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Order No. 46 (UTC/A/Alabama Public Transportation Rapid Valley)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| $12,000  | 11/28/2011  | 6/08/2011  | UTC/A  | U. of AL  | CDC  | ALDOT
| Task Order No. 47 (UTC/A/Characterization of Non-Ducment Adverse Compaction) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pending Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-1758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Investigator’s Current and Pending Report
5.1 Investigator Certifications

As a researcher there are numerous agency requirements that must be met in order to maintain the proper credentials and certifications that are necessary to work on sponsored research projects. These certifications must be renewed. Each certification has its own renewal schedule. For instance, investigators with a security clearance must have annual refresher training, while export control and Responsible Conduct in Research requires multi-year renewals.

To assist the investigator with tracking their certifications, a link to the “Investigator Certifications” screen is provided. This screen lists the various certification or refresher training session dates for the investigator. Currently, there are only the three certifications previously mentioned; however, that may change as federal requirements increase.

![Investigator Certifications Table]

5.2 Effort Certification

The final link that is currently defined allows the investigator to visit their “Effort Report Certification Portal.” Effort certification is required by the Federal Government for all non-hourly individuals that work on sponsored research. A detailed description of the Effort Report Certification Portal is not included in this user manual. Contact the UAHuntsville Effort Reporting Officer to obtain specific instructions on its use. UAHuntsville is in the process of migrating from its current system to a Banner module to complete effort certification. When the migration is complete, this link will be removed or replaced.
6. Approval Routing

On the rounded rectangular region labeled “Approvals” are links to items that require the attention of the investigator/approver. Currently, only the proposal Internal Coordination Sheet approvals are available, but other electronic approvals will be added. The proposal identification numbers are listed for those proposals requiring review and approval in rows. These numbers are links to the electronic version of the Internal Coordination Sheet. Once approved, these numbers are no longer listed for the approver.

6.1 Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS)

The Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS) screen has been designed to replace the entire proposal package that has previously been circulated for internal approval prior to the proposal submission. General proposal information, such as the proposal title, principle investigator, co-investigators, funding agency, proposed amount, responsible department, indirect cost recovery rate (ICR) and Contract Administrator information, is combined with information that normally was part of the circulated package. Links to electronic versions of supporting documents, cost share information, conflict of interest statements for all investigators, and approval certifications are available.

The screen is a misnomer for what is basically a general proposal review. While it does replace the paper version of the ICS, it includes much of the information that defines the proposal and subsequently also serves as the proposal detail screen that the links in the proposal search and listing links display.

6.2 General Design

The page has a distinct layout that allows for easy access to the information that a reviewer/approver would be interested in seeing. The basic information is shown on the top half of the screen while a set of tabs are displayed across the bottom. Moving the mouse over a tab causes the tab to be selected. The information contained within that tab is displayed and the tab...
itself appears blue with white text. Color coding is utilized to make review quick and simple. If, for instance, an investigator has listed a conflict of interest, the tab for that section appears with red text instead of black text. When selected, it appears as a red tab with white text. This allows the reviewer to quickly identify areas of concern that may warrant closer review.

The Principal Investigator and the Contract Administrator names are email hyperlinks. Clicking on them opens an email message in your default email application. If you use the web interface to UAHuntsville’s Google Mail you cannot use this feature.

![Initial view of Internal Coordination Screen](image)

In the above screen image, the reviewer could quickly determine from the red tabs that there is cost share information included, that the proposal has a safety and protection issue, and at least one of the investigators has a conflict of interest listed. If the tab text were black, the reviewer would instantly know that there were no issues in those areas.

### 6.2 Documents

The “Documents” tab provides links to the various supporting documents that are part of the proposal package. These include the technical description of the proposal, the proposal budget, letters of support, collaborative agreement letters, and other relative documents. Selecting a document link opens the document on the reviewer’s computer in a separate screen. The document cannot be saved back to the server, but can be saved locally to the reviewer’s computer.


6.3 Cost Share

The “Cost Share” tab lists any cost share obligation for the proposal. In tabular form, the type of cost share, dollar value of the cost share, responsible organization for providing the cost share, and comments regarding the cost share are provided. The first column of the will either contain a blue checkmark or not. This checkmark indicates whether the cost share is a requirement by the agency for proposal submission or voluntary cost share by the University.

![Figure 11. Documents Tab of the Internal Coordination Screen](image)

![Figure 12. Cost Share Tab of the Internal Coordination Screen](image)
6.4 Safety and Protection

The Safety and Protection tab displays the safety issues associated with the proposal that may be of concern to the University. This information is only updatable by the Principle Investigator and the Contract Administrator. No additional information is provided on this screen.

![Safety and Protection tab of the Internal Coordination Screen](image)

6.5 Conflict of Interest

On the “Conflict of Interest” tab a series of questions is posed to the investigators listed on the project. All of the investigators must answer the questions before the proposal can be routed for supervisory review and approval. Each investigator’s name is listed across the bottom of the tab. If the investigator’s name appears in blue, they have not completed the questions. If the name appears green, then there were no conflicts of interest listed by the investigator. However, if the name appears red, conflicts of interest were listed. By clicking the name of the investigator, the yes/no answers for that investigator are displayed. Yes answers appear in red for easy identification. If the investigator answers yes to any of the questions they are routed to the Office of Compliance’s website and required to complete a detailed report.
Figure 14. Initial view of Conflict of Interest tab of the Internal Coordination Screen

Figure 15. Conflict of Interest tab for Investigator Input on the Internal Coordination Screen
6.6 Investigator Approval

The “Investigator Approval” tab is where the investigators give their final approval of the proposal package. On this tab there are a series of statements that each of the investigators must agree to and certify. All of the names of the investigators are listed below the statements. If the investigator has approved the proposal package, a date stamp showing their approval is displayed. If the currently logged in investigator has not approved the proposal, two buttons will appear to the right of their name. One of the buttons is to approve the proposal and the other is to reject the proposal. ANY INVESTIGATOR CAN REJECT THE PROPOSAL. All investigators must approve the proposal’s ICS before supervisory approval is initiated.
If the investigator has listed a conflict of interest, then they are directed upon selecting the approval button to the Office of Compliance website to complete a more detailed form regarding the nature of the conflict.

### 6.7 Supervisory Approval

After all of the investigators have approved the ICS, the supervisory review and approval process is initiated. The list of reviewers/approvers for each department, school or research center of each of the investigators is notified that the ICS is waiting for their review and approval. Any of the reviewers/approvers defined for a given unit can review and approve the ICS. Once approved or rejected by a unit, the ICS will no longer be available to the other reviewers/approvers from that unit. If two or more reviewer/approvers are simultaneously reviewing the ICS, only the first approval or rejection will be accepted and recorded.

Obviously the budget, technical description and supporting documentation for the proposal is of interest, but other issues may be of importance to the reviewer as well. Remember the visual cues that indicate areas of possible concern. Red tab markers indicate anomalies to be reviewed.
Once the reviewer is satisfied with the evaluation of the proposal information, simply moving the mouse over the Supervisory Approval tab will display the Approve and Reject options. The approval or rejection is recorded and, in the event of an approval, the routing process continues. In the event of a rejection, the Principal Investigator and Contract Administrator are electronically notified and the routing process is cancelled.

7. Notifications

The routing system utilizes email as its notification mechanism. Messages are generated to inform the investigators and reviewers/approvers that the proposal has been released for approval and requires their attention. The approval notification message is sent to all reviewers/approvers included in the current approval tier at the time the tier is released for approval. A tier is released for review and approval when the previous tier is complete. The initial tier (Level 1) notifications are sent out by the system when the Contract Administrator releases the proposal for routing. The review/approval tier structure is described in Section 7.1, Notification Tiers.

The message contains basic information regarding the proposal and instructions for accessing the ICS review page. On the Review/Approval Notification email, there is a link that will directly take the reviewer/approver to the Banner Self-service login screen. Below are samples of both the Approval Notification email and the Rejection Notification email.
Sample Review/Approval Notification Email

Subject: Proposal 2010-999 is ready for your review

A proposal requires your approval for submission.

Proposal Number: 2010-999
Title: Wonderful Research Done By Brilliant Scientists
Investigator(s): Investigator1  Investigator2  Investigator3
                Investigator4  Investigator5  Investigator6
Agency: Funding Source

To review, approve or disapprove this proposal select the “Investigator Research Portal” link on the “Employee” tab of Banner Self Service.

Click the link below to go to Banner Self Service
http://register.uah.edu/

Figure 19. Sample Review/Approval Notification email

Sample Rejection Notification Email

Subject: Proposal 2010-999 has been REJECTED!

The proposal has been rejected by Dr. Jane Doe. The proposal routing has been cancelled.

Proposal Number: 2010-999
Title: Wonderful Research Done By Brilliant Scientists
Investigator(s): Investigator1  Investigator2  Investigator3
                Investigator4  Investigator5  Investigator6
Agency: Funding Source

Figure 20. Sample Rejection Notification email

7.1 Notification Tiers

The routing system uses a tier-based system for the approval process. There is currently a maximum of five tiers that must be successfully traversed for the ICS approval to be complete. Notification to each of the reviewer/approvers is sent simultaneously and approvals may occur within a tier in parallel. This means that each investigator can be reviewing and approving the ICS at the same time (Level 1) and the department chairs, deans, and center directors (Level 2) can all approve simultaneously as well. Tier level approval must be complete before the next tier level of approvals is initiated. For example for Level 1, ALL investigators must have completed and approved the ICS before any of the next tier level (Level 2) members are sent their notifications. The review/approval tier structure is diagramed below.
7.2 Reminders Notifications

If a tier level has not been reviewed and approved within a specified time period an additional email notification is sent out to the individuals identified as reviewers/approvers for the units within the tier level that have not approved the ICS. No reminder is sent to those individuals that have approved the ICS. On second and subsequent reminders, the Principle Investigator and Contract Administrator are also notified.
The time period allowed for review and approval is set by the system to a default value; however, it is a customizable quantity that may be adjusted by the Contract Administrator. All tier levels share the same review/approve time setting. If the Contract Administrator changes the review/approval time for the proposal, all tier levels have that modified time window for review and approval before the reminder notifications are sent.

7.3 Overrides

In the event that an investigator, department chairman, dean, or center director is unavailable for approval, and no other designated party is available to approve on their behalf, the Contract Administrator assigned to the proposal has override approval authority. The override approval is NOT meant to be used except in emergency situations. If the Provost or Vice President for Research is unavailable, Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs, Associate Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs, and Research Budget Director have override approval authority.

If an override is performed, the system records that the required approval was received and the routing continues. The overriding party is recorded as the approver and shows up on the approval tab as a red signature stamp instead of the green signature stamp that is associated with a non-override approval.

8 Additional Information

Check the Office of Sponsored programs website frequently for updated revisions of this User’s Guide. Contact your contract administrator for questions regarding proposal content and submission requirements. For technical questions or to report a problem with the submission system contact John Rogers (john.rogers@uah.edu) 874-2648.