

Financial Management of Research Contracts and Grants

Researcher guidelines for budget holder proxy



Introduction

The process for financial management of research contracts and grants has been reviewed, updated and standardised into four distinct phases. The phases include: pre-award, acceptance and establishment, post-award management and project close and reporting.

In accordance with [Outgoing Payments Procedure](#), Budget Holders are individual roles assigned in the UniFi financial system to oversee expenditure linked to a specific project or organisational unit. The role of Budget Holders is to:

- confirm the goods/services are needed and are for a valid University purpose; and
- confirm funds are available and expenditure is within the contract conditions.

The Budget Holder for financial management of research contracts and grants is the Chief Investigator, who is also accountable to the funding body for expenditure on grants or research contracts. In some instances, the Chief Investigator as the Budget Holder for the research contract or grant, may have a requirement to appoint a proxy to manage the operational aspects of the budget for a defined period.

This document describes the approved criteria in limited circumstances for a Chief Investigator to appoint a Budget Holder proxy in the UniFi financial system, with an understanding that the Chief Investigator remains the accountable and responsible authority for the research budget and expenditure for the life of the project.

Circumstances for a Budget Holder proxy

The following circumstances would be appropriate to consider the appointment of a proxy:

- During a period of the Chief Investigator's absence for example; travel or extended absence such as long service leave, extended sick leave or special study program.
- When the Chief Investigator is responsible for managing multiple significant research projects, the Chief Investigator can appoint a proxy Budget Holder within the research team for each grant to undertake the role of Budget Holder. The proxy must report to the Chief Investigator who is the authority and accountable for the research contract or grant.

Criteria for a Budget Holder proxy

In order to be able to demonstrate that the requirements of the definition of Budget Holder can be met, the proxy must fulfil the following requirements to apply for appointment as a delegate of the Chief Investigator:

- Must be an appropriately senior team member within the research project or related laboratory with an understanding of the research itself and the contract requirements.
- Research Operations Manager or similar, overseeing the research in accordance with the contract.

How to establish a proxy

1. Complete the [Budget Holder Proxy Request form](#) and the declaration as the Chief Investigator, acknowledging full accountability and responsibility for the research budget and authorising the proxy in line with the criteria to be the proxy Budget Holder.
2. Seek HR Authorisation Level 5 (Head of School/ equivalent) approval.
3. Once approved, return the form to your Management Accountant in the Finance Professional Services Advisory team for actioning in UniFi.
4. Management Accountant to keep a copy of the approval on their local files.