

Start-Up Funds Request and Approval Process

This process was initiated on July 15, 2008 and is fully implemented for new hires in FY09 and beyond. The annual review portion of this process will begin at the end of FY09 for new hires that started prior to FY09.

Start-up funds are often a critical element in the successful recruitment and launch of a faculty member's academic career. All tenured and tenure-track faculty, regardless of discipline, are eligible to receive start-up funding support. To facilitate this process in a timely fashion the following suggestions and procedures are being implemented.

When negotiating with candidates for faculty positions, department heads should request a plan for the use of the start-up funds being requested by the candidate. The department head must then assess whether the funds being requested and the plan for use of those funds are reasonable and appropriate for the position being filled. A request for start-up funding support after a candidate has accepted a position is not appropriate.

If summer salary is deemed appropriate, the amount should not exceed half of the total start up budget. Exceptions will require special justification for review and approval. The start-up fund package should not include moving costs or equipment for locations not owned and operated by UT-Knoxville and should not be included as part of the start-up package because they are to be funded from other sources. The department head is encouraged to confer with the dean, or associate dean, who will confer with the Office of Research to put together the total start-up package that seems appropriate. Once there is agreement on the start-up funds to be included in the offer, the department head should initiate the request form with budgets for all years (found on the Forms page of the Office of Research website) for approval by the dean and associate vice chancellor for research.

The Office of Research will match on a dollar for dollar basis any combination of department and/or college funds in the start-up package. Therefore, approval prior to initiating the search is not required. This does not include supplemental funding provided from other sources such as institutes or centers. The start-up commitment will be included in the official offer letter from the Provost's Office. Start-up packages can be requested for up to three years, should include annual budgets which will be reviewed annually and should be fully expended each year and by the end of the approved time period (request forms are posted on the Office of Research website). Carryover past the end of the approved number of years may be approved on an exception basis through the Office of Research.

Once the new faculty member arrives on campus, she or he, the department head, and mentor, if a mentor has been appointed, should discuss in some detail the projected expenditure of start-up funds for the first year as well as any compliance approvals that will be necessary to conduct the research. Based on these discussions, the new faculty

member must confirm with the Office of Research by no later than October 15 a final first-year line-item budget for the funds allocated for that year. Each college is requested to submit a spread sheet of anticipated recruiting and start-up needs for the following fiscal year by December 15 of the current fiscal year.

A start-up account will be opened for that faculty member and all committed funds from the department, the college, the Office of Research and other sources for that year will be allocated to the account and the new faculty member will expend funds from this account according to the budget she or he submitted. It is sometimes desirable that start-up expenditures be made prior to the arrival of the new faculty member, or before start-up accounts are funded. In such cases, startup accounts can be established and opened before the new faculty member arrives which is less error prone, eliminates the need to do cost transfers, and allows them to begin making purchases in a more timely fashion.

Each year of the start-up period is an independent accountable budget. It is the desire of the university that new faculty get started building their research program as soon as possible and start-up funds are allocated to assist with that process. Annual revisions in the budget may be necessitated by the need to redistribute the total start-up commitment over the years for which the commitment was made. These revisions must receive written approval by the department, college, and Office of Research.

Department heads and/or department business officers and the faculty member should manage the start-up accounts carefully to assure that there are no cost overruns and that funds are being expended in a judicious manner. Carryover of start-up funds will not be automatic. As with other accounts, return of carryover from start-up accounts must be approved. Any unused start-up funds will be returned to the units that contributed to this fund on a basis their respective original contributions.

Personnel in the Office of Research are available to assist in preparing budgets using budget forms on the Office of Research website. Please remember that if a new faculty member is using start-up to cover personnel costs, benefits and maintenance fees, tuition waivers, etc., must be budgeted.

Process Summary

- Department Head negotiates, in coordination with the Dean's Office, a start-up package with the potential new faculty member.
- When a Request to Make an Offer form is being submitted, the start-up approval form should be signed by the department head and forwarded to the college dean.
- The college signs for the college commitment and forwards the form to the associate vice chancellor for research.
- The associate vice chancellor for research will sign approval and the information will be included in the official offer letter.
- The Office of Research Business Office will record the information and notify the department and college of the completion of the approval process.

- The Provost's Office will notify the Office of Research Business Office once an offer has been accepted. Any request by the department for early set up of the start-up account should be made after offer acceptance.
- The Office of Research Business Office will notify the Office of Budget and Finance who will set up the account.
- The Office of Research will notify the faculty member, department, and college of the account number assigned.
- The department will annually submit a Request for Budget Revision form (T15) to the Office of Research, who will submit this along with its own to Budget and Finance to transfer funding from the department and college to the start-up account.
- By October 15, new faculty will adjust start-up budgets if needed.
- By December 15, colleges will provide a spread sheet of anticipated new start-up needs for the follow fiscal year (for information only).
- Beginning May 15, the annual review of all start-up accounts will begin.
- Up to 10% of unspent funds will automatically carry over each year until the end of the start-up period.
- Special requests for carry over approval are to be submitted through the college to the associate vice chancellor for research by May 1st.
- Requests to return any unused funds should be submitted through the college to the associate vice chancellor for research for approval.

If you have questions about this procedure, please do not hesitate to contact Greg Reed directly (gdreed@utk.edu).

Start-Up Funds Request and Approval Process Flowchart



Important Start-Up Funding Process Dates

ANNUALLY	Department submits a Request for Budget Revision form (T15) to the Office of Research	BY OCTOBER 15	New faculty will adjust start-up budgets if needed	ONGOING	Requests to return unused funds submitted through the college to the associate vice chancellor for research
ANNUALLY	Office of Research submits T15 along with its own to the Office of Budget of Finance to transfer funding to the start-up account	BY DECEMBER 15	Colleges will provide anticipated new start-up needs for the following fiscal year (for information only)	BY MAY 1	Special requests for carry over approval are submitted through the college to the associate vice chancellor for research
				BEGINNING MAY 15	Annual reviews of all start-up accounts