

July 16, 2014

RAOR Forum

**Presenters: Monica Cole,
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Schedule of Final Charges

Today's presentation is on project closeout.

Sponsors today are demanding quicker and cleaner closeouts from us. With Federal sponsors, we get a firm 90 days to final report. In the past, we've been able to go back and do revisions to add missed charges but we don't have those opportunities anymore.

The farther we are from the prime funding source, the tighter the window is for reporting. That means we don't always get 90 days. It could be 60, 45, 30, or even 15 days.

In order to facilitate these timely closeouts, we've been using these SFC forms.

Over the years, the form hasn't changed much.

However, in September, we will be changing when they are sent out and when they are due back.

There are 5 sections on the SFC. We ask that you input information in only 3 of them.

Section 1 is completed by SPA. It includes the direct expenses posted as of the last closed accounting period before the end date.

Example: If project ends 5/15, we will use 4/30 to complete section 1.

Section 5: Please pay attention to the final number in this section. Anything unspent will be de-obligated by the sponsor.

Certification and Signature

This is the same certification that Monica signs on all invoices and FFRs.

When we get the PIs signature, that is the certification to Monica that everything on the SFC is appropriate and will stand in audit.

Q: In section 2, you said we could attach a CJ13 report. Is the same allowed for Section 3?

A: Yes, that is acceptable.

Q: Is a separate SFC form sent for each individual R account number?

A: Yes.

Q: What if we're overspent in direct? Do we still include it on the form?

A: Yes, report all the expenses that were required to complete the project. We will deal with direct cost share separately.

Q: You said only the PI or department head's signature is acceptable. What if both of these people are not available? What do we do?

A: If the PI or department head is out of the country or traveling and you can't get physical signatures, please communicate this to us. We can facilitate these through email. When you send the email, scan the documents so they can see it for review. A blanket approval is not enough. Their email needs to

clearly state that the charges that they see in the form are approved. We can also accept electronic signatures.

Q: What about a college budget director? Is their signature acceptable?

A: No. It has to be the PI or department head. This decision is based on fiscal policy. The responsibility needs to stay with the person who has it.

Q: What if we have signing authority? The PI has already signed the ledger saying it's correct. Isn't it redundant to get the SFC signed also?

A: Delegation of authority means a lot of different things to different departments. If you are a special case, we can discuss it separately.

Q: The ledger is the legitimate book of accounts and the PI's signature is already there. Why does he have to sign again?

A: There shouldn't be any discrepancies in signatures. This is backed up by policy.

From an administrative standpoint, this is important because of the shorter and shorter deadlines that we're seeing. We won't have a chance to do a revision after the final is submitted.

What if the PI has purchased something and the bookkeeper/business manager isn't aware of it? This procedure will help prevent that situation from happening and the University will be protected from losing out on a lot of money.

Q: Can you include on the form stating that "authorized signatures" aren't allowed?

A: Thank you for the feedback. We'll look into it.

Q: About the Budget box in the top right hand corner... Can you clarify if this is the total budget or direct budget? It is confusing.

A: Thank you, that's a good point. We will look into it.

Q: Can you unlock the date part of the signature box?

A: Yes, we can do that.

Q: What if we want to do the SFC early?

A: Yes, we love that!

Q: The form uses the term "object code". That's kind of an outdated term. Can we change that to "commitment item" or "GL"?

A: Yes, we can do that.

Q: When Drew sends out reminder emails, can he include the due date so that the PI doesn't think that I'm late in submitting work?

A: Yes, we have updated the emails.

Q: One of the things that the PIs are not comfortable with on the form is that the information is not transparent. Can we include a section that states if the account is overspent or not? If overspent, how much the department will be absorbing? Add notes so that the PI can easily see and understand.

A: That's a good point. We'll look into it.

It might be helpful to attach the summary report to the SFC because it already shows the available balance.

Q: Can an official notice from a higher office be sent out to notify about these changes? i.e. Dr. Reed's office, etc.

A: We are all working together for the September 1 rollout.

Q: From a college standpoint, do you have the capabilities to send out a list of all the SFCs due from the college for that period?

A: We might be able to do a separate email with a list.

You can also go into IRIS and pull up the information using ZPS_WBS_ATTRIBUTES.

Q: Is this form just between the department and SPA?

A: If auditors come in and look, they can ask for anything they want to see. We will provide them with whatever we have.

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- Make sure the charges added to the SFC flow through to the ledger. Everything on the SFC should be on the ledger. Sometimes, the charges never actually post so we have to go back and revise the FFR because of an error on the SFC.
 - If the SFC isn't submitted by the due date, SPA will use the ledger balance on the last day of the project. Everything else will be the department's responsibility.
 - Please don't leave too much determination up to SPA. We will not make assumptions on your behalf.
 - We will not miss a billing deadline or FFR deadline. We will use the best information we have whether it's a ledger or an SFC so please turn in your information on time.
 - If the final is due 60 days after the end date, you don't have 60 days to work on the form. SPA needs time to review the SFC and create the financial report.

➤ **Highlights from the presentation:**

- Official rollout is September 1, 2014
- Please submit the form as they're sent to you
- Please turn it in signed as soon as you possibly can
- Communicate with us. Let us know what's going on
- Failure to submit the report puts the university and department at financial risk

***Comments by Theresa Sears:**

When processing contract, we run into different numbers of days for closeout. In OSP, we do try to negotiate these agreements to get the full 90 days but many stand fast on 30 days. This cuts the reporting time short but please know that we do try.

For extensions, we always ask that if you need one on a project, you need to ask at least 30-60 days before the end date. That is crucial because an official request needs to be sent to the sponsor.

*If you're expecting an extension and we haven't received an official mod, SPA will final report according to the deadline.