Grant Reporting and Management (GRAM) System Frequently Asked Questions

PennNet Authentication

Q: What is PennNet Authentication?

A: A PennNet ID and password authenticate your use of PennNet and its connection to the Internet. Your PennNet ID must be unique, and your password must adhere to certain rules that make it difficult for someone else to guess.

Q: How do I obtain a PennNet ID?

A: Penn faculty, students, and staff need a valid PENNcard in order to obtain a PennNet ID and password. You can obtain a new PENNcard or revalidate an expired card at the PENNcard ID Center. Take your PENNcard to one of the PennNet ID stations to swipe your card through the card reader attached to the PennNet ID terminal. When the card has been validated, follow the online instructions to select a PennNet ID from the choices presented, and then enter your choice for a password. You may take your PENNcard to any one of the PennNet ID stations listed below:

- ID Center, 150 Franklin Building, 3451 Walnut Street
- Biomedical Library, 3610 Hamilton Walk
- College of General Studies, Suite 100, 3440 Market Street
- Computing Resource Center, 202 Sansom West, 3650 Chestnut Street
- DRL Multimedia Services, 33rd and Walnut Streets
- New Bolton Center, Widener Hospital Computer Lab, 382 West Street Rd, Kennett Square
- SEAS CETS, 169 Moore Building, 200 South 33rd Street

Direct Cost Summary: Current Awards

NOTE: this page represents the DIRECT costs of the award ONLY. The information that you find here assumes that the Direct and F&A costs have been properly calculated and allocated in the budget.

Q: How is the Carry Forward calculated? Why are there negative balances?

A: At the end of the previous grant year/budget period of this award, the Total PJTD expenses were subtracted from the Total PJTD budget in each category. This difference is the Carry Forward from the prior grant period to the current one. If you had charges in an "unbudgeted" category during the previous year, a negative Carry Forward balance will appear in that category.

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Q: My grant received a new fund number this budget period (typically a program project or training grant). I know there were funds carried forward from the previous grant, but they do not appear in the Carry Forward column. Where will they be posted?

A: Because the grant has changed fund numbers, the funds are not automatically carried forward. When the Carry Forward balance has been approved by the sponsor and/or the Office of Research Services, a notice is issued to your BA. This notice authorizes the BA to increase the budget of the current budget period for the new fund. You should compare the current year's budget on your Notice of Grant Award with the amount on this report to determine if your authorized Carry Forward amount has been added to the budget.

Q: How can there be a negative amount in the "Actual Spent" column?

A: This is a budget period or grant year report. Only the transactions that have taken place during the current budget period are included here. If a transaction was initiated in a previous budget period, but was reversed in the current period, only the reversal will appear.

Q: A wayward transaction warning flashes every month. My BA says that s/he has corrected the transaction, but the warning continues to appear.

A: Because this is a budget period or "grant year" report, only transactions that have taken place during the current budget period are included here. The correction of an erroneous transaction that took place in a previous budget period will continue to appear, as a wayward, for the rest of this budget period.

Q: The "Percent Committed" bar graph seems disproportionately high when compared to the "Time Elapsed" bar. Am I really spending at this high rate?

A: The "Percent Committed" bar represents the total amount spent plus the total amount encumbered. Typically the entire year's salaries will be encumbered at the beginning of the grant period. This can cause the information to look skewed. You should drilldown to the salary and benefits category and view the encumbrances to see if this accounts for your apparent accelerated rate of spending.

Q: I appear to have a large balance in my "Salaries and Benefits" category, although I have filled all the positions on my grant. How can this be?

A: The payroll system will only encumber salaries through the end date of a post-doctoral researcher's current appointment. If the appointment cycles of the post-docs working on this grant do not coincide with the cycle of the budget period, their salaries may only be encumbered for part of the current budget period. [Less commonly, this may occur with your own salary/encumbrance, if your reappointment has not been entered into the payroll system.] Check with your BA to determine if this is the cause of your "underspending" in the salary category.
Q: My BA and I have reviewed the items in the "Other (Possible Unallowable)" category and found them to be acceptable charges on this grant. Why do these charges continue to appear in this category?

A: This report classifies charges based on their object code. If you and your BA determine that an incorrect object code was used and s/he moves the charge to another object code, it will disappear. Otherwise, the report will continue to classify the charge as "Other." You will not have to continue reviewing this category unless the balance changes, indicating that a new charge has been made.

Q: Why don't the Total Direct Costs Available and the Total Costs Available seem proportionate?

A: At the present time, this report is not calculating an "indirect cost (F&A) encumbrance." This enhancement will be added to this report when the data becomes available. Until then, if you need to estimate the current Total Costs Available, you can multiply the "F&A Rate" located at the top of the screen by the Total Amount Encumbered and subtract this from the Total Costs Available. You should consult with your BA to determine if there are any categories, such as equipment or student aid, to which the F&A rate will not be applied.

Q: A new budget period began this month, however I would like to review the detail of a transaction or salary charge that was made last month. How can I do this?

A: This report is calculated on a grant year basis, so you can no longer view the data here. Ask your BA to retrieve the information from the FinMIS system. You may wish to make screen prints of these reports during the final accounting period of each grant cycle.

Q: Why doesn't the budget match the information I received on my Notice of Grant Award?

A: First check the dates of the current budget period, if they are not correct, the Current Budget Period calculations will be wrong. Alert your BA to this problem so that s/he can have the dates corrected. If the dates are correct, your BA may not have entered the budget correctly, please check with him/her to resolve the problem.

Q: Why does my current budget show "$0," but the award dates are correct and current?

A: Check with your BA. It is possible that your BA has not entered the budget yet or that it has been entered into an incorrect accounting period.
Direct Cost Summary: Current Subawards

Q: What if a grant from another department does not appear on my subaward tab?

A: Check with your BA to be sure that these are funds that are administered by your department and not by the "funding" department.

Direct Cost Summary: Past Awards

Q: My grant ended several months ago. Why does it continue to appear here?

A: If your grant continues to appear on this tab, the grant has not been disabled in the FinMIS system. This does not mean that charges can continue to be made against this account (as of the Project end date new expenditures are frozen). However, there is some reason that this account cannot be disabled. This reason could range from the fact that a final technical report has not been submitted to an encumbrance that has not been paid. You should consult with your BA to determine if you can provide any missing items or information to facilitate the process.

Direct Cost Summary: Future Awards

Q: What if a new grant doesn't appear? Or, a grant appears on the "Future Awards" tab, but has no budget, although one has been entered into FinMIS?

A: A grant will not appear until the month after it has been created. For example, if an award started in July, the earliest that it will appear on the "Current Awards" tab is during August.

If a fund had been assigned by Research Services prior to the last GRAM System update, it will appear on the "Future Awards" tab. If a budget has been entered in a future accounting period, to coincide with the start date of the grant, you will NOT see a budget in the current period. When the grant becomes active and is transferred to the "Current Awards" screen, you will then see the budget.
GRAM Demonstration Training

Definition of Terms

Tabs & Buttons:

Primary Awards – Clicking on this tab displays any primary awards. An award displayed under this tab is either a current award or an award that is less than 90 days past its end date, for which the identified investigator is the Principal Investigator for the entire project.

Other Awards – Clicking on this tab displays any “sub-awards.” A sub-award is a part of a program project or other multi-investigator award in which another investigator is responsible for the overall project, but the identified investigator is responsible for one or more subprojects.

Past Awards – Clicking on this tab displays any FinMIS enabled past awards. An award displayed under this tab is more than 90 days past its end date and is still enabled in FinMIS. Appropriate adjustments can possibly still be made to these accounts.

Future Awards – Clicking on this tab displays any future awards. An account displayed under this tab is a project for which a notice of award has been received and that has a start date following the end of the current month.

Choose PI – Clicking on this button will display a screen allowing you to access award information for other Principal Investigators.

Award Drilldown – Clicking on this button will display a screen with more financial information about this specific award.

Subawards – Clicking on this button will display a screen to provide access to the “sub-awards,” components of this program project or multi-investigator award.

Waywards – Clicking on this button will display a screen listing any FinMIS account combination related to this award’s fund that has no budget, and against which a transaction was posted.

Definition of Terms:

Current Budget Period – (also called “Current Grant Year” or “Grant Year”) The fiscal time period designated for a given award. It encompasses the current funding increment. Although sometimes called a budget year, this period may or may not be 12 months in length. A “budget period” may be less than a year or consist of multiple years, depending on the sponsor’s method of funding.

Sponsor – The name of the sponsoring agency that provides the financial support for this award.

Award ID – This is the identification number that is assigned to the award by the sponsoring agency.

Fund – The code identifying the FinMIS financial fund assigned to this award. This 6-digit code is the fourth segment of the seven segment, 26-digit FinMIS account number.

Title – The name of the award.

Budget – The money allocated to the award for expenses in the current budget period.
Carry Forward – Money left over (unspent) from previous budget periods. Restricted amounts should not be included. However, this should be confirmed with the departmental Business Administrator. Note that if the fund number for the award has changed from the last budget period any residual money will not be shown in Carry Forward; rather it will be included in the award’s new budget.

Effective Budget – Consists of any money leftover from previous budget periods (i.e. “Carry Forward”) plus the money allocated for expenses in the current budget period.

Total Spent – The amount of money spent from this award during the current budget period.

Encumbered – Money that has been designated for a specific purpose but not yet spent.

Total Committed – The combination of all of the money spent and all of the money encumbered.

Total Available – The Effective Budget minus the Total Committed. This is the amount that can still be spent or encumbered.

F&A Rate – Also known as either the “indirect cost rate” or “overhead rate.” The Facilities & Administrative Rate is an agreed upon percentage of the Direct Cost expenses of an award that will additionally be charged to the award for Facilities & Administrative Costs. See “Facilities & Administrative Costs” below.

Budget Period Start – The starting date of the award’s current budget period. A budget period is a fiscal time period designated for a given award. Usually it is a different time period than the University’s fiscal year and the period may consist of several months, a year, or more than one year.

Budget Period End – The ending date of the award’s current budget period. A budget period is a fiscal time period designated for a given award. Usually it is a different time period than the University’s fiscal year and the period may consist of several months, a year, or more than one year.

Project Start – The award’s start date as defined by the sponsoring agency. Several budget periods may occur during the duration of a project.

Project End – The award’s end date as defined by the sponsoring agency. Several budget periods may occur during the duration of a project.

Time Elapsed – The percent of time that has passed since the starting date of the current budget period relative to its length.

Percent Committed – The percent of money spent and encumbered (Total Committed) relative to the Effective Budget (i.e. amount of money budgeted and carried forward).

Percent Available – The total money budgeted and carried forward less the amount of money spent and encumbered expressed as a percentage.

“Salary & Benefits” – Personnel costs and benefits spent or committed for the current budget period. Note: (1) This does not include monies spent during previous budget periods nor those committed to future budget periods that may also be part of this project. (2) Post doc and research associate salaries are only encumbered up to their appointment end date – which may be prior to the end date of this award’s current budget period.

“Equipment” – Capital expenses consisting of individual items each costing $5,000 or more, which are directly allocable to the project.

“Supplies & Services” – Expenses consisting of individual items with a unit cost that is less than $5,000 which are directly allocable to the project.
"Travel" – Travel expenses related directly to this award by persons working directly on this project.

"Tuition and Fees" – Payments for graduate research fellows and assistants working directly on this project and paid directly from this award. If a student works on multiple projects, the tuition and fees must be paid proportionate to the stipend amount from each award.

"Other (Possible Unallowable)" – Any expense that does not fall into any of the established categories and may not be allowable under the terms of the award. An expense falling under this category may or may not be allowable depending upon the terms and conditions of the award.

**Indirect Costs** – See "Facilities and Administrative Costs."

**Overhead** – See "Facilities and Administrative Costs."

**Facilities and Administrative Costs** – Sometimes referred to as "Indirect Costs" or "Overhead."

Costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives, and that, therefore, cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular project or activity. These costs, previously known as indirect costs, involve resources used mutually by different individuals and groups. In most instances, they will be referred to in this application as "F&A Costs." Note: F&A Costs have not been calculated on Encumbered amounts. F&A Costs can be estimated by applying the F&A Rate to the Encumbered Total Direct Cost amount less the amounts in the Equipment and Tuition & Fees categories. It is expected that this amount will be automatically calculated in the future.