



Office of the Associate Dean for Research  
and Graduate Studies

# UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DEL CARIBE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/PROJECT DIRECTOR HANDBOOK

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Delia M. Camacho", is written over a horizontal line.

Delia M. Camacho, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

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**PI/PD HANDBOOK**  
**Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC)**

**Revision history**

<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Page</b>
September 2020	New F&A Agreement (Effective period 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2024) The UCC rate changed to 70%	2

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# Principal Investigator/Project Director Handbook



## Introduction

The purpose of the Principal Investigator/Project Director PI/PD Handbook is to ensure that the administration of funds provided from external sources to support research and other projects is according to the corresponding regulations of the funding agency, as well as established University policies and procedures. Faculty and staff who conduct sponsored projects under University auspices have an important public, as well as personal, responsibility to manage those projects accordingly. The PI Handbook will help research investigators fulfill this responsibility.

### Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) (NIH Grants Policy Statement 2.1.2 Grantee Staff)

A PI/PD is an individual designated by the applicant organization to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct the project or program supported by the award. Each PI/PD is responsible and accountable to the grantee organization or, as appropriate, to a collaborating organization, for the proper conduct of the project or program, including the submission of all required reports.

PI/PDs are members of the grantee team responsible for ensuring compliance with the financial and administrative aspects of the award. They work closely with designated officials within the grantee organization to create and maintain necessary documentation.

## PRE-AWARD

The pre-award phase represents the beginning of the grant lifecycle, which includes announcing opportunities, submitting applications, and reviewing applications.

Pre-Award Services support the University community in proposal development through value-added, high-quality service and professional partnerships with Principal Investigators in order to facilitate research.

The UCC sponsored program personnel work collaboratively with investigators to prepare grant applications, serving as a dedicated central resource in all matters related to University and sponsor policies for proposal development and submission.

### Procedures:

1. **Funding Opportunity** - The applicant contacts the office to notify the intent to submit a proposal, and for orientation on the specific internal procedures. The applicant and the office personnel must read ALL guidelines carefully and thoroughly.

The following important specifications such must be considered:

- Is there a limited number of submissions per institution?
- Does our institution qualify for these funds?

- Are there any restrictions the applicant must satisfy? For example: citizenship, residency, institutional affiliation, degrees, etc.
- Are institutional matching funds required? If at the time of proposal submission (deadline) all approvals have not been received, the proposal submission process cannot be completed.
- Does the deadline fall on a UCC non-working day? How will this be managed?

## 2. Internal Routing Form

An [Internal Routing Form](#) must be processed prior to submission of the proposal. The applicant should download the Form from the UCC website. This document must be totally completed, and it must include the budget of year one as attachment. In addition, it must have the signatures of the PI/PD, Department Chair, Sponsored Program Officer, Associate Dean for Research and President. This document is necessary to assure that all institutional requirements for complying with the proposed project are agreed upon prior to the proposal submission. It must be submitted at least **3 days** before submitting a proposal that does not require institutional commitment (for example matching funds, additional space) and **7 days** for those that potentially do.

## 3. Proposal Preparation



A. **Letter of Intent/Notice of Intent** – the PI/PD prepares the Letter of Intent when required. This document briefly describes a summary of the intention to submit a full proposal to the sponsor agency.

B. **Budget** - Special attention should be paid to any requirements specified in the guidelines. The allowable costs and format can vary largely from agency to agency and even for different programs within an agency. Please study the application package BEFORE you start putting together your budget so that it follows the necessary structure from the beginning; it is easier than having to restructure a budget at the last minute.

Items to consider:


- Personnel:
  - Fringe Benefits – Are additions to compensation that companies give their employees. The UCC percentage is 27% ([Fringe Benefits Certification](#))
  - Facilities and Administration Costs – These are costs that cannot be uniquely associated with a particular project but which are nonetheless incurred by the University due to the project. The UCC rate is 70% ([F&A Agreement](#))
  - Base salary – Personnel salary; verify with the Office of Human Resources
  - Percent Effort – Effort dedicated to the project. The total percent effort dedicated to research must not exceed 85%. This percentage may be dedicated to only one project or divided among various projects. A higher total percentage requires approval by the President.
- Cost Sharing or Matching Funds - Institutional funds required by the funding agency. These must be included in the Internal Routing Form and approved by the President prior to submitting the proposal.
- Consultants
- Equipment
- Publication Costs
- Supplies
- Stipends and Tuition
- Subcontracts
- Travel
- State Tax (IVU) - You must take into consideration that all quotes will pay tax charges.



- Facilities Fees – fees for specific services to be paid by the investigators. (May be subject to change)
  - UCC Optical Imaging Facility Annual Fee \$1,500
  - UCC Common Instrumentation Area and Services Annual Fee \$1,500
  - Animal Housing Costs. (See Table Below)

*Species	**Projects of the UCC	**External Projects
Rats	\$0.35	\$0.41
Rats (1-28 days of born)	\$0.15	\$0.17
Mice	\$0.25	\$0.28
Mice (1-28 days of born)	\$0.08	\$0.10
Caiman	\$1.00	\$1.10

\*For other species, the per diem cost must be evaluated.  
 \*\*These costs are subject to change.

- C. **Budget Justification** - The narrative should provide sufficient detail to allow the sponsor to determine whether the proposed costs are reasonable and appropriate. The justification should provide brief descriptions of the duties of all positions, justify all equipment purchases, and explain how subcontracts will help achieve goals and objectives of the project.
- D. **Institutional Letters of Support** – The PI/PD is responsible for requesting letters of support. The OADRGS collaborates in follow-up to obtain them.
- E. **Consultants** – include name, organization affiliations, letters of support and Biographical Sketches.
- F. **Approvals and Compliance Issues** –Investigators are responsible for contacting the corresponding Institutional Committee for an orientation about the procedures to obtain the appropriate approvals to perform the specific research. Among these are the Institutional Review Board (IRB), for research involving human subjects; Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Radiation Safety, Chemical Safety and Biosafety. Once a research plan has been developed, all applicable compliance issues need to be identified and properly addressed. The most common compliance areas are listed below but each case should be studied on its own merit:
- Financial Conflict of Interest
  - Human Subjects in Research
  - Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
  - Use and Care of Animals in Research
  - Environmental Impact
  - Hazardous Materials Handling & Disposal
- 
- G. **Subcontracts** – A Subcontract is required if part of the research effort under a grant is to be performed by an organization or institution other than the prime recipient.
1. **UCC is the Prime Recipient (Principal Institution):**  
 Investigator Responsibilities:
- Inform the OADRGS that the proposal will lead to a subcontract with another institution.
  - Obtain the contact information of the subrecipient institution.

OADRGS Responsibilities: request all necessary documentation:

- [Subrecipient Commitment Form](#). This form must be signed by the Subrecipient Institution Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).
- Budget and Budget Justification (The total direct and indirect budget will be considered as direct costs for UCC).
- Biosketches
- F&A Rate Agreement

## 2. UCC is the Subrecipient Institution

Investigator Responsibilities: Submit the following documents:

- Statement of Work
- Budget and Budget Justification
- Biographical Sketches
- Research Committee's Approvals

OADRGS Responsibilities:

- Complete the *Subrecipient Commitment Form* and obtain the President's signature.
- Prepare Letter of Commitment
- Obtain the administrative documents (F&A Agreement, Fringe Benefits Certification, System for Award Management (SAM) Registration, etc.)

4. **Proposal Submission** - All submissions must be through the UCC Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) of the OADRGS. Most federal agencies require proposals to be submitted through electronic portals (Grants.gov, ASSIST, FastLane, DoD). These portals are subjected to temporary disconnections, server malfunctions, and slowdowns that can affect timely submission of proposals. We strongly encourage all investigators submitting the proposals through the OADRGS to comply with **3-business days prior to the agency's deadline** and to be aware of any conflicts pertaining to the agency's deadline and the institutional calendar. **The PI/PD must confirm to the Authorized Organization Representative of the intended date of submission at least 7 days in advance.**



- Best time for electronic submission from OADRGS is before 2:00 PM.
- Follow guidelines' specified file formats when preparing the proposal package.
- Be aware of page and character limits throughout the application.

5. **Just in Time** – Additional information required by the agency after scientific review of a proposal with possibilities of being funded. The AOR is responsible for contacting the PI/PD and assisting with the required documents. The PI/PD will upload all documents requested through eRACommons and the AOR is responsible for submitting them to the agency.

## **POST AWARD**

The post award phase comprises a significant amount of work over the duration of the award dates, which includes implementing the grant, reporting progress, and completing the closeout requirements.

The OADRGS post-award staff is responsible for: cost projections, budget preparation and changes, salary plans, overseeing compliance with grant regulations and preparation of financial reports.

### **Procedures:**

1. **Notice of Award (NOA)** – The Sponsored Program Officer receives all Notice of Awards and is responsible for their distribution to:
  - Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD)
  - Associate Dean for Research
  - Director, Office of Fiscal Resources
  - Budget Officer, Office of Fiscal Resources
  - Research Administrator



\*Please pay particular attention to possible Special Conditions of the NOA.

2. **Grant Account** – A financial account for the grant will be created by the Office of Fiscal Resources at the request of the OADRGS personnel. The account will be based on the budget approved in the award documentation. OADRGS will notify the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) when the account has been created and available for use. **Accounts will be handled through the OADRGS or Authorized Departmental Administrator.**
3. **Subcontracts** – When UCC is awarded a subcontract by another institution, OADRGS is responsible for verifying its content, completing the requested documentation, obtaining the approval of UCC legal advisors and of the President, prior to submitting the final version to the institution of the Parent Grant. Once the subcontract is signed by both parties, OADRGS proceeds to request the creation of the financial account for the subcontract.
4. **Managing Budget** – OADRGS reviews and prepares documentation for financial transactions (requisitions, travel, reimbursement, petty cash, re-budgeting, etc.) as appropriate. It also monitors expenditure activities on sponsored research funds to ensure compliance with federal regulations, agency specific requirements, and University policies and procedures.

Account activity must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the accuracy of expense incurred, that expenditures conform to the project budget and costs are consistent with the project schedule and incurred within the project start and expiration dates.

- A. **Proposal and Authorization for Personnel Actions (PAAP) Form** - The Proposal and Authorization for Personnel Actions (PAAP) Form, is the official document that gives course to the hiring of an employee. The employee's compensation will be according to the proposed and approved budget. Departmental Directors and Research Administrators are in charge of completing and processing this form. Based on the PAAP, the Human Resources Office will generate a yearly contract, which requires the employee's signature.



- B. **Purchasing** – All requisitions should be prepared by the Research Administrator for the acquisition of materials, equipment and other non-personal services in accordance with the proposed and approved budget. Purchase Office Policies are to be followed.

Some important steps to make purchases:



1. A quote is required for the purchase of all product(s). Quotes should always include the cost of shipping and handling and the Tax charges must be obligated. For equipment purchases, three quotes are required to compare prices, guarantees and terms of purchase. A letter of justification will be required, if applicable. (Pre-approved emergency purchases with PI/PD personal funds may be reimbursed provided original receipts are submitted).
  2. If the purchase was not requested in the original proposal, a justification is required.
  3. If the requisition involves the purchase of animals or radioactive agents, the signature of the President of the corresponding Committee is required.
  4. Requisitions are prepared by the Research Administrator, signed by the Principal Investigator and approved by the Program Director.
- C. **Reimbursement** – Pre-approved emergency purchases with PI/PD personal funds may be reimbursed provided original receipts are submitted.
- D. **Facilities Fees** – Fees for specific services payed by the investigators. (May be subject to change)
- UCC Optical Imaging Facility Annual Fee \$1,500
  - UCC Common Instrumentation Area and Services Annual Fee \$1,500
  - Animal Housing Costs. (See table below)

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\*For other species, the perdiem cost must be evaluated.  
\*\*These costs are subject to change.

\*Each unit is responsible for monitoring services and providing invoices.

E. **Travel**

- The PI/PD must make sure that all travel is approved by the funding agency, particularly in the case of foreign travel.
- The PI/PD must send a letter addressed to the President, and signed by the Department Chair, requesting approval for the trip.
- Travel coordination is done in accordance to UCC Travel Policy.
- OADRGs will assist with the travel arrangement.
- Upon return, an Expense Report must be submitted using the Travel Expense Form with evidence of the activity, detailed expenses and corresponding receipts.



- F. **Petty Cash** – Cash advance for special purchases that should not exceed \$50.00, according to UCC Policy. A Petty Cash request form indicating the purpose of the expense must be submitted by the PI/PD to the Deanship of Administration for approval. Original receipts are required after completing the purchase. Purchases exceeding the \$50.00 limit must follow the purchasing requisition process.
- G. **Rebudgeting** – PI/PDs may need to expend funds differently from the approved budget. Budget category increases or decreases require submission of a Re-budgeting Form, an explanation of the need for budget changes and signature approvals (PI/PD, Budget Officer and Dean of Administration). The research administrator (OADRGS) prepares the form according to the PI/PD's request(s).

## 5. Invoicing and Financial Reporting

- Financial Status – PI/PDs will receive a monthly financial report from the research administrator. These reports should be reviewed to verify that the expenditures are correct and charged to the corresponding account.
- The Fiscal Resources Office will prepare and submit financial reports and invoices to the sponsor.

## 6. Award Amendments:

- A. No Cost Extensions (NCE) – Should it be necessary to extend the project period (without requesting additional funds) to complete the project, a request must be submitted to the funding agency at least **60 days prior to the grant's end date**. Different procedures are used depending on the type of award and sponsor. The PI/PD must send a request for additional time, via email to AOR explaining the reasons for the additional time needed to accomplish the project goals.
  - NSF Awards: NSF provides one automatic 1-year no-cost extension, if the PI/PD requests it through the online portal (research.gov), subject to AOR approval, at least 45 days before the project end date.
  - NIH Awards: NCE requests are submitted via the eRA Commons system. The eRA No-Cost Extension feature allows the grantee organization to electronically submit a notification of intent to extend the final budget period of a grant. This extension does not have additional funding and provides up to 12 months of additional time. The NCE may be requested only by the AOR, no earlier than 60 days before the end of the project period and no later than the project's end date.
- B. Change of PI / Reduction of Effort – Changes should follow award guidelines. Typically if a PI/PD's will be absent from a project for three or more consecutive months or will reduce effort by 25 percent or more, they must request the funding agency's approval. If for any reason work on a project cannot be continued under the direction of the original PI/PD, the PI/PD shall request a change in leadership by sending an email to the Associate Dean for Research and the AOR with the following information:
  - Reason for change
  - Biographical sketch of the proposed new PI
  - Budget adjustments resulting from change in PI

OADRGS will use this information to draft and submit a justification letter to be sent to the sponsor, which should include the AOR's signature.

- C. Change of Institution – If a PI/PD transfers from UCC to another eligible institution of higher education before the expiration of an award received while employed by UCC and intends to transfer the corresponding award to the new institution, specific sponsor guidelines must be followed. OADRGS will provide assistance accordingly.

7. **Time and Effort Reporting (required on federal awards)** – [The UCC Effort Reporting Policy](#) requires the [certification of effort](#) on extramurally sponsored projects by ALL personnel that receives a compensation from external funds to comply with federal effort reporting regulations. (According to UCC regulations, the total percent effort dedicated to research must not exceed 85%. At least 15% effort must be dedicated to UCC Activities. Variations must be approved by the President).
- The completed and signed Time and Effort Reports must be submitted every three months.
  - Certifications must be signed by the personnel, the Principal Investigator and their immediate supervisor using suitable means of verification that the work was performed stating that salaries and wages charged to the sponsored agreement as direct charges and to F&A cost or other categories are directly related to the work performed for the sponsored project.
8. **Conflict of Interest** – in accordance with the Federal and [UCC Research Conflict of Interest Policy](#), the UCC has established standards and procedures to be followed by investigators applying for funding. These ensure that the design, conduct, and previous to submission reporting of research results will not be biased by any conflicting interest of those investigators for the proposed activity.
- A notification will be sent to the PI annually (due date September 15) to complete a [Disclosure Form](#).
  - The Compliance Officer monitors certification of Conflict of Interest, ensuring compliance with federal regulations.
9. **Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPR)** – The RPPR is used by grantees to submit progress reports to NIH on their grant awards. There are three types of RPPRs:
- *Annual RPPR* – Required to describe a grant's scientific progress, identify significant changes, report on personnel, and describe plans for the subsequent budget period or year.
  - *Final RPPR* – Required as part of the grant closeout process to submit project outcomes in addition to the information submitted on the annual RPPR, except budget and plans for the upcoming year.
  - *Interim RPPR* – Required when submitting a renewal (Type 2) application. If the Type 2 is not funded, the Interim RPPR will serve as the Final RPPR for the project. If the Type 2 is funded, the Interim RPPR will serve as the annual RPPR for the final year of the previous competitive segment. The data collected on the Interim RPPR are the same as for the Final RPPR, including project outcomes.
10. **Closeouts** – Process to determine that all applicable administrative actions and all required work of an award have been completed by the grantee. Due dates for applicable closeout reports vary according to the sponsor agency. For NIH, closeout reports are due no later than **120 days after the project's end date**. Failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect future funding to the organization and/or awards with the same PI/PD.

The PI/PD must ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Proper closeout procedures have been followed for personnel hired during the award. The PI/PD should arrange to move personnel paid on the project to an alternate funding source or advise them of pending layoff at least one month before the project ends.
- All personnel effort has been certified in accordance with the University's policy
- All technical reports required by the sponsor have been prepared (final progress report, final invention reports)

- Patents or copyrights have been reported via OADRGs and procedures have been followed, if applicable.

The OADRGs is responsible for:

- Sending an award close notification to the Principal Investigator
- Submitting to the agency, the final progress report and the final invention report
- Coordinating with the Budget Officer the submission of a Final Financial Report.

#### 11. Quick Reference – Institutional Information:

Universidad Central del Caribe  
PO BOX 60327  
Bayamón, PR 00960-6032

100 AVE Laurel  
Lomas Verdes  
Bayamón, PR 00956-4816

- DUNS Number: 090534694
- UIE: XVQJLM5S8L85
- Animal Welfare Assurance Number: D16-00343
- CAGE Code: 1XW58
- Congressional District: PR-098
- Entity Identification Number (EIN or TIN): 66-0349669
- Federal Wide Assurance: 00001103



#### 12. UCC Research Policies

- [UCC Bridge Funding and Seed Money Policy](#)
- [UCC Disposition of Equipment Transfer Policy](#)
- [UCC Effort Reporting Policy](#)
- [UCC Fee for Service Policy](#)
- [UCC Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [UCC Research Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [UCC Relocation Expenses Policy](#)
- [UCC Research Space Allocation Policy](#)
- [UCC Scientific Misconduct Policy](#)
- [UCC Sponsored Projects Budget Revision Policy](#)
- [UCC Sponsored Projects Cost Transfer Policy](#)
- [UCC Sponsored Projects Procurement Policy](#)
- [UCC Sponsored Projects Unallowable Cost Policy](#)