

## Organizational Prior Approval System (OPAS)

Funding agencies have delegated expanded authority to institutions to approve certain administrative actions. Under expanded authority, the agency grants the University of Colorado the right to act in its place in determining the movement of direct cost within the project. These agencies require grantees to assure that adequate institutional reviews and approvals are in place for decisions that affect the management of federally supported projects. All approvals must be documented.

The Principal Investigator/Project Director/PI is authorized to make changes to grants that agree with the approved budget. Before incurring any changes that deviate from the budget the PI must work with the INSTAAR Chief Financial Officer to complete the OPAS form.

The OPAS form is required to request/document any change to grant terms and conditions including the categorical budget. Examples of changes and requests that require OPAS forms:

- Used for grants only
- 90 day pre-award spending authority
- Changing budget lines within the categorical budget
  - General budget lines
  - Travel lines

There are three forms available on the Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG) website:

- Organizational Prior Approval (OPAS)
  - <http://www.colorado.edu/VCRResearch/research/forms/pdfs/OPAS%20Form.pdf>
  - Used for pre-award request and general budget deviations
  - Must justify why it is necessary to set up a project prior to the award being received and processed. *i.e.*, need to procure items so that the field season is not delayed or missed
- Organizational Prior Approval (OPAS) – Budget Deviations for Equipment Acquisition
  - <http://www.colorado.edu/VCRResearch/research/forms/pdfs/OPAS-Equipment%20Acquisition.pdf>
  - Used for equipment acquisitions
- Organizational Prior Approval (OPAS) – Budget Deviations for Travel Expense
  - <http://www.colorado.edu/VCRResearch/research/forms/pdfs/OPAS-Travel%20Expenses.pdf>
  - Used when the travel budget has insufficient funds for the requested travel

- Must justify the need for the travel, specify which budget categories the funds are coming from to cover the travel and why those funds are no longer needed in that budget category.
- Contracts require prior approval from the sponsor
- Check the terms and conditions to ensure the sponsor does not have prior approval requirements for foreign travel. Note: Required by NASA and JPL.

Upon completion of the OPAS form it will be sent to the Office of Contracts and Grants for review and approval. OCG will review the changes to see if they are:

- Allowable under OMB Circular 21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions
- Are consistent with the terms and conditions of the award and with the sponsor's policies
- Do not constitute a change in the scope of the project
- Are reasonable, necessary and allocable to the project

After review and approval, the request will be forwarded to the funding agency, if required.

Any change in Scope of Work will require prior approval from the sponsor.