FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SPONSORED RESEARCH GUIDES

I Got the Grant! Now What?

You just had your funding application approved and you now have a research grant! Congratulations! This guide walks you through the process of getting your funds deposited into an account at Memorial University, who will administer the account and how, information on necessary actions if there are changes you need to make to your grant, and account and grant closing responsibilities.

Jump to the sections included in this guide:

Informing Memorial of Grant Success

1. First of all, you will need to inform all of the relevant Memorial offices that your grant proposal was awarded. Email the news to those who may not yet know: the Grants Facilitation Officer (GFO) who handled your file, your department head, administrative staff member(s), SGS manager Elizabeth Simms (if you had baseline commitments), and, of course, team members listed on your application, especially co-applicants and partner institutions. The GFO will work with RIS to update the status of your Researcher Portal (RP) ROMEO file from "Pending" to "Active".
   o Tri-Agency funding is a special case: more often than not, RIS will inform you of your award, update your RP file, and then you should email others listed above.
2. Once the RP file status has been updated, you then need to formally accept the award by launching an Event, "RIS - Agreement" against the RP file you initially submitted for the proposal. For detailed instructions on how to submit an Agreement Event, see HSS's research website, "How do I… Access my Funds".
   o If you applied for a grant without submitting it through the RP for review and approvals, then an RP file will first need to be submitted for review and approval by your department, HSS, and RIS, before an account can be opened. Contact a GFO in this scenario. Note that account opening will take longer in this case.
3. If you are a co-investigator (CI) or are being contracted to work on a specific portion of a grant where the Principal Investigator (PI) is at another institution, it's likely Memorial will be required to sign a sub-agreement or contract with the PI's institution. The internal process is the same as if you were the lead PI – there must be an RP file here at Memorial before an account can be opened and funds transferred here. If you didn't submit an application through the RP for review and approval prior to the agency's deadline, you'll need to go through that process first, and then submit the award notification documents (that you obtain from the PI) as an Event, "RIS – Agreement" against the RP file.

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Account Opening Processes

SIGNING CONTRACTS

All grants are a type of a contract or agreement; in order for the funds to be transferred to Memorial, there needs to be an agreement worked out and mutually signed between Memorial and the funding agency/sponsor. RIS secures institutional signature on these types of research funding agreements on behalf of the researcher and will begin work on the agreement once you have submitted an Event, "RIS – Agreement" against the original RP file. Transferring of funds only occurs when Memorial signs the agreement and the external funder counter-signs, finalizing the funding arrangements.

- In the case of Tri-Agency grants, there is an existing master agreement between Memorial and the Tri-Agencies, so this step is not needed. The Event "RIS – Agreement" you submit, however, indicates, in part, that you accept the Principal Applicant's responsibilities outlined in this master agreement.

CLEARANCES

Once the contract has been fully signed, RIS will review if ethics, animal care, Indigenous research declarations or permits, or other clearances need to be tracked (this is determined by sponsor and/or Memorial policies). If so, RIS will confirm with the Memorial PI and enter this information into ROMEO. If there is a clearance required before funds can be disbursed, RIS will ask you if you want a partial release of funds (see next section).

- Note that some clearances require that annual verifications be submitted, such as ICEHR. These verifications are submitted as an Event, "RIS – Certification Verification" through the RP each year.

PARTIAL RELEASE OF FUNDS

If there are clearances tied to your account, such as ICEHR (ethics), then you can submit to RIS a modified budget which separates those budget expenses tied to ethics from those that are not. RIS can then request a 'partial release' of the funding so you can begin your project with those activities and expenses that do not require ethics clearances. These non-ethics related funds can be deposited into your account while you wait for ethics approval. Once ethics has been approved, you will submit the approval documentation through an RP Event, "RIS- Other Documents," to have the rest of the funds released and deposited.

ACCOUNT OPENING PROCESS

When their review is complete and the agreements signed (as applicable), RIS will then send a "New Account Opening" email and memo to Financial and Administrative Services (FAS), cc'ing the PI, the department, the GFOs, and HSS.

The account opening memo triggers a process which travels through several units within FAS. Typically, the process is as follows:

- The file is reviewed by the FAS research accounting unit who determine eligibility of expenses against sponsor guidelines, university reporting requirements, etc.

- The file is then sent to the FAS Financial Systems unit for account opening. This unit emails the department (or other unit) that will be administering the funds and tracking account activity. They then send account opening documents for signature to the department (see next section).
- Depending on the type of grant, various units track account expenses:

Source of award or grant funding, administration of the accounts, and clearances:

External Grants/Agreements		Internal Grants	
Administered by Department	Administered by RIS's MUP unit	Administered by Department	Administered by other internal unit
• Most Tri-Agency; DFO; NFRF; PAO; etc.	• Major University Partnership (MUP)-type grants, such as the SSHRC Partnership Grant • Other institutionally-led grants	• Start-Up Funds • Dean of HSS or VPR Special Awards • Research pool account • RIS grants – SBMF, SSHRC Exchange/ Explore	• ISER • JR Smallwood • Harris grants • OPE grants
All grants administered by Memorial may also require the researcher to: • Obtain Agreement in Principal/ Evidence of Community Engagement prior to submitting grant proposal/application, as per RIIG policy. The AIP/ECE must be on file in ROMEO. • Obtain Memorial's clearances from either REB, ICEHR, animal care, biohazard, etc., if awarded. Annual verifications must be submitted through the RP to report on status of the clearance, as required by the sponsor. • Obtain other necessary clearances and certificates at appropriate time, based on clearance policies: for example, PAO research permit, Indigenous communities' research permits, drone license, etc. Annual verifications may need to be submitted through the RP, depending on terms and conditions of clearance and the funding contract.			

ACCOUNT OPENING DOCUMENTS

Before an account is opened, FAS emails the PI and unit administrative staff with account opening documents that require signature. These will include a "Research Fund – Signing authority and Banner Access" form, but also a "Specimen Signature – Grantee and/or Delegates" form if it's your first ever research account at Memorial; this is used to confirm signatures indicating approval of expenses or other paperwork in FAS. It also contains some text regarding disbursement of funds and access to fund information.

- Note that in the case of students, the account will be established under a faculty supervisor, in trust on the student's behalf. This means the faculty member must approve expense documents and requests regarding the account.
- The form "Research Fund – Signing authority and Banner Access" designates who has access to your research fund. It will include several administrators and staff members at the department as well as faculty level who require access to administer the funds on your behalf. Under Signing Authorities, you and current Deans / Assoc Deans will be listed as individuals authorized to approve expense paperwork. Under Banner Access, you will be listed along with staff members responsible for processing and overseeing the fund itself in Banner Finance.
- Additionally, you can add other Memorial faculty-appointed researchers to be signing authorities, such as a co-principal investigators or co-investigators, if you wish. If they

submit expenses and are in a different department or unit, they must work with *your* home department who will administer the grant, and not their own home department admins.

THE FOAPAL (OR 'FUND')

Once the department returns the forms back to FAS, FAS proceeds with account opening in Banner, assigning it a FOAPAL number. An email, with attached memo, is sent to the PI confirming the FOAPAL and cc'ing the department admin staff.

- The FOAPAL includes the six-digit fund number, as well as many other digits. Generally speaking, FOAPAL and Fund Number are used interchangeably, but technically the "F" stands for "Fund". The "O" is the Organization or 'org', which is the number representing the unit responsible for administering the funds. The remainder are "Account", "Program", "Activity", "Location". It is not unusual for HSS grants that Activity and Location remain all zeros.
- In most cases, as a researcher, all you will need to reference your account is the Fund number (research funds are 'restricted,' and will usually begin with a 2). When contacting RIS, however, the 8-digit RP/ROMEO file number will need to be referenced.

Spending the Funds

Congrats - you can now spend your research grant funds! But how? All expenses will go through your department admin person(s). For questions about spending or reimbursements, contact them. If questions arise, they will reach out to Research Accounting in FAS to confirm expenses and processes. It is the job of Research Accounting to ensure that expenditures conform to the regulations and processes established by Memorial *and the sponsor*.

- Some expenses may need to go through a tendering process, usually if the expense is over $10,000. Memorial is obligated by law to adhere to the NL provincial government's statures regarding tenders. Your departmental admin will help you in coordinating with FAS's Public Procurement unit.
- Hiring staff or students is also coordinated through your department who may need to confer with HR.
- Make a note in your calendar if the sponsor has indicated that the PI must submit mandatory reports; *these are the PI's responsibility to submit on time.* Reports must also be submitted to the RP via an Event, "RIS - Other Documents."
  - o Note that financial reports will usually be compiled and submitted by FAS and/or your department (of course, there are always exceptions, depending on the sponsor).
- For the life of the grant, all expenses must conform to the funding agency/sponsor's terms and conditions for what it considers an "eligible expense." This will vary considerably based on the program and/or grant you have received. Many grants may have very specific terms and conditions. The following outlines the various situations that you should follow based upon the type of grant that you hold.

TRI-AGENCY GRANTS

Eligible expenses for Tri-Agency grants are outlined in the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration (TAGFA). Note that eligible expenses are the same across programs, although there are occasionally differences in various grant programs. Contact your departmental staff or a GFO if you're unsure of an expense. Budgets can be altered at the PI's discretion – as long as the expenses are still considered eligible according to the TAGFA. The TAGFA requires institutions to provide additional institutionally-based rules and policies regarding specific expense types as well as processes; FAS is responsible for these rules and policies in instances where the TAGFA is unclear or open-ended. Regardless, all expenses must adhere to the principles governing *direct costs of research* as outlined in the TAGFA.

OTHER EXTERNAL GRANTS

Eligible expenses for other external grants vary depending on the agency. They alone determine if an expense is eligible, so it is best to consult the agency's grant or application guide, terms and conditions, agreements between Memorial and the agency, or contact the agency directly. In some cases, only expenses outlined in the application budget are eligible, which means that any changes will have to be signed-off by the agency prior to being incurred.

INTERNAL GRANTS

Memorial has many internal grant programs with various terms and conditions. To determine if an expense is eligible, please consult the Terms and Conditions of that specific program. Grants such as: Special Awards; Start-Up Funds; Seed, Bridge, Multidisciplinary Fund; and SSHRC Explore and Exchange, follow the TAGFA (with some exceptions - consult the T&C for each program).

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Account Tracking and Budgeting

To know how much money you have remaining, you can ask your administrative staff person who has access to Banner Finance and account actuals.

BANNER ACCESS

If you would like to be able to see your account expenses and totals yourself, your department can request a FAST account for you (they submit the request to FAS), which is a program that reads Banner and shows account actuals in an easy-to-read format: www.mun.ca/finance/systems/Fast.php. FAS will first set up a Banner User account for you.

Banner users can have varying levels of access to Banner HR, Banner Finance, and Banner Student records. For your research grant, as a researcher, you can obtain read-only access to Banner Finance allowing you to see, but not add or edit, data. Such access is restricted, and only possible for account holders: if you're a student with a grant, it's best to talk to your supervisor who will hold the funds, or your department admin. Banner access depends on your role with the University – if you're teaching or also an administrator, you may have access to different parts of Banner as your job requires. Regardless, access will be for information purposes only: all queries should be directed to your Dept. Admin staff who are trained to use Banner and will have appropriate access levels, as required.

SUBGRANTS, TRANSFERS, & COMMITMENTS

If you have a larger grant, you may need to commit to specific uses, or transfer funds out as subgrants to other researchers on your team at other institutions. Banner Finance will show this in a number of ways:

- If an expense has been entered into the system, such as an invoice or purchase order, a student stipend, or a salaried position, it is 'committed' or 'encumbered' to that expense, but the expense itself may be ongoing (i.e. to be paid out over a period of time) or working its way through the system to be paid. In these contexts, you'll see the expense listed as a 'commitment'. This means the funds haven't left your account yet, but they're not available for use because you've essentially 'promised' them to a specific expense.
- If you want to transfer funds to another institution, you must submit an RP Event, "RIS-Request to Transfer Funds to External Team Member's Institution" with that request; be sure to include information for the contact person at the external institution. RIS will prepare a draft Transfer Agreement and confer with the external institution and obtain all required signatures.
  - These transferred funds are most likely to appear under 'Research Grants' in Banner Finance, meaning you've created a subgrant for someone else. Funds here often appear as 'commitments' even though the cheques have been sent elsewhere. When the other institution returns funds, or reports on expenses, the amounts will move into their appropriate expenditure categories as the records are reconciled for your grant.
- If portions of a subgrant are unspent, you can work with your co-applicant to have the funds returned. In this scenario, the remainder is cleared out (barring expenses incurred) as a commitment, and the remainder becomes available for use as per the sponsor and budget governing your funding (as noted above).

TRACKING EXPENSES

It is the PI's responsibility to keep track of expenses and stay within budget. Of course, actual costs of expenses may be more or less than what was estimated and budgeted for at the time of application submission. For grants that are many years, budgets can differ considerably. It may be helpful to utilize RIS's resources on their Research Project Management website which contains instructional videos, downloadable PDF guides, and other resources to aid Memorial researchers in project management from start to close-out of a grant.

- You can use FAST or you can request Banner reports from your department admins that show the current state of your grant finances. The most useful is often the "Grant Inception to Date" for your full grant timeline. The bottom right hand corner amount is what remains available for use.
- Note that it can be tricky to monitor hourly wages as they occur, especially towards the end of a grant when you're trying to 'spend it down'. Payroll takes time to process, and hourly time sheet expenses may not always show up under commitments or expenditures in a timely manner.
- Many researchers maintain a separate spreadsheet with their expenses along side Banner reports to track their funds more easily and precisely. Especially useful is RIS's Project Budget Monitoring Excel document and guide.

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Changes to a Grant/Agreement

Some changes to the grant or the project may require the submission of a formal amendment request. Amendment requests or notifications are submitted with the involvement of a GFO; once all documentation is compiled and unit (normally the department and Faculty) approvals have been obtained via email, an RP Event, "RIS- Amendment" should be submitted. See HSS's "How do I…?" page for details on how to do this. Once RIS have reviewed and approved (or received approval for) the amendment, they pass along the information to FAS who can update the account (as applicable).

Note that amendments vary widely, depending on the sponsor and the agreement signed, as do the processes required to submit them. It is always best to contact a GFO before proceeding. Typical amendments include:

- Requesting an extension to the end date or ATUF date (see next section)
- Pausing or deferring a payment/disbursement
- Changes to budget (if the agreement dictates this – Tri-Agency does not)
- Adding or removing team members
- Changes to the affiliation of any of the team, e.g. PI, CI, and/or collaborators
- Adding new partner institutions to a grant
- Changing the PI
- Etc.

Reporting and Account Closing

END DATES

For many grants, there are 2 end dates: the official end date of the award, and then an "authorization to use funds" (ATUF) end date. For most Tri-Agency grants, the ATUF is at the end of the one-year automatic extension. When you are within an ATUF time-period, you can spend down the funds until the account is $0, but you will not be receiving any more deposits/disbursements.

- If there are funds leftover after the ATUF date, they will either get returned to the funding agency (as is the case with CIHR funds), or they will be pooled into an account for VPR's use as discretionary funds (typically spent on graduate students and for grants that require matching cash, etc.), or, if non-Tri-Agency funds, they could be awarded as a Dean of HSS Special Award (the PI must request this via the GFO) to be used for research activities. What happens to residual funds depends on the agreement Memorial signed with the sponsor at the start of the grant: w*hat happens to leftover grant funds depends entirely on the terms and conditions of the funding agency – the **sponsor** dictates what happens to them.*

ACCOUNT CLOSURE

The account will only be closed by FAS once FAS has sent the final report to the funding agency. Therefore, the account may stay open, even if there are no funds left. Or, there may be funds

left, but you cannot spend them because they are residual after the grant end-date or ATUF date.

INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial reporting by FAS to the sponsor is often required; FAS makes a note of any reporting requirements during the account opening process and are typically compiled through consultation between FAS and the departmental admin; sometimes they may confer or request clarification from the PI.

PROJECT REPORTS

Some sponsors require that project activity reports or milestone achievements are submitted by the PI to the sponsor by a certain deadline once the project has been completed or at set times over the life of the grant.

- For SSHRC, "Achievement Reports," typically, must be submitted within six months of the end of the grant period, inclusive of any extension. If the deadline for the Achievement Report has passed, you may not apply to another grant until the outstanding report has been submitted. Reporting requirements are stated on your Notice of Decision. Previews of these reports are found here: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/using-utiliser/achievement-realisation/reports-rapports-eng.aspx
- NSERC award holders submit annual "Progress Reports": https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/Students-Etudiants/AnnualProgressReport_e.pdf
- CIHR award holders submit a "Final Report": https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/electronic_final_report_e.pdf
- For non-Tri-Agency grants or agreements, consult the Terms and Conditions, guidelines and/or the agreement for reporting requirements.
- Most internal grants also have reporting requirements; consult the T&C of the award you received for details.

SUBMITTING REPORTS TO MEMORIAL

All reports submitted to an agency should also be submitted to RIS via an Event, "RIS - Other Documents". RIS will attach them to the RP file, for the record.

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