

# Glossary of Basic Grant-related Terms Pertaining to Northern Kentucky University

updated 1/29/16

**501(c)(3):** A section of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax code. It often is used as shorthand to designate an organization that has been accorded *nonprofit status* by the IRS. Sponsors and contributors usually require proof of 501(c)(3) status before awarding a grant or contribution. The NKU Research, Grants, & Contracts Office provides this documentation if needed. The Northern Kentucky University Research Foundation is a **501(c)(3)**.

**Abstract:** A brief overview of a project, often less than a half page, that typically follows the face page or cover sheet of a grant proposal. An abstract may also be called an *executive summary*.

**Allowable costs:** Allowable costs refer to the direct and indirect costs that may be charged to a grant project, as well as those costs that cannot be charged and are thus considered *unallowable*. These questions can help determine "allowability" – is the cost *acceptable* to the sponsor and NKU regulations? Is the cost necessary and *reasonable* (a prudent person would have purchased this item and paid this price)? Is this cost *allocable* (can it be assigned to the grant activity on some reasonable basis)? The cost must be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of the University. NKU must abide by the Federal Office of Management & Budget Uniform Guidance which further details allowable and unallowable costs.

**Assurances and Certifications:** Often a grant submittal to a funding sponsor requires that a variety of assurances and certification forms be verified and signed by the authorized representative of the institution (in NKU's case, the Director of the Research, Grants, and Contracts Office). This office will assist in compiling these forms.

**Authorized Representative:** The official within an applicant organization having the legal authority to give assurances, make commitments, and enter into and execute contracts. The signature of this official certifies that commitments made on grant proposals will be honored and ensures that the applicant agrees to conform to the grant maker's regulations, guidelines, and policies. NKU's *Authorized Representative* is the Director of the Research, Grants, and Contract Office. The Principal Investigator (PI) should *never* sign as NKU's Authorized Representative.

**Award:** An award is the actual provision of funds to the University by the funding sponsor. Awards are made for approved proposals and represent an agreement between the sponsor and NKU to carry out the proposed research or program. With the acceptance of an award, NKU assumes project management and fiscal responsibilities.

**Budget:** A budget is a cost estimation of a proposed grant project, including direct costs and indirect costs (also called Facilities & Administrative (F&A) costs). Budgets generally consist of an itemized list of expenses using standard line items including personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, consultants, and other.

**Budget Narrative:** is a detailed explanation of the line items with justification as to why the expenses are necessary.

**Capital Equipment:** Any asset purchase made that exceeds \$5,000. Included in the capitalization amount (to determine if item cost exceeds \$5,000) is the vendor invoice price for the item less any discounts, the freight costs and any assembly or installation costs.

**CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance):** The CFDA lists all federal domestic assistance programs, including grants and contracts. Each federal program is given a CFDA identification number, which is used by agencies to identify the specific division or program accepting grant applications and is often listed on proposal submittals.

**Co-investigator (Co-PI):** A co-investigator is a senior researcher or senior leader on a project other than the Principal Investigator (PI). Co-PI status implies equal stature and management responsibilities with the PI. Not all funding sponsors allow co-PIs to be name on a project; that criteria will be detailed within the Request For Proposal instructions.

**Commitment (in SAP):** Open encumbrances including personnel salaries, purchase orders, and travel authorizations consuming budget

**Competitive review process:** The process used by the sponsor to select discretionary grant and cooperative agreement applications for funding. Subject-area experts score applications and the most highly scored applications are considered for funding. The exact mechanism varies among funding agencies.

**Contract:** A contract is a legally binding agreement between the University and a funding sponsor to provide a service in return for compensation. Both the University and the sponsor receive benefit from the contractual relationship. A contract obligates the University to provide a product or service. It also obligates the sponsor to pay an agreed-upon amount for that product or service. The NKU Research, Grants, and Contracts Office must sign all NKU contracts associated with a grant award.

**Cost Center in SAP:** A cost center is a master data element representing an organizational unit, usually a department. Grant cost centers end in either 55 or 65; match cost centers 50 or 60; program revenue cost centers 59 or 69

**Cost Sharing/Matching funds:** Cost sharing, or *matching*, refers to the portion of project costs borne by the University, rather than by the funding sponsor. Some sponsors require organizations to reflect their project commitment by sharing in its costs. Types of cost sharing include mandatory cost sharing, committed cost sharing, voluntary cost sharing, matching, and in-kind contributions, as well as equipment and non-equipment cost sharing. Cost sharing is accounted in the budget and must be indicated on the NKU Routing Form.

**Direct Costs:** Direct costs are project costs that can be clearly identified with that specific project. They include salaries and fringe benefits of Principal Investigators and staff, equipment and supplies, consultant fees, travel costs, and more.

**DUNS Number:** The Data Universal Numbering System, (DUNS) is a system developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet, which assigns a unique numeric identifier (9 digits) to a single business entity. This numeric identifier is referred to as a DUNS number. Often the NKU DUNS number is requested on grant submittal forms; the Research, Grants, & Contracts office will provide this information.

**EIN Number:** The Entity Identification Number is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN). The U.S. Internal Revenue Service assigns this number and uses it to identify a business entity. Often the NKU EIN number is requested on grant submittal forms; the Research, Grants, & Contracts office will provide this information.

**Evaluation Plan:** The evaluation plan addresses the merit, worth, or success of a grant funded research project or program, answering the general question of "How will we know if this project has been successful, worthwhile, or had positive effects?". The plan, which should be developed by the Principal Investigator (PI) when grant proposal writing begins, is an explanation of what needs to be evaluated, what specific questions should be addressed, and what data should be collected to answer these questions. The plan should be based on the proposal's clearly defined realistic goals and objectives. The measures used in the evaluation plan can follow quantitative or qualitative approaches. The PI uses the plan to compare what was or was not accomplished through the grant funded research or program. The PI should read the Request For Proposal (RFP) to understand specific expectations for evaluation procedures.

**Export Control Regulations:** Are federal laws that prohibit the unlicensed export of certain information or commodities for reasons of national security or protections of trade. NKU members should be aware of export control as it relates to traveling to non-U.S. destinations with sensitive files and/or a laptop. The NKU Research, Grants, & Contracts office encourages faculty and staff to contact us to discuss this concept and precautions before traveling abroad.

**Facilities & Administrative Costs (F&A costs, Indirect costs, Overhead costs):** F&A costs are the costs of research that cannot be easily identified with or charged to a specific project. Expenses such as facility maintenance, depreciation, utility costs, library expenses, sponsored programs administration, and general department administration may be fully or partially covered through F&A costs. Since F&A costs cannot be itemized for specific projects, they are calculated using a fixed percentage rate. The NKU Research, Grants, and Contracts Office provides the F&A federally negotiated rate to the Principal Investigator.

**Federal Funding Agency:** A U.S. governmental agency that disburses grant funds for promising research or programmatic efforts. Federal agencies include organizations such as the National Institute of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Education, and others. To view an index of all U.S. Government Agencies go to <http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml>

**Foundation (Private Foundation):** An organization established to disburse funds for philanthropic purposes, usually privately owned. An example of a private foundation is the Ford Foundation.

**Fringe Benefits:** Fringe benefits are paid by the employer to eligible employees in addition to salary. These include health and life insurance, retirement plan contributions, worker's compensation, etc. Fringe benefits vary depending on the employee's classification and often change from year to year due to cost of living. The NKU Research, Grants, and Contracts Office provides this information if needed when developing a grant proposal budget.

**Funding Sponsor (Sponsor):** In the context of grants and contracts, a funding sponsor is an organization or agency that awards financial assistance for agreed promising research or programmatic efforts. A funding sponsor organization typically has a strategic mission and will design funding opportunities to address that mission. The funding opportunities are available to eligible applicants and are usually competitive. Funding sponsors may be federal, state, or local government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations such as foundations.

**Gift:** A gift is a type of funding voluntarily given by the sponsor to the University without anything being given in return to the sponsor. The University is free to use non-restricted gifts however it wishes. Restricted gifts must be used for a general purpose designated by the sponsor. Gifts are processed by the NKU Development Office.

**Goals and Objectives:** The section of a funding proposal commonly called "Goals and Objectives", "Specific Aims", or "Evaluation Plan" is one of the most important components of the Request for Proposals. A "goal" is a general statement of anticipated outcome -- for instance, "*Our goal is to help women victimized by abuse recover their strength and self-esteem.*" The "objectives" might best be called the targets or success indicators -- those results that are specific, measurable and time bound and that directly contribute toward accomplishing the overall purpose. An example: "Within 6 months of graduating from our program, 75% of the women will have secured and maintained employment at or above the median income level by household size."

**Graduate Research Assistant (GRA):** A graduate student who is supported by a grant or the university to do research.

**Grant:** A grant is a type of funding awarded to the University as additional resources to support previously approved instruction, research, or public service. Grants are generally made available to accomplish a specific purpose, are solicited by submitting proposals, and are competitive. The terms of a particular grant determine how the award is processed and used. All external grant proposal submissions are processed by the NKU Research, Grants, and Contracts Office.

**Grant Management Report:** The most commonly used grant reports are collected in this easy-to-use application through the Business Warehouse in a series of tabs and views. You must be logged into myNKU to access the report.

**Grantee:** An organization that has been awarded financial assistance by a funding sponsor.

**Indirect Costs:** See *Facilities & Administrative Costs (F&A Costs)*.

**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):** The NKU IACUC ensures that all vertebrate animal research and related instructional activities are performed in a safe, ethical and legal manner as required by the National Institute of Health's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW).

For details link to <http://rgc.nku.edu/irb/index.php>

**Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC):** The NKU Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) ensures safe use of recombinant DNA, biological toxins, microorganisms and infectious agents as required by the National Institute of Health (NIH) guidelines. For details link to <http://rgc.nku.edu/irb/index.php>

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** IRBs are federally required to review and approve human subject research before it is initiated by NKU faculty, staff and students. NKU has an IRB committee in place to support this effort.

For details link to <http://rgc.nku.edu/irb/index.php>

**In-kind:** An in-kind is a contribution to a sponsored program that has value but is not monetary in nature. For example, in-kind support can include the value of NKU faculty or staff release time. In-kind support should always be included in a budget at fair-market value. In-kind contributions must be approved on the NKU Routing form.

**Key Personnel:** Are senior researchers or project members, including the Principal Investigator (PI), Co-PI, and others without whom the research/program would not be possible. Key personnel are subject matter experts or have some special skill to contribute to the grant initiative. Graduate Research Assistants and Undergraduate Research Assistants typically are *not* considered key personnel.

**Keyword:** In grant context, a keyword is a descriptive word used for finding information about funding opportunities. Keywords can be very broad such as "education" or very narrow such as "autism research".

**Letter Of Inquiry (LOI):** A brief letter to assess a potential funding sponsor's interest in considering a proposal for funding. Unless the sponsor specifies otherwise, a letter of inquiry is never more than one page long. It should include:(a) a few sentences of background about the organization; (b) a brief description of the project or service being proposing; (c) the specific dollar amount that will be requested; and (d) an explanation of why this proposal matches the sponsor's priorities and interests. A sponsor will occasionally make a grant award based on a Letter of Inquiry. More often, the sponsor will ask for a full proposal if the idea is of interest. Letters of Inquiry are usually sent to foundations rather than federal funding agencies.

**Letter of Intent (LOI):** A brief letter to inform a sponsor of the Principal Investigator's interest in submitting a proposal. The Letter Of Intent is non-binding and is requested by a funding sponsor for planning purposes.

**Matching:** See *Cost-Sharing*

**Office of the Comptroller:** The NKU Office of the Comptroller provides post-award services associated with the fiscal management of sponsored programs, including establishing and maintaining the accounting and budget records, interpreting sponsor and University fiscal policies, providing financial information relative to sponsored programs, and preparing financial reports. For more details go to: <http://comptroller.nku.edu/grants.html>

**Overhead Costs:** See *Facilities & Administrative Costs (F&A Costs)*

**PAR (Personnel Action Request):** PAR forms are required to document the ongoing employment relationship between Northern Kentucky University and any staff, faculty, or student employee. This requirement applies to all employment actions related to hiring, additional assignments, status changes, salary changes, leaves of absence, supplemental or part-time faculty pay, separations, and retirements. A supervisor/department head or other designee prepares a Personnel Action Request form which is then authorized through the appropriate chain of command according to the division, department, and/or grant procedures that apply to the employee for whom the form is completed.

**PVI (Parked vendor invoice) in SAP:** A parked vendor invoice is created for payments using foundation funds, agency funds, non-student refunds, and NKU student travel reimbursements and to return unspent grant funds to a sponsor.

**Participant Stipend:** Participant support costs (stipends) are those costs paid to participants or trainees (not employees) for participation in meetings, conferences, symposia, and workshops or other training activities, when there is a category for participant support costs in the award. Participant stipends are considered nonemployee compensation and therefore are subject to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements for miscellaneous income reporting (1099).

**Post-award:** The period of time from actual receipt of a grant award document or fully executed contract agreement through final project reporting, closeout from the accounting system, and audit resolution.

**Pre-award:** The period of time during which a proposal is developed, reviewed, submitted to a funding sponsor, and, if necessary, negotiated prior to actual receipt of an award document or fully executed contract agreement.

**Pre-proposal:** A short (about 5-10 pages) preview of the proposal. A pre-proposal typically will include an introduction to the problem, a brief overview of what the research methods will be, and a preliminary budget. Pre-proposals often are used to determine who is allowed to submit a full proposal.

**Principal Investigator (PI):** The PI is the lead researcher or director on a grant initiative and is sometimes called the Project Director. There are sponsor and institutional rules about who may be a Principal Investigator, but typically fulltime faculty members, qualified professional and scientific staff members, or postdoctoral scholars are eligible.

**Program Income:** Federal Regulations define program income as gross income received by the grantee or subgrantee directly generated by a grant supported activity, or earned only as a result of the grant agreement during the grant period.

**Program Officer:** A program officer is in charge of managing a particular grant program for the funding sponsor. Program officers serve as the main point of contact for program questions or clarifications, can offer advice about whether a proposal matches the goals of the program, and can authorize variances in individual proposals (i.e., budget variances). Depending on the agency, the program officer may make funding decisions based upon the recommendation of a review panel and upon the availability of funds within the program.

**Proposal:** A request to an external sponsor to fund research/programs. Proposal formats vary widely among sponsors. Usually, a full proposal consists of an abstract, introduction to the problem, goals and objectives statement, research plan, research budget, and documentation about key personnel (i.e., curriculum vitae/resumes).

**Request for Application (RFA):** An RFA is an announcement by a sponsor that indicates the availability of funding for research in a specific area. The announcement generally includes the amount of funds the sponsor intends to spend in that research area, the number of awards likely to be made, and a specific deadline for applications.

**Request For Proposals (RFP):** This is a formal announcement issued by a sponsor letting researchers know that it seeks proposals for funding a specific topic or program. The RFP generally will include details on the kinds of services or programs the grant maker will consider; what the proposal needs to contain; deadline information; proposal review and evaluation; and other guidelines to help respondents submit a qualified document.

**Research, Grants, and Contracts Office (RG&C):** Grant and contract specialists who help turn a research/program idea into a grant proposal submittal. RG&C offers a variety of services such as offering training related to external grant development, helping to search for grant funding, supporting a cross-discipline grant initiative, preparing grant proposal budgets, handling proposal submittals, reviewing or designing grant award contracts, and more. For details about RGC services go to <http://rgc.nku.edu>

**Research plan:** The section of the proposal that tells the reviewers exactly how the Principal Investigator (PI) will achieve the goals and objectives. The research plan must be detailed enough to convince the reviewers that the PI has the needed expertise to be successful.

**Reviewer, Review Panel, Grant Reviewer, Peer Reviewer, or a Field Reviewer:** An individual who serves the sponsor by reviewing and scoring a competitive proposal. Reviewers are chosen for their subject-area expertise. Often,

they serve on a panel or “technical” panel of at least three members.

**Routing Form:** The Routing Form is an internal NKU document that summarizes key information about a submitted grant proposal. A routing form must be completed and submitted to accompany each external proposal. The Principal Investigator, department chair, and dean must sign the routing form to ensure full support for the effort. Find the NKU routing form on <http://rgc.nku.edu>

**SAP:** SAP is the financial/business information system used by NKU. SAP is an ERP software, SAP stands for Systems, Applications and Products in data processing. ERP stands for Enterprise Resource Planning.

**Sponsor (Funding Sponsor):** The sponsor is the awarding agency that has agreed to fund a project in total or in part based upon an application or proposal provided in response to a request for proposal. The sponsor may be a government agency, company, foundation, or individual interested in furthering study or interest in a particular area. The agreement from the sponsor represents a contractual obligation for performance of the specific activity by the University.

**Sponsored Programs, Office:** See *Research, Grants, and Contracts Office*.

**Student Stipend:** Student Research Stipend is a lump sum of money paid over a set period and is used with *research* projects/programs. Stipends are paid when the faculty can document the student’s academic activity. This is determined by NKU Payroll office based on IRS guidelines. .

**Travel Expense Report SAP:** Travel Expense Reports are completed in SAP in order for travel reimbursement to be issued to faculty/staff for University travel.

**Travel Request in SAP:** A trip authorization completed thru SAP. Travel requests in SAP are required for all trips with an overnight stay. No travel expense shall be reimbursed without an approved travel request completed in SAP.

**UWL in SAP:** The Universal Worklist (UWL) tab is used by faculty and staff to approve automated workflow items in myNKU. Access to the UWL tab is automatically provided to all faculty and staff.

**Undergraduate Research Assistant (URA):** An undergraduate student who is supported by a grant to do research.

**Workflow in SAP:** Online approval processes for the university’s business transactions. These approval processes and workflows are based on the official organizational structure of the University and policies regarding financial, personnel, and academic authority.

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<http://www.azgrants.com/glossary/glossary.cfm>  
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/knowabtgrants/glossary.html>