FAQs for Workflow (Online Approvals)

These frequently asked questions (FAQ) provide more information about automated workflow (online approvals).

Approval Process

Question: **Will requests submitted prior to June 16th (date we moved to online approvals) go through online approval?**

Answer: No. RSO will continue to accept signed paper copies of the signature pages for all requests submitted prior to us going live with online approvals.

Question: **What does my approval mean?**

Answer: Approvals are defined as per the UAPPOL "Research Administration Roles and Responsibilities Procedure"

Question: **What happens to the approval step if the submitter is an approver or reviewer at the Department or Faculty level?**

Answer: If the submitter is an approver or reviewer it will self/auto approve at that approval step.

Question: **How do we capture U of A co-PI approvals on New Application/Proposal/Project requests?**

Answer: U of A co-PIs (i.e. co-applicants) should be added to the U of A co-investigator(s) section of the new proposal request page. An email notification will be sent to each co-PI prompting them to acknowledgement their participation in the proposed project.

Question: **How do we capture online signatures for Co-PIs that are not from the U of A?**

Answer: We don't. U of A policy does not require us to collect signatures/approvals from co-PIs who are external to the U of A.

Question: **Can attachments be added to a request after it's been submitted?**

Answer: Attachments can be added by the pending approvers, including the PI when they are not the submitter of the request up until the point in which the request is received by RSO.

Question: **Can requests be cancelled at any time during the approval process?**

Answer: Yes. Who has the ability to cancel the request depends on the request type. Please contact RSO if you would like the request cancelled if there is no cancel button on the request page.

Approval Process

Question: **How do I track where a particular request is at in the approval process?**

Answer: Approvals can be monitored via the approval path that is displayed on the bottom of the individual request pages. Approvals can also be monitored by individuals who have eTRAC administrator access via the Research Approval Inquiry page.

Question: **Can approvals be done while traveling?**

Answer: Approvers have the ability to approve, deny, or send back a request from anywhere as long as they are logged in through their U of A Gmail account or into PeopleSoft Financials**.**

Question: **Can approvals be done from a mobile device such as a smartphone and/or tablet?**

Answer: Yes, as long as the approver is logged into their U of A Gmail account or PeopleSoft Financials.

Question: **Can the DeptID be changed once a request has been submitted into workflow?**

Answer: No. If changes are required to the DeptID field the request must be sent back so that the field can be updated and the request resubmitted.

Question: **How does the approval path work for non-departmentalized faculties?**

Answer: Approvals still need to go through a "department" and "faculty" level approval. Non-departmentalized faculties can avoid having to approve twice by setting up the approver groups to be the same at both the department and faculty levels. Approvals will be done at the "department" approval step and then auto-approve at the Faculty level thereby eliminating the need to physically approve at both steps.

Question: **How does an approver delegate their approval if they are going to be away?**

Answer: "Delegations" are managed through adding an additional individual(s) to the approver group.

Question: **With the new online system how much time will it take to go from the submitter to the RSO?**

Answer: The approvals themselves are almost instantaneous, however, the reviewers and approvers need to be available and need the time to do their reviews prior to approving.

Approval Process

Question: **How do I know who submitted a new request?**

Answer: The name of the individual who submitted a request is displayed in the Approvals section of the request page (e.g. Requester).

Email Notifications

Question: **Do all reviewers and approvers in the approver groups receive email notifications?**

Answer: Yes. Email notifications can be managed using Gmail filters.

Question: **Is the PI notified when a request is sent back or denied?**

Answer: An email notification is sent to the submitter (i.e. the individual who pushed the submit button), who may or may not be a PI when a request is sent back or denied. A separate notification is not sent to the PI when they were not the submitter of the request.

Question: **Are all individuals in an approver group informed when the approvals for a particular request have been completed?**

Answer: No. The submitter (i.e. the individual who submitted the request) is the only one that receives an email notification indicating that a request has been received and/or approved by RSO. Other individuals in the approval chain can track an approval via the approval path that displays on the bottom of the individual request pages and/or via the Research Approver Inquiry page if they have eTRAC Administrator Access.

Question: **What do I do if I didn't receive an email notification re: a pending approval?**

Answer: Notifications are sent to an individual's ualberta.ca email address. Most individuals are able to find the missing notification email by searching for the RES number (e.g. RES00XXXXX) using the "search mail" feature in Gmail.

Email Notifications

Question: **As a principal investigator (PI) or U of A co-investigator how do I access a New Proposal request to do my approvals if I can't find the email notification?**

Answer: Principal Investigators and U of A co-investigators (i.e. co-applicants) can use the following path to access the New Proposal request page once logged into PeopleSoft Financials: Main Menu>Employee Self-Service>Projects>Create Proposal. Once on the Create Proposal search page individuals can enter the RES number (e.g. RES00XXXXX) in the Proposal ID field and click Search. Please contact your research facilitator for help accessing other request types when you can't find the email.

General or Miscellaneous

Question: **Who can edit the fields on the request pages?**

Answer: Edits can be made by the pending approvers, including the PI when they are not the submitter of the request. The specific fields that can be edited depend on the request type and approval step.

Question: **Is Sponsor Deadline a required field on the New Proposal Request?**

Answer: No, it is not a required field, but we strongly recommend that the field be populated when there is a deadline as a means of notifying the pending approvers when the deadline is. If there is no formal deadline please insert a date 5 working days from the date of submission.

Question: **How are application related comments provided to the PIs?**

Answer: Application specific comments will be sent to the PI via an application review report that is sent to PIs via email from the RSO staff member who is reviewing the application.

Question: **Who can edit the Intellectual Credit section?**

Answer: The submitter and/or PI is able to edit the Intellectual Credit section. Once the PI has approved the request will have to be sent back to the submitter if edits are required**.**

Question: **What if a sponsor requires an original/wet signature on their application?**

Answer: If the sponsor requires an original/wet signature on their application please contact your research facilitator for guidance.

General or Miscellaneous

Question: **Who do I contact if I have questions about the online system?**

Answer: Contact your research facilitator if you have any questions.

Research Approver Group Maintenance

Question: **Who can manage the approver groups?**

Answer: Approver groups are managed at the unit (i.e. department/faculty) level. The ability to manage approver groups (i.e. add and remove individuals) is tied to a DEPT ID-level security role that is assigned to an individual. The role (Research Approver Group Maintenance Access) is requested by the faculties through IST.

Research Approval Workbench and/or Inquiry Pages

Question: **Who can view the research approval workbench and inquiry pages?**

Answer: The workbench is visible to anyone who is in an approver group. The inquiry page is visible to anyone with eTRAC administrator access.

Question: **Can attachments be viewed from the research approval workbench or inquiry page?**

Answer: No. Attachments are visible on the individual request pages, which are accessible through the workbench and inquiry pages.

Question: **Can the information on the approval workbench or inquiry pages be sorted and/or searched?**

Answer: The workbench and inquiry pages can be sorted by clicking on the column headers. Requests can also be searched and/or sorted by transaction type or specific field value using the Search Parameters section