

Research Account Closure – Policy



Policy owner UCD Finance, UCD Research & Innovation
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1. Purpose

Research Accounts should only remain open for a short period after the end date of the contract to allow for outstanding entries.

A research account must have a zero balance before it can be closed.

2. Definitions

- A **research account** is a single financial account issued to a Principal Investigator upon registration of their research grant agreement.
- **Principal Investigators** are defined as members of the UCD Community carrying out research.

3. Scope

The scope covers all the research accounts held by principal investigators.

4. Principles

Research Accounts should only remain open for a short period after the end date of the contract to allow for outstanding entries.

A research account must have a zero balance before it can be closed.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- Researchers are responsible for the financial administration of their research accounts (with assistance from the Research Finance Office), that the project will be completed within budget, that they will make timely returns to the Funding Agency/ Sponsor and that they will adhere to UCD Internal Procedures in relation to their research accounts.
- Notice of Contract Maturity – unless specifically agreed in advance, the research account will be automatically placed on hold.
- Completion of the project - the Principal Investigator should advise, in writing or by email, the RFO of:

- o any request to the funding agency to approve a time and /or cost extension.
- o any request to transfer expenditure to another research account or other cost centre.

The RFO will advise the Principal Investigator of:

- o Claims submitted and due to be made
- o Current over/under spend on the project (based on records in eFinancials).
- o The RFO will notify the Head of School and College Accountant of the estimated projected final balance, and any potential financial transactions that will be posted to the School / Institute as a result of closure of this account.

- Post-Completion Period – During the period after the contract completion date, final income and expenditure transactions will have been recorded and, at the end of that quarter, the RFO will prepare a summary report showing the current balance on the account, together with details of any reconciling items between it and the projected final balance per the PI.
- Agreement of Final Balance - If necessary, the PI will be asked to clarify the difference between their projected final balance and the notified current balance. Any necessary adjustments, arising at this stage will be communicated to the RFO from the PI.
- Treatment of Credit Balances

A credit balance on the account will be returned to the Sponsor in accordance with their terms and conditions.

Where there is no requirement to return unspent funds to the sponsor, a credit balance will be dealt with as follows:

- Internally funded awards – the credit balance will be returned 100% to the funder i.e. Academic unit or the research capacity fund.
- Externally funded awards where the account holder is no longer in UCD – the credit balance will be transferred to the School.
- Externally funded awards where the account holder is an existing faculty member – in the first instance the credit balance will be used to set off any research debit balances held by the same PI. 90% of the residual credit balance will be returned to the PI as a new internally funded research project account. The project will require registration as with any new award. An internal offer letter will be provided to the PI to facilitate grant registration. The PI will hold only a single internal project account for each subsequent external grant closure. The internal project account will have a duration of five years. Any remaining credit at the end of the grant term will be split equally between the school and central funds. The remaining 10% of the residual credit balance will be transferred to the academic unit.

- Treatment of Debit Balances

Agreement of Final Balance - If necessary, the PI will be asked to clarify the difference between their projected final balance and the notified current balance. Any necessary adjustments, arising at this stage will be communicated to the RFO from the PI. Any overspend on the account will be charged to the School / Institute cost centre.

- Expenditure charged to the project account that has been deemed ineligible, either by the RFO or the funding agency, will be recharged to the school/institute's cost centre.
 - Where an internal or external audit of a project disallows expenditure that has been made on a research project, it is the responsibility of the school to cover that expenditure. RFO will charge the school with such expenditure following the conclusion of the audit, which may take place after the project end-date but before final closure.
 - Where a loss on foreign exchange has occurred on the project account, resulting in an account deficit, it is the responsibility of the school to cover that expenditure. RFO will charge the school with such expenditure following the conclusion of the audit, which may take place after the project end-date but before final closure.
 - Where a debit balance has arisen because of a bad debt, the irrecoverable amount of the debit balance will be charged to the Provision for Bad and Doubtful Debts.
- Penalties – Where a funding agency imposes financial penalties, for example for late-filing of financial or other reports, the penalty will be chargeable to the school/institute cost centre.
 - Adjustments to the Research Capacity Fund (RCF): Any adjustments required to the RCF due to an inability to claim the full overheads as per the contract will be processed by the RFO will be notified to the Finance manager in UCD research and processed by RFO.
 - Dormant accounts – Accounts reporting no activity over the previous 24 months are classified as dormant accounts and the remaining credit balance will be treated as per the “Treatment of credit balances” section above.

6. Related documents

- UCD Code of Responsible Conduct of Research
- UCD Funded Research Activity Policy

7. Version history

- V1.0 –24/10/23