



McGill

Memorandum

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Date: November 6, 2012

To: McGill Principal Investigators

Cc: Prof. Anthony Masi, Deans, Associate Deans of Research

Subject: Research Administration and Accountability – Tri-Agency Recommendations

Dear Colleagues,

In December 2011, McGill received the Final Report of the Tri-Agency Financial Monitoring Review. This report concluded that the University needs significant improvements in its framework and procedures for the management of grant funds in order to be compliant with Tri-Agency requirements. Weaknesses identified within the framework resulted in 11 findings and recommendations. McGill takes our responsibility to address these findings very seriously, and therefore we must be diligent in our responses. As a result, a significant amount of work and extensive consultation have taken place over the past year to address the Report findings. We have discussed and vetted proposed solutions with all levels of stakeholders at McGill as well as with sister Canadian institutions that have also been required to make adjustments to their operations.

As many of you know from experience, the global regulatory environment has changed significantly in recent years. The introduction of increased regulations and expectations on the part of granting agencies requires academic institutions worldwide to implement new processes to ensure compliance with audit findings. This is a major imposition on our already strained organization, and we are well aware that greater scrutiny from federal, provincial and international research funding agencies over spending and management of research funds will also increase the administrative burden on researchers.

While we are making every effort to provide solutions that will minimize the overall regulatory burden, these changes will nonetheless impact McGill's research community. The attached **appendix** provides an overview of the solutions that will be implemented in the near future. Improved administrative and financial tools are being developed to assist researchers and administrators with these additional constraints. Researchers will be informed as new tools and processes are implemented, and all staff involved in supporting researchers will be invited to participate in the new Research Administration Network forum.

We are depending on your collaboration as we implement these required changes over the next few months. Communiqués from our teams will continue to keep you abreast of important changes as they occur. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Rose Goldstein
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International Relations)

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Tri-Agency Financial Monitoring Report 2011 – Selected Findings and Solutions

APPENDIX

The following table includes excerpts from the Tri-Agency Monitoring Report and aims to summarize the solutions identified that will satisfy the funding agencies' expectations. The below changes will be implemented over the next two to six months. Additional communiqués will be sent to McGill's research community for each of the below solutions with detailed administrative guidelines.

THEME	REPORT FINDING	SOLUTION
ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES & TRAINING	<i>"Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the management of research grant funds are well defined and understood."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Publication of Roles & Responsibilities: a new reference document that defines the responsibilities of all key stakeholders involved in research administration at McGill. ✓ New training events will be held aiming to further clarify key administrative policies & procedures that govern research administration.
DELEGATION OF SIGNING AUTHORITY	<i>"Only the grant holder can delegate authority to another individual for authorization of expenditures and...the delegation must be made in writing."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In addition to the existing delegation process for Procurement, a new delegation of signing authority will be implemented allowing PIs to appoint delegates for payment requests, travel advances, expense reimbursements (temporary delegation for each research award).
APPROVAL OF MONTHLY EXPENDITURE REPORT	<i>"Implement a process that ensures the grant holder's or delegate's approval is obtained for all expenses charged to research grant accounts."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enhanced monthly financial reports will be available to help PIs review the transactions charged to their research funds and ensure that all expenses charged to Tri-Agency grants are eligible and appropriate to the project. ✓ PI's approval of the monthly financial reports will be confirmed via Minerva. ✓ All other non-Tri-Agency research funds will have the same functionality, allowing PIs to apply this best practice to all their funds.