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# FST ROUND TABLE

January 21, 2015

2:00pm to 3:30pm

Strathcona Anatomy & Dentistry Building,  
Faculty Council Room M/48



McGill

# Agenda

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1. Announcements, Updates & Reminders
2. Tri-Agency Year End 2015
3. Compliance Update (Q1)
4. Best Practices – Engineering
5. Open Dialogue / Q & A / Closing Comments

# New FST Members & Staff Announcements

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**Welcome** to our new FST Member:

- Lucy Nunez - Faculty of Science

## **Staff Announcements**

- Luana Sorella, Manager, Transactions Services has transferred to the Faculty of Medicine
- Tonia Sciannamblo has been appointed Interim Manager, Transaction Services
- Saman Diwan has been appointed to the RFD (NSERC) position effective January 19th

## ■ **OSR Re-Organization Update**

# Announcements, Updates & Reminders

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- Taxes on Service Agreements
  - Service agreements are tax exempt as they are part of the core research mission of McGill University as confirmed by KPMG Auditors.



# Tri-Agency Year End 2015

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- Tri-Agency financial statements
  - Period ending: March 31, 2015
  - Agency due date: June 30, 2015
- Terminating grants
  - All purchases must be received and invoiced by March 31, 2015; invoices dated after March 31, 2015 are **NOT** eligible
  - Clear outstanding travel advances, encumbrances and balances by March 31st
  - Ensure that expense reports and travel advances do not exceed grant's end date

# Tri-Agency Year End 2015

## ■ Terminating grants

- Grantees were notified via email for the following:
  - Grants with termination dates between February 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015
  - Grants with balances equal to or greater than \$1000
  
- For terminating grants with balances less than \$1000
  - FSTs to contact grantee directly to assist in clearing balance
  - Fund Administrators will handle any grants with balances less than \$20
  
- Lists of terminating grants were saved in the FST shared directory

# Tri-Agency Year-End 2015

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- Preparation of Statements (April – June)
  - PI will be emailed financial statement for signature with copy to FST
- FST can help by:
  - Reviewing financial statement with PI
  - Obtaining PI signatures
  - Emailing signed financial statement back to FA
  - Sending original signed hardcopy to FA

# Tri-Agency Year-End 2015

## ■ **Reconciling Ineligible Expenses**

- RFMS is currently reviewing and reconciling the ineligible expenses posted on the Tri-Agency grants for the period of April 1, 2014 to October 31, 2014
- FST will receive an email from the Fund Administrators when their assistance is required
- Remaining ineligible transactions will be reviewed in February – March and FSTs will be notified if their assistance is required

## ■ **RFMS Eligibility Email**

- Please send all queries to [rfmsexpense-eligibility.finserv@mcgill.ca](mailto:rfmsexpense-eligibility.finserv@mcgill.ca)





# Compliance Results FY15 (Q1)

Improvements were noted in the Non-Compliance Rate for both Expense Reports & POPS

## Overall University Totals (Includes Other Research)

PROGRAM	FY15 (Q1)	FY14 (Q4)
Expense Reports	28%	29%
POPS	28%	32%

## Tri-Agency Specific

PROGRAM	FY15 (Q1)	FY14 (Q4)
Expense Reports	30%	37%
POPS	27%	34%



# Compliance Observations & Tips

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## ■ Expense Reports

- When credit card statements are attached, the amount reimbursed to the claimant must match that of the statement
- Pay attention to the original currency indicated on the invoice/receipt
- Alcohol must be deducted from bill if it is ineligible on the fund being charged

## ■ POPS

- Timesheets need to be signed once work is completed and prior to payment



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

### What works well with the Faculty?

- The use of service accounts for all FSTs.
  - Facilitates back up when primary FST is on vacation etc.
  
- Designated person in each department to process HR/BSA appointments.
  - This reduces errors since that person is a specialist in that role.



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

- Departments are setup differently within the Faculty of Engineering.
  - Small departments such as Architecture, Bioengineering and Urban Planning
    - Have one person who reconciles all the PCards for the department.
    - Same person is also the Expense Report reviewer for the department.
  - Big departments such as Mining and Materials Engineering and Mechanical Engineering
    - Funding for all appointments is approved by the FST prior to processing.
  - Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
    - Efficient collaboration between Professors and Administrative Staff



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

- Departments are setup differently within the Faculty of Engineering – cont'd
  - Department of Civil Engineering and Applied Mechanics and Chemical Engineering
    - Have a designated individual who prepares expense reports for students who don't have frequent expense reimbursements – this reduces errors in the expense reports



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

### How do the FSTs communicate compliance/sponsor requirements to the researchers?

- FFO communicates compliance findings and recommended corrective actions to Administrative Assistants and FSTs.
- Administrative Assistants send memos to the Professors regarding issues that they need to address.
- Any other issues that come up are addressed as they arise



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

### **Is any training being provided in the Faculty vis-à-vis compliance?**

- FFO communicates overall compliance results in monthly team meeting.
- FFO communicate specific issues related to a Department or a FST at bi-weekly meeting and recommends steps to address the deficiency.
- FFO meets with the Administrative Assistants to reinforce or provide training on regulations such as Payroll POPs and/or Appointment Form requirements.



# FST Presentation

## Faculty of Engineering

### **Describe any best practices and process improvements in place?**

- Analysis of funding sources prior to processing of an appointment is mostly done by FSTs. This results in fewer changes on the HR/BSA appointments due to funds running out etc.
- Delivery of expense reports is done by a work-study student – this has significantly reduced the cases of lost documents.
- Invoices sent to the Faculty are emailed to Accounts Payable – this has reduced late payments to suppliers.

### **What challenges remain?**

- Some Policies are very subjective and this makes it difficult to enforce them



# Upcoming FST Meetings



- Upcoming FST meetings
  - March 2015 – Faculty of Management will be presenting best practices
  - Discussion – FST/RAN Future Meetings

## ■ Next Meeting

Date	Time	Location	Room
March 11, 2015	2:00pm to 3:30pm	Strathcona Anatomy & Dentistry	M/48

- The FST meeting schedule for 2015 is posted on the RAN website <https://www.mcgill.ca/research/ran/members/financial-services-teams-fst>

# OPEN DIALOGUE

