

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**  
**Office of Research & Innovation**

**Guidelines for Charging Costs Directly or Indirectly to  
Federally Sponsored Projects**

In order to comply with OMB Circular A-21 and the cost accounting standards of the Cost Accounting Standards Board, the University of South Florida has established the following guidelines for charging costs to projects funded with federal or federal flow-through monies. These guidelines apply to the USF system: USF Tampa (including USF Health), USF Lakeland Polytechnic, USF Sarasota-Manatee, and USF St. Petersburg.

**Direct costs**

- Salaries and fringe benefits of the Principal Investigator (PI), Co-PIs, and research and technical personnel.
- Laboratory supplies.
- Software purchased for scientific purposes.
- Repair and maintenance charges for scientific equipment.
- Other related costs (photocopies, travel, technical and scientific equipment, animal care and other services provided by specialized service facilities).
- Long-distance telephone charges.
- Travel.
- Consultants.
- Subcontracts or subgrants.

**Indirect costs**

- Clerical and administrative salaries and fringe benefits.
- Postage.
- Basic telephone service.
- Office supplies.
- Software purchased for general purposes (e.g., Microsoft Word).
- Subscriptions.
- Institutional and individual memberships.

**Exceptions will be permitted only under the following circumstances.**

Clerical and Administrative: Individuals whose salaries are paid from a federally sponsored project must have responsibilities specifically associated with the work of the federally sponsored project. The specific association requirement may be satisfied in one of two ways:

1. Unusually high levels of administrative activity associated with unusually large and complex projects such as program projects, cooperative agreements, coordinating centers, multicenter grants, or operation offices. Only in such cases, eligible responsibilities might include coordination of financial activities for multiple projects, core units, meetings for steering or advisory committees, pilot project programs, special reporting needs, etc.

2. Administrative work that is specifically related to the distinct scientific and technical requirements of the work of the sponsored project, such as data collection, maintaining subject/patient data, phone surveys, etc.

The Clerical and Administrative salaries must support a major project or activity. A major project would include:

- Large complex programs such as general clinical research centers, primate centers, engineering research centers, and other federally sponsored projects that entail assembling and managing teams of investigators from a large number of institutions.
- Projects which involve extensive data accumulation and entry, surveying, tabulation, cataloging and reporting such as epidemiological studies, clinical trials and retrospective clinical records studies.
- Projects that require making substantial travel and meeting arrangements for large numbers of program participants.
- Projects whose principal focus is the preparation and production of manuals and large reports excluding routine progress and technical reports.
- Projects that are geographically inaccessible to normal departmental administrative services, i.e., seagoing research vessels and radio astronomy projects that are remotely located from campus.

Postage: Direct charges for postage should be restricted to projects with a high demand for these items as described in the budget narrative.

Basic Telephone: Basic telephone charges may be direct charged to major projects/activities when justified as essential.

General Office Supplies: Direct charging of general office supplies should be restricted to projects with a high demand for these items as described in the budget narrative.

Scientific Software: Direct charging of scientific software items should be restricted to projects that are specifically justified in the budget narrative and not specifically disallowed.

Non-federal Sponsored Agreements: All costs may be direct charged to a non-federal sponsored agreement as long as the awarding sponsor has approved them.

### **Required Form**

The USF Cost Accounting Standards Exception Form is located at:

[www.research.usf.edu/files/sr/CAS\\_Exception\\_Form.doc](http://www.research.usf.edu/files/sr/CAS_Exception_Form.doc)