Survey to Assess Administrative Burden of Carrying Out Sponsored Programs

The purpose of this survey is to assess areas of particular administrative burden or frustration as they relate to research administration.

Much of the work involved in seeking and managing sponsored funding is due to regulations beyond our control. However, we work hard to develop systems and procedures to minimize the time PIs need to spend on administrative activities. We would like to better understand which regulations contribute to your administrative burden, and we’d like to pinpoint areas where we may be able to make improvements to lighten your load.

This survey is voluntary. In the interest of time and simplicity, we’ve asked that you indicate the two or three areas that are most time-consuming and/or most frustrating, but you may certainly choose as few or as many areas as you wish. Your responses will help us prioritize where we need to focus and improve. Note that we will be polling departmental administrative staff regarding similar topics in the near future. This survey is about your time.

Please be assured that the data will be treated as confidential, and the results of any research or analysis using the data will be presented in a way that individual respondents cannot be identified. If data from this survey are used for academic research, the same rules of confidentiality and reporting will apply.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Suzanne Pettit in the Office of Sponsored Programs - spettit@mit.edu.
Thinking about how you spend your time: Which 2-3 areas take the most time? What 2-3 areas are the most frustrating?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Most Time</th>
<th>Most Frustrating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel: Personnel administrative issues (including hiring, managing, visas, evaluation)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances: Managing grant/contract expenditures</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort Reporting: Time and effort reporting, including training, approving percent of effort and summer salaries</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sharing: Meeting federal requirements for resource and data sharing</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposals: Preparing and submitting proposals for funding</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-Agency/Sponsor: Dealing with differences in administrative requirements and forms across federal agencies and non-federal sponsors</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing Contract Negotiations</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing Subcontracts: Responsibilities associated with managing subcontracts to other entities</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Property (including patent/copyright applications, licensing agreements, invention, disclosures, Materials Transfer Agreements, etc.)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest: Meeting federal conflict of interest requirements for reporting financial relationships (Travel COI and Yearly COI)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside Professional Activities: Reporting time spent on professional activities outside of MIT and yearly outside income reporting</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Care - CAC: Meeting federal animal care and use requirements</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Subjects - COUHES: Meeting federal human subjects research requirements</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Conduct of Research: Meeting Responsible Conduct of Research requirements for trainees on federally funded projects</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Export Controls: EAR, ITAR and other restrictions on access to technology</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health and Safety (including laboratory inspections)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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</table>
Based on which boxes you checked in the previous section, you will be asked to answer the more specific questions below. Upon completion of this section, you will be taken to a few more questions that start on the bottom of page 7 in this document.

Which specific Personnel-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Managing people in your lab (technical staff, graduate students, post docs, undergraduates)
- Hiring personnel
- Evaluating personnel
- Dealing with issues related to visas

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Finance-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Managing budget-to-actual expenses
- Dealing with equipment and supplies purchases
- Determining and justifying which tasks and related costs are allowable as direct charges
- Meeting other sponsor cost accounting standards (incl. budget transfers and spending authority oversight)
- Completing training regarding budgets/expenditures on federal projects
- Requesting, meeting and tracking cost-share requirements
- End of year reporting

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Effort Reporting-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Completing quarterly time and effort reports for my time
- Completing quarterly time and effort reports for others' time
- Completing training regarding time and effort reporting on projects

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Data Sharing-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Interpreting and adapting to changing federal requirements for data sharing
- Posting data and other resources (e.g. software and curricula) as required by federal funding agencies
- Clearing and posting publications to federal repositories as required by federal funding agencies
- De-identifying and refining data to meet federal requirements for data sharing
- Completing training regarding data sharing requirements on federal projects
Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Proposal-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?

- Identifying appropriate sources of funding – talking with colleagues and potential sponsors, maintaining relationships with sponsors
- Reviewing solicitations and proposal requirements
- Adhering to sponsor requirements in writing the scope of work and other technical aspects of the proposal (e.g. formatting, word counts, page counts, etc.)
- Drafting administrative aspects of the proposal – compliance forms, other sponsor requirements
- Drafting the budget – reviewing and revising to meet sponsor’s requirements
- Finalizing and submitting proposals – on-line proposal certifications, approvals, sending proposals to sponsors
- Identifying sources of cost share funding, matching, or under-recovery funds

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Cross-Agency/Sponsor-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?

- RFPs and proposal submission guidelines
- Adhering to sponsor requirements in writing the annual technical reports (e.g., formatting, providing detail, online forms, etc.)
- Adhering to sponsor requirements in preparing the scope of work and other technical aspects of the proposal (e.g. formatting, word counts, page counts, etc.)

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific items related to Managing Contract Negotiations are particularly time consuming or frustrating?

- Maintaining relationships with sponsors
- Interfacing with OSP Contract Specialists (and TLO for IP matters) to complete sponsored research agreements
- Handling ongoing contract issues

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.
Which specific items related to Managing Subcontracts are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Selecting subcontractors and negotiating Scope of Work and Budgets
- Overseeing progress toward project goals and deadlines
- Overseeing budgets, expenditures, invoices and other financial matters
- Overseeing compliance and safety/security issues
- Dealing with management issues specific to international subcontracts

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Intellectual Property-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Assisting TLO with background IP reviews for proposals to non-federal sponsors
- Writing patent disclosures
- Assisting TLO with the marketing of patents
- Interfacing with TLO to complete Materials Transfer Agreements

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Conflict of Interest-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Filing disclosures (both annual and/or transactional i.e. at proposal and award stage)
- Updating significant financial interest (SFI) entities
- Contributing to the development of management plans
- Complying with terms of management plans

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Outside Professional Activities-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Filing annual OPA report
- Updating department head of changes to OPA

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.
Which specific Animal Care - CAC-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Preparing IACUC protocols for initial review
- Completing annual IACUC reviews and three-year rewrites of protocols
- Completing protocol revisions requested by reviewers
- Fulfilling federal requirements for training in animal care and use
- Satisfying federal requirements for funded projects (e.g. tracking animal numbers)
- Maintaining veterinary medical records

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Human Subjects - COUHES-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Preparing IRB protocols and consent forms for initial review
- Completing protocol revisions requested by reviewers
- Waiting for feedback from review
- Completing annual continuing review of protocols
- Ensuring that study procedures meet protocols
- Fulfilling federal requirements for training in human subjects protections

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific items related to Responsible Conduct of Research are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Interpreting and adapting to changing federal requirements regarding RCR
- Tracking and documenting completion of RCR requirements
- Developing and providing training activities to meet RCR requirements

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

Which specific Export Controls-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- Interpreting and adapting to changing federal requirements regarding export controls
- Ensuring security of controlled information or items
- Negotiations: restructuring research to maintain fundamental research exclusion in sponsored research, adjustments to meet contract specifications, etc.
- Research inefficiencies caused by working around controlled equipment or information
- Completing training regarding federal requirements for export controls
- Providing federally-required technical and contextual information

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.
Which specific Environmental Health and Safety-related items are particularly time consuming or frustrating?
- General laboratory safety requirements
- Laboratory inspections
- Developing and maintaining laboratory protocols
- Fulfilling federal requirements for training in laboratory safety, security, and handling of specialized materials (chemicals, controlled substances, biohazards, blood-borne pathogens, radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, etc.)
- Dealing with federal requirements for handling specialized materials (chemicals, controlled substances, biohazards, blood-borne pathogens, radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, etc.)
- Cataloging and inventory management of specialized materials (chemicals, controlled substances, biohazards, blood-borne pathogens, radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, etc.)
- Controls on access to facilities, equipment and/or supplies
- Controls on access to computers and data/information
- Personnel issues related to laboratory security (e.g. foreign nationals)

Please provide details about your difficulties with these aspects of research administration and any suggestions for what would make them more efficient at MIT.

General questions start again here.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The MIT Office of Sponsored Programs is responsive to requests for information or assistance.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with how non-federal contracts for sponsored projects are being negotiated.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>I am aware of programs to support under-recovery.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How many people are in your lab?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (including yourself)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officers/Financial Officers (in central offices; could be shared?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Postdocs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Staff, including research scientists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting scientists/affiliates/etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who else could be helping you manage your lab?

Do you have experience administering research at another institution?
- Yes
- No

Which institution(s)?

How does your research administration experience at MIT compare to other institution(s)?
- Favorable
- Neutral
- Unfavorable

If you would like, please provide more detail on your research administration experience at MIT compared to other institutions.

Please use the space below to elaborate on any of the questions in this survey or comment on any other aspect of your experience of research administration not covered in this questionnaire.