The Senior SRGA Position in the Graduate School of Oceanography
Updated March 2022

Overall Principles:

- GSO's team of Senior Scientific Research Grant Assistants (SSRGAs) enhance Principal Investigator (PI) productivity.
- SSRGAs are an important driver of GSO's overall success as a research enterprise, which in turn is an essential attribute of URI's stature as a major research university.
- The PI-SSRGA relationship is a partnership that allows the PI to focus on science (or sponsored activity) while the SSRGA handles the financial and administrative tasks required for proposals and funded projects at URI.
- Both the PI and the SSRGA are individuals with unique strengths and work styles, and both parties have a responsibility to develop a cohesive, well-functioning partnership that serves the greater interest of the School.

The following guidelines were established in consultation with SSRGAs and GSO faculty to help define administrative service levels. They are not meant to take the place of the official job description; rather, they represent an effort to document the characteristics of an effective working relationship.

Sponsored funding awards are the lifeblood of our institution, and our job is to create and support an environment where great science can flourish. As such, the philosophical position of the GSO Dean's Office will usually lean towards helpful service and respectful collaboration in support of proposal development and post-award grant administration. In the event of a gray area and/or conflict between an SSRGA and PI, either party should reach out to the GSO Associate Dean of Research for guidance on how best to proceed.

I. Pre-award Service

Over 75% of GSO's funding is provided by external sponsors of our work. Therefore, proposals to funding agencies are a critical activity that takes significant time and effort. Ultimately, responsibility for the content of a proposal rests with the PI, as does the submission to the sponsoring entity. However, before a proposal is ready for submission, there is much that an SSRGA can do to assist his/her PI. This includes:

- Developing the proposal budget
  - Gathering all details for creating the budget, creating spreadsheets and revising drafts to final form
  - Budget justification narrative - assistance/review
  - Gathering subcontract (if applicable) paperwork (subrecipient monitoring form, RR_Budget form, statement of work, etc.) from PI and/or subcontractor

- If cost sharing or "match" is required, assist the PI in gathering documentation

- Prepare internal URI forms and required agency forms
    - Reach out to the GSO Dean's Office and/or our OSP representative to clarify any questions that arise, such as signatures needed from OSP, the appropriate indirect cost rate, etc.
    - Check RFP for budget information/restrictions, CFDA #, and funding opportunity #
    - Gather/upload agency verification of non-standard indirect cost rate, if applicable
    - Gather/upload Coastal Institute approval document, if applicable

- Creation of proposal in InfoEd
    - Includes creating skeleton proposal, inputting budget, uploading subcontractor RR_Budget template(s), if applicable, posting of documents, and uploading any agency forms that require OSP signature
    - Assist in monitoring proposal during routing in InfoEd for any issues with approvals and required revisions.
    - Work with PI on posting of approved InfoEd proposal on agency sites not direct- linked, such as NSF Research.gov, NASA, etc.
    - For proposals classified as "Manual Setup" in InfoEd, input budget and assist with loading forms into agency site (e.g., biosketches, C&Ps, COA tables, etc.)
    - Upload final proposal sections (PDFs) into InfoEd and/or agency site if requested

Note: The Principal Investigator, as the project lead, is ultimately responsible for checking final files, uploads, forms, and documentation and submission of the proposal after URI Sponsored Projects has approved the project.

II. Post-Award Service

Financial Management:
- Periodic reconciliations of all CFSs in Peoplesoft (monthly is the standard, but quarterly is acceptable),
- Maintain "shadow system" spreadsheets to monitor financial commitments on various funds (awards, startup accounts, Foundation funds, etc.)

Human Resource actions:
- Process Employee Action Forms (EAFs) and other related forms to manage faculty, staff and student employment-related issues.
- This includes payroll distribution changes, summer salary payments, graduate and undergraduate payroll, etc., etc.
- Approve student and internal payroll employee hours as recorded online,
- Effort Reporting - sign off on effort certification reports from payroll and/or distribute forms for signoff by the knowledgeable individual to ensure compliance with federal

regulations and University policy.

Subcontracts
- Once a proposal has been funded, work with OSP to package subcontractor documents from InfoEd and create/process URI Subcontract Purchase Order in PeopleSoft

Travel
- Assist the PI and others in the group, when needed, with creation of online Travel Authorizations (TA) and travel Expense Reports (ER).
- Assist, when needed, with airfare, hotel, etc., reservations.
- Serve as delegate for all travelers in group, particularly graduate students.
- For grants containing third-party travel, such as a conference, workshop, participant costs, etc., the SSRGA works with the PI to process participant travel prior to/following the event

Purchasing
- Create/process purchase orders in PeopleSoft for grant-related spending
- Gather paperwork to enable consultants to be paid on grant; process consultant invoices
- P-Cards - reconcile all spending each month in compliance with URI P-Card policies. Maintain good records supporting the appropriateness of each transaction and ensuring the proper CFS is charged. *PIs should provide the SSRGA with well-organized package of receipts to facilitate this process.*
- Provide approval of receiving reports for purchases as needed.

Other duties
- Manage and maintain shared office resources for group.
- Maintain records and files to ensure a clear audit trail exists for all sponsored projects.
- Assist group members with obtaining various permissions to actively engage in online processes.