Project: Cost Sharing and Commitments

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**Project Summary:**

**Cost Sharing and Commitments.** Cost sharing means the university has an obligation to pay some of the costs of research from its own funds and to track those costs and document them for audit. The commitment to provide cost sharing funding is made at the time a proposal is submitted, and it becomes the basis for determining the actual amount of funding UW must provide.

If UW commits to cost-share certain project expenditures, those commitments (what was promised to the sponsor) must be tracked throughout the life of the project, even as changes occur. There is considerable complexity in tracking commitments against actual expenditures, and the university’s new effort reporting system necessitates accurate and timely information.

**Solutions:**

The team has crafted an electronic workflow approval tool which supports the new cost sharing policy and guidelines. The tool is a resource to facilitate discussions between principal investigators (PIs) and department/dean’s offices. The tool assists evaluation and decision making from the very beginning of the cost sharing process.

**Project Status:**

This team completed an in depth review of the current cost share process on campus but discovered a policy and clear understanding of the definitions/guidelines for offering commitments and following them through the research enterprise was needed before an accurate measurement could be made of the process. A new cost sharing policy and guidelines drafted by Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP) was approved by the Research Policy Advising Committee (RPAC), University Committee, and the Provost in October 2010 and is posted at: [www.rsp.wisc.edu](http://www.rsp.wisc.edu). The team rolled out an electronic workflow approval tool in November 2010.

Measurements will be taken after the new cost sharing policy is in place for a period of time.

*Click here for more information about the Cost Sharing and Commitments Project*