Off duty quarter salary from sponsored projects

Over the last few years, the Federal Government has become increasingly vigilant about off-duty quarter salary for 9 month faculty working on federally sponsored research. There have been a number of high profile and extremely expensive audits at other universities that did not have effective policies in place for compensation during off-duty quarters. OSU is committed to ensuring that we comply with all of the requirements associated with accepting federal research funds. This commitment, in concert with our move to semesters, led to a review of our policy regarding compensation for quarter off duty (QOD).

The government’s expectation is that, during any month that 100% salary is charged to a sponsored project, 100% effort will be committed to that project and other activities such as teaching, administrative activities, proposal writing and vacations will not occur. Therefore, if three months salary is charged, none of these activities should occur at all during the off duty quarter. We recognize that it is not typical for faculty to follow this “singular focus” of activity.

In recognition of how faculty actually spend their time during their QOD, the Nine Month Task Force chaired by Dr. James Beatty recommended that we allow a maximum of 2.5 months of sponsored project salary during the QOD. The provost has accepted the task force recommendation and this policy will become effective in the summer of 2011. However, we do not want faculty who have been receiving 3 months of QOD compensation from sponsored projects to necessarily receive a decrease in salary because of this policy change. Units may pay such faculty 0.5 months QOD compensation for non-sponsored project activities undertaken during the QOD. This compensation could come from general funds, release time funds generated from project effort during the academic year, or from other departmental sources. A working group is currently developing procedures that will assist departments in setting up appropriate procedures.

For this year, we will continue with the present policy, i.e., allowing 3 months compensation from sponsored projects, but ask that you provide some additional documentation of your activities by using the form (at osp.osu.edu/documents/OffDutyQuarterForm.pdf). We want to emphasize that this is in no way a ‘time sheet’ or accounting document but rather a simple tracking device. We ask that you complete this form if you are receiving any QOD funding from sponsored projects. Based on the new faculty term of duty rule, a full time appointment averages 19 working days per month. Please note on the form the days you worked on sponsored project(s). Other days are assumed to be travel, vacation, other university activities or off duty. Please return the completed form to your college or department HR administrator by September 30, 2010. If you have questions, contact your department or college administrator. Leslie Flesch (flesch.2@busfin.osu.edu) or Anne Moffat (moffat.1@osu.edu) can also provide additional information.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.