
RESEARCH PROJECT GUIDE

Hatch Project Review

New Faculty initiate a Hatch project two to three years after starting their position, depending on start date and guidance from their Department Head (refer to letter of hire). Existing projects with an end date of June-September of that fiscal year will also go through Project Review to renew a Hatch project. These peer-reviewed projects allow the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station to support faculty salaries with federal funds. There may be additional resources for operations, activities, travel, personnel, and graduate research assistantships related to the projects. Prior to developing a Hatch project, PIs should engage with their Department Head and colleagues in developing a research plan that will meet the missions of the PI, the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES), Montana State University (MSU), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

The Project Review process is as follows:

1. PI develops proposal and submits it to their DH
2. DH establishes peer review committee (existing of your DH, other COA DH's and/or faculty) and schedules their seminar
3. Peer review committee members complete evaluation forms of the project prior to the seminar, attends the seminar and meets with the faculty for discussion after the seminar. Peer review committee provides their reviews to the DH.
4. DH writes a memo to the PD with any suggested changes to proposal
5. PD makes suggested changes, submits final proposal to DH
6. DH (or dept. admin) submits final proposal with memo and evaluation forms to Program & Reporting Manager
7. The proposal is reviewed by the MAES Associate Director and approved or sent back to the faculty for any changes.
8. Program & Reporting Manager reviews for accuracy and completeness (project dates, requirements, etc.) and assigns a project number (MONBxxxxx)
9. Program & Reporting Manager will start the Project Initiation in NRS, completing the cover page section (proposals are not uploaded into NRS as they were with REEport in previous years)
10. PI will receive instructions to review and complete the rest of the Project Initiation in NRS (If this is a new project the PI must first establish and E-authentication login)
11. Once the PI submits for Org Review, Program & Reporting Manager will need to review the project for grammar, spelling, accuracy, and completeness before submitting to NIFA
12. NIFA has 30 days to review and approve. Sometimes the National Program Leader (NPL) reviewing the proposal will send it back to Draft Stage and ask for more clarification on something. PI will correct & re-submit as necessary.

Hatch Project Requirements & Deadlines

Timeframes, start & end dates

New Hatch projects are set for a term length of three years, the following renewals will be five years. There may be some existing projects with different start dates but generally, they begin on July 1st of the following FY after Project Review was completed. For example: if a new project is established and Project Review is completed in March FY23, then the project start date will be 7/1/23 (first day of FY24).

If a project will not be renewed or a PI is going to leave MSU, the project must be terminated early with an updated end date. (Please see next section for further information on early termination)

Results & Reporting

Within the NRS project page, there is a “results” dropdown section. Annually, the PI must submit a progress report no later than February 15th (in previous years the deadline was November 30th). These annual progress reports are required to submit with our entire COA Annual Report to NIFA. This Annual Report is completed by the Grant Coordinator, and she will send reminders if individual progress reports have not been completed for that Federal FY. The “reporting period” for results is the Federal FY (October 1st – September 30th).

Final Reports must be submitted for the last FY that the project was active. Final Reports are done in lieu of an Annual Progress Report for that year, but they encompass the duration of the project, not just that FY. If a Hatch project has a term length of 7/1/23 – 6/30/28 then a progress report would need to be submitted for FY24, 25, 26 and 27 then a Final Report in FY28.

Regarding early project termination, if a project is terminated early then a Final Report will need to be submitted for the FY of the termination date. A Final Report needs to be done in this case regardless of whether a Progress Report was already submitted for the same FY in order to close out the project.

Multistate Projects

PI's can join Regional Multistate Projects at any time. The National Information Management Support System (NIMSS) is the website where these projects are held. To join a project, an Appendix E needs to be submitted in NIMSS here: https://www.nimss.org/appendix_e/create

There are two types of multistate projects:

1. Coordinating Committee and Information Exchange Group. This type does not require a corresponding project page in NRS. Hatch and/or other research is used to share results and other findings with this type of Multistate Project.
2. Multistate Research Project (MRP) – these have a corresponding project in NRS which is linked to NIMSS but will be designated with a different project number (MONBMSxxx). The corresponding project in NRS falls under the same requirements as a Hatch project, Annual Progress and Final Reports are due in the same manner.

We can have multiple MSU participants on one project in NIMSS, but only one can be designated as the “head” for the MSU station.

Faculty without MAES appointments within the College of Agriculture may participate in Multistate projects, but no funds will be distributed to support their participation.

Other Grants in REEport

A NIFA non-formula funded project is a competitive grant that has been awarded through the grants.gov application and approval process through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP). Once a non-formula grant has been awarded, the grantee is notified by NIFA that they must use REEport to complete the Project Initiation. Annual Progress Reports and Final Reports are due 120 days after the anniversary of the start date of the project.

INDEX NUMBERS AND ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

1. MAES funds 911XXX these state funds are the least restrictive. These indexes should not be used typically for educational expenses (i.e., items that should be covered under an educational index 412XXX) but can be used for all other expenses associated with administration, travel, supplies, recruiting, etc. associated with research and conferences for PIs with MAES appointments and Hatch projects. Computer purchases are allowed as long as the equipment benefits the research. 911 indexes have the same restrictions as other state funds with the additional caveat that they must be going towards things that benefit the Montana Ag Experiment Station.
2. Hatch funds 923XXX are treated like all other Federal Grants and must abide by the same spending guidelines. No capital equipment (account code 61399) to be purchased without prior written approval from NIFA. Can be used for travel to do research on the specific project or for going to conferences where PI is presenting specifically on the research being conducted under the Hatch project. Salaries can be paid on these indexes but only for those who are working on research benefiting the project. Office supplies are permitted, but office equipment shouldn't be purchased on these funds. These same restrictions apply to MRPs and Animal Health funds as well.
3. Multistate Project funds 924XXX these are the most restrictive of the funds. They are only used for salary, operational funds for supplies & tools necessary to conduct the research, and travel to the annual approved meeting for that Multistate Project.
4. Animal Health Funds 926XXX These funds are related to specific Animal Health USDA approved projects and can be used for salaries, operations or travel associated with the research being conducted under the project.

For 923/924 indexes the unallowable account codes are as follows:

- 63199 Capital Equipment or Any Capital Expenditures
- 62828 Tuition and Fees
- 62801 Membership fees (not to be confused with subscription fees to informational sites which are allowable)
- 62601-3 Utilities
- 62371/4 Telephone or internet access

For 911 indexes the unallowable account codes are as follows:

62828 Tuition and Fees

62204 Educational supplies

If you are in doubt of a purchase, please ask!

WEBSITES & CONTACTS

NRS	https://nrs.nifa.usda.gov/portal
REEReport	https://portal.nifa.usda.gov/cas/login
NIMSS	https://www.nimss.org
NIFA	https://www.nifa.usda.gov/
GRANTS	https://www.grants.gov/
CRIS	https://cris.nifa.usda.gov/

Registration & Guides

eAuthentication instructions for NRS (new faculty only)

https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/NIFA%20Reporting%20System-eAuthentication%20Registration%20Guide_0.pdf

NRS User Guide (the guide is not solely applicable to PI's, but some info may be helpful)

<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/NIFA%20Reporting%20System%20User%20Guide%20%281.25.23%29.pdf>

Dean's Office Contacts

Program & Reporting Manager- *Contact Jenna for NIFA site navigation, managing Hatch/ multistate projects, e-authentication set up, MAES allowable expenses, index set-up, project initiation, Final Reporting, any additional questions regarding the process for projects.*

Jenna Smith

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Grant Coordinator- *Contact Rebecca for grant management questions, NIFA Annual Reporting, grant writing, seeking new grants or funding opportunities, any additional questions regarding grants.*

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Department Fiscal Operations Manager – *Contact your department's FOM for spending, budget & finance inquiries.*