



UCL

University College London

Research Advance Policy and Procedures

Updated June 2019

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Staff members may apply through their departments for a Research Advance for the purpose of remunerating subjects for taking part in experiments, to a maximum of £50.00 cash per subject for the duration of the experiment. Subjects may claim in addition to this their travel (where allowed by the grant) from the advance on the production of the original receipt. If the subject is to be paid more than £50.00 (not including travel) or who will be taking part in multiple experiments within the same research where the total is more than £50.00 should be paid by cheque and NOT through the advance. (Due to HMRC tax regulations)
- 1.2. All advance applications are subject to departmental authorisation and Financial Services Office approval and must be made on the appropriate form. Applications can only be made by staff that are currently paid via UCL's Payroll. The liability for the advance remains with the member of staff who has taken out the claim.

2. Documentation Required & Additional Information

- 2.1. An Application for a [Research Advance Form](#) (FSO RA) should be completed.
- 2.2. The application must be completed in full, providing the following details:
 - Department name
 - Organisation Number
 - Staff Member's name (Payee)
 - Total amount of advance
 - The Project and the Award numbers that the funds will be posted to
 - Full details of the advance, costing and supporting documentation of the grant if applicable
 - From and to dates of the research period
 - Signed by a departmental authorised signatory with the appropriate authorisation level
 - Payee's signature, UCL payroll and UPI numbers and email address
- 2.3. Once completed, the authorised Research Advance Form should be taken/sent to the Financial Services Office (FSO), 1st floor, Bidborough House. If any of the documentation is incomplete or incorrect it will be returned to the department unprocessed.
- 2.4. The advance once received by the FSO will be processed within 2 working days, however you must give at least two weeks notice before the funds are required to allow Accounts Payable enough time to enable your payment to be processed and added to the next available BACS run.
- 2.5. The FSO will now complete the General Expenses form instead of the department as all advances will now be paid from a Central Finance Account.

3. Advance Reconciliation

- 3.1. Subject payment forms and receipts must be received from the department by the agreed closure date and must be grouped together in separate expenditure types (subject payments/subject travel etc) with the relevant codes for each provided e.g.

- Project Number (6 digits)
 - Task Number (3/5 digits)
 - Award Number (6 digits)
 - Expenditure Type (5 digits)
- 3.2. These will be reviewed, processed and closed within seven working days provided correct documentation, including receipts are submitted.
 - 3.3. Once the FSO have agreed the totals and validated the accounts codes provided we will then debit the department's account/s by IDJ to clear our Central Finance Account which will then close the advance.
 - 3.4. Where queries arise or additional information is required, departments will be emailed in the first instance and requested to provide the information. Where this is not forthcoming, departments and the individual staff member will be informed in writing by formal letter of the requirement to provide information.
 - 3.5. If funds remain unspent from an advance, these must be repaid to UCL. Foreign currency should be converted back to sterling (proof of exchange rate must be provided) and travellers cheques should be dated, authorised by the payee and made payable to UCL. These should then be deposited with the FSO who will complete the appropriate paperwork to clear the advance.
 - 3.6. If funds are spent in excess of the advance received then a [General Expenses Form](#) should be completed with the appropriate breakdowns of expenditure along with their corresponding account codes and forwarded to the FSO along with all advance paperwork. Once checked and authorised the paperwork will be sent to Accounts Payable for processing.
 - 3.7. Reminders will be issued once a week after the closure date to the member of staff to whom the advance was made. Where no information is provided within three weeks of the agreed closure date, the staff member and department will be issued with a final request of expenditure. No further advances will be issued while a previous advance is outstanding.
 - 3.8. If the advance is not cleared in a timely manner, UCL will seek to retrieve the sum advanced via the staff payroll and all future requests made by that member of staff will be denied.
 - 3.9. Heads of Department/School Finance Directors will be notified on a regular basis of staff who have outstanding advances.
 - 3.10. If a department has an excess number of advances which have not been cleared, Finance and Business Affairs has the discretion to refuse any further advances to that department.