

COST ACCOUNTING EXCEPTION REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS
(Do Not Submit to OR)

The University of Tennessee is required by federal regulation to comply with the Office of Management and Budget *Circular A-21* for all federally sponsored projects (includes federal flow-through). The Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) states that items that should be paid out of indirect costs cannot be directly purchased from a sponsored project. However, A-21 in Exhibit C does provide examples where direct charging of administrative or clerical staff salaries may be appropriate.

Exhibit C. Examples of “major projects” where direct charging of administrative or clerical staff salaries may be appropriate.

Large, complex programs such as General Clinical Research Centers, Primate Centers, Program Projects, environmental research centers, engineering research centers, and other grants and contracts that entail assembling and managing teams of investigators from a number of institutions.

Projects which involve extensive data accumulation, analysis and entry, surveying, tabulation, cataloging, searching literature, and reporting (such as epidemiological studies, clinical trials, and retrospective clinical records studies).

Projects that require making travel and meeting arrangements for large numbers of participants, such as conferences and seminars.

Projects whose principal focus is the preparation and production of manuals and large reports, books and monographs (excluding routine progress and technical reports).

Projects that are geographically inaccessible to normal departmental administrative services, such as research vessels, radio astronomy projects, and other research fields sites that are remote from campus.

Individual projects requiring project-specific database management; individualized graphics or manuscript preparation; human or animal protocols; and multiple project-related investigator coordination and communications.

These examples are not exhaustive nor are they intended to imply that direct charging of administrative or clerical salaries would always be appropriate for the situations illustrated in the examples. For instance, the examples would be appropriate when the costs of such activities are incurred in unlike circumstances, i.e., the actual activities charged direct are not the same as the actual activities normally included in the institution’s facilities and administrative (F&A) costs pools or, if the same, the indirect activity costs are immaterial in amount. It would be inappropriate to charge the cost of such activities directly to specific sponsored agreements if, in similar circumstances, the costs of performing the same type of activity for other sponsored agreements were included as allocable costs in the institution’s F&A cost pools. Application of negotiated predetermined F&A cost rates may also be inappropriate if such activity costs charged directly were not provided for in the allocation base that was used to determine the predetermined F&A rates.