

Using Business Intelligence (BI) as a Tool for Managing Grant Awards

What is BI (Business Intelligence)?

BI is one of Marquette University's financial reporting tools that provides financial information to Principal Investigators regarding their sponsored projects accounts. There are several reports available for each sponsored project account that provide budget and expenditure information, open order (encumbrance) information and information on wages paid from each grant account. The various reports provide as close to real-time information as possible to ensure good stewardship of third-party funding.

How do I access BI?

Open a web browser and navigate to the reporting site <https://bi.mu.edu>

- Mac users please note that the most recent version of Chrome or Firefox is recommended to execute monthly reports
- PC users should try a different browser if they are encountering problems with one.

All Principal Investigators (PIs) are given access to BI reports for each of their grant accounts once the account has been established in MyJob, Marquette's financial accounting system. PIs are responsible to the funding agency to ensure expenditures fall within the "Terms and Conditions" of the project. Through the BI reports, PIs are able to review budget and expenditure information on a regular basis for accuracy and completeness.

What is the best time to check BI (beginning of month, mid-month, end of month)?

Accounts can be reviewed at any time during the month, but at minimum PIs should review their accounts each month after the monthly accounting is complete. Monthly review of the accounts allows for any errors posted to an account to be corrected in a timely fashion.

Monthly, the Comptroller's Office sends an e-mail when the monthly management reports are finalized and available. The e-mail is sent out typically 5 business days after the end of the month (e.g., notification of December report being available would be emailed January 7-10th). The subject line of the email has the name of current month that has been finalized, followed by "Management Reports" (e.g., December Management Reports). Reviewing your account(s) using BI Reports is a recommended process to check expenditures posted to the account for completeness and accuracy, reviewing budget changes (if applicable), and remaining balances available in the account.

What BI Reports are available to help manage my grant?

PI's have access to BI Reports for each of their grant accounts. You should have access to the following reports:

- **Grant (Project) Statement** – provides an overview of the total budget and expenditures from the grant inception to the current month and fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The Statement also includes a summary of activities by Direct and Indirect costs and funds available calculations.
- **Journal Entries with iExpense Report Detail** – provides a detailed report of expenditures charged to the account, including description, merchant, invoice #, payment #, justification, purchase order (PO) #, and amount.
- **Labor Distribution Report** – shows individuals, pay dates, and amounts of wages charged to the account.

- People working on grants must be paid during the same time frame in which effort is being devoted. Wages and effort need to occur in the same time period. One cannot work during the academic year and be paid in the summer or vice versa. **Effort promised by PIs must be accounted for as salary or cost share.**
 - Changes to effort amount (outside of 25% variance) must be approved by ORSP through the funding agency.
 - Faculty summer research pay is based on the academic year contract amount proceeding the summer session.
 - Make sure to look at the FWS (Federal Work Study) matching report. This report shows student wages (with federal matching funds) charged to the account. These expenses are posted to natural 6065.
 - Work period dates and payment dates can be found on the Payroll Schedule posted on the MU Payroll Department webpage. Salary payments are typically posted to the report and account 3 business days after the payment date.
 - Student workers can only be paid from the grant if their work period falls within the grant start and end dates. If the grant hasn't started yet or has already ended, then the student can't be paid from it. Students can only be paid for work performed during the active period of the grants.
- **Encumbrance Report**- list of purchase orders that are pending payment from the account or the remaining balance between PO price and invoice price. This report should be checked to make sure POs are paid or closed so that any remaining encumbered funds are released back to the account. It is important to follow up with vendors to submit invoices in a timely fashion when purchases are made near the end of the grant to make sure invoices are processed before the final report is due.

How can I use BI reports to help manage my grant?

- BI Reports provide account balances, budget information, expenditures, encumbrances, and wage amounts paid from the account.
- The project statement provides information about the grant such as the indirect cost rate, project title, sponsor, and the project start and end dates. These are the dates that are authorized by the sponsor to incur expenses. Multi-year grants may only show the current authorized period (e.g., years 1-3 of a 5-year grant).
- Until they are approved and recorded in the financial system, the reports do not reflect invoices, Pcard charges, expense reimbursements or other business transactions that are in process. PI's need to keep track of these obligations and account for obligated funds to avoid overspending of the account. Amounts reflected in the columns titled Period Exp, FY TD Exp, and Project TD Exp. are expenditures that have been processed and posted to the account.

How do I read my Grant (Project) Statement?

- The top two sections provide a summary of the account.
- The "Project Activities Categories" section is a summary of the account showing encumbrances, current month expenditures, current fiscal year budget, current fiscal year to-date expenditures, and current fiscal year available balance. The remaining columns show the project to-date budget, project to-date expenditures, and project to-date available balance.
- The "Category" section is broken down in sub-categories of naturals for each subsection, current period encumbrances, current period expenditures and current budgeted amounts

for each natural. The last 3 columns show project to-date totals for the budget, expenditures, and available balance.

What do the column headings mean on the Grant (Project) Statement?

- **Encumb** – Encumbrances are purchases posted to the account but not yet paid to the vendor.
- **Period Exp** - Expenditures for the current month. PIs should regularly check that operating and salary expenditures are correct.
- **FY Bud** - Fiscal Year Budget (July 1 to June 30).
- **FY TD Exp** - (Fiscal Year To-Date Expenditures) - Total expenditures posted to the account for the fiscal year.
- **FY AV Bal** – (Fiscal Year Available Balance) - Remaining balance in fiscal year budget (budget – encumbrances – FY TD expenditures = FY AV Balance).
- **Proj TD Bud** – (Project To-Date Budget) - budgeted amount from the inception of the grant. Budget is increased as each grant period is approved by grant agency.
- **Proj TD Exp** – (Project To-Date Expenditures) - Expenditures posted to account from the inception of the grant.
- **Proj TD Av Bal** – (Project To-Date Available Balance) - Remaining available balance per category or natural for the remainder of the project period.

Why do I have a negative balance?

A negative balance indicates the posted expenditures exceed the budgeted amount for that natural or category. Individual naturals can have negative balances (see natural exceptions below) so long as the “Total Compensation,” “Total Operating Costs” or the “Total Indirect Cost Expense” **totals** do not have a negative balance.

Natural exceptions: Grant equipment over \$5000 (6247), Tuition (7225), Grant Subcontracts under \$25,000 (6515) and Grant Subcontracts over \$25,000 (6520) should **not** have a negative balance. A negative balance can often impact the indirect costs. A negative balance in any of these naturals (6247, 6515, 6520 and 7255) need to be corrected with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) by processing an adjustment to the budget amount or processing a transfer of expenses from the account to another account. It is important that this is done prior to the end of the fiscal year. These types of corrections are done by submitting a [Grant Budget Transfer Request](#) or a [Grant Expenditure Transfer Form](#) to postaward@marquette.edu.

What are some limitations of the BI Reports?

- Financial reports do not include expenditures that have not posted to the account. This is why it is important for you to review the Journal Entries with iExpense Report Detail to make sure that all known expenses are accounted for to avoid overspending.
- Indirect costs, when applicable, are only charged to the account once a month and only on actual expenses (not encumbrances). If the project statement shows \$0 in the Period Expense column of the indirect costs expense natural (7520), the current indirect costs have not been applied to the account. If you are reviewing expenses before the monthly reports are finalized, indirect expenses for the current period are not included and will need to be taken into consideration.
- If you have re-budgeted funds but they are not reflected on the report, e-mail postaward@marquette.edu to check the status of the re-budgeting request.

- Salary and fringe are **not** encumbered. The reports only show salary expenditures that have been charged to the account. If you have committed salary to someone, only the salary that has been paid is posted to the account. The remaining obligated, but not yet paid, amount of the salary authorization needs to be accounted.
 - Current fringe rates can be found on the ORSP web page by clicking on the “Current F&A Rate” hyperlink then opening the “F&A and Fringe Benefit Rate Agreement” document.

Who can help me if I have questions?

- For BI access questions (remember Mac users need to use the most recent version of Chrome or Firefox) – **Contact the Comptroller’s Office or your College Business Manager/Director.**

- For Budget adjustments/transfers and expense transfers – **ORSP at postaward@marquette.edu**
 - College of Health Science contact your Business Director first.
 - Questions may include:
 - In planning to make future adjustments, how do salary funds get moved from one natural to another due to personnel changes?
 - How can funds be moved from Salary to Operating (or vice versa) due to a change in needs?

- For BI Report questions – **College Business Manager/Director**
Questions may involve, but not be limited to, account balances, expenditures, encumbrances, and additional training on how to use/read the BI reports.

- Salary Questions – **College Business Manager/Director**
Questions may involve processing salary authorizations to ensure payment to students or staff, and for processing buyouts, cost share, and summer salaries. This includes new salaries and continuing assignments. Salary authorization requests are typically processed through your College with a salary verification form. Questions concerning payment amounts, individuals being paid or amounts of payment should also be directed to your College.