Personnel Budgeting Questions

What appointment length should I select for my personnel?

Faculty:
Non-NIH proposals: PI and other faculty with an academic year appointment should typically have a 9-month appointment. NIH proposals: The appointment should be 12-months if this is an NIH proposal and the faculty member’s salary is above the NIH salary cap. In this case, select the 12-month appointment and ensure the base salary is listed as the NIH salary cap.

Non-Faculty:
Post Docs, Grad Students, and other non-faculty personnel are typically budgeted at 12 months. If this proposal is S2S, grad students should be budgeted with a 12-month appointment by adding their academic and summer month salaries. If the proposal is not being submitted S2S, they can be budgeted with a 12-month appointment or by adding a 10-month appointment at the AY salary and 2-month appointment at the summer salary.

How do I calculate the effort or salary requested percentage?
Please use the Princeton ERA – Effort Distribution Tool available on the ORPA website to calculate the correct effort and salary requested percentages.

This tool can be used to calculate the effort and/or salary requested percentages when you know the effort in person months or when you know the person’s base salary and determined budget amount for salary.

How do I calculate a blended fringe rate?
Please use the Princeton ERA – Blended Fringe Benefit Rate Tool on the ORPA website to calculate the blended fringe rate.

If the first period of the proposal spans the current fiscal year and the next fiscal year, a blended fringe rate must be calculated and entered for the first period. The blended fringe rate should properly account for the number of days at the current fringe benefit rate and at the provisional fringe benefit rate.

How do I apply 3% inflation for Grad Students?
Inflation for personnel defaults to 4% within the system. When budgeting graduate students, their salaries typically need to be inflated at 3% as opposed to the defaulted 4%

If you are only including graduate students on this budget, go to the General Budget Information page on the budget SmartForm, and update question #7. Change the default rate from 4% to 3%. This will apply the 3% inflation rate to all personnel listed on the budget.

If you are budgeting more faculty than grad students in the budget, leave the default rate at 4% on the General Budget Information page. On the Personnel Cost Definition page, indicate that inflation should not be applied for each graduate student. After you have done this, the base salary field on the Personnel Costs page table will be editable for the grad student. Update the base salary for each out year to account for the 3% inflation by multiplying the previous period base salary by 1.03.
If you are budgeting more grad students than faculty in the budget, change the default rate to 3% on the General Budget Information page. On the Personnel Cost Definition page, indicate that inflation should not be applied for each faculty member. After you have done this, the base salary field on the Personnel Costs page table will be editable for the faculty. Update the base salary for each out year to account for the 4% inflation by multiplying the previous period base salary by 1.04.

**Why am I seeing a “Salary Overage” message on my budget workspace?**
A message may appear on the budget workspace that says “This budget has a salary overage of $XX.XX. Use the Create Cost Share creator to properly capture these costs.” This message indicates that the system thinks a cost share budget should be created based on the budget information entered.

If you were not expecting to see this message, check the following items on your budget:

- Review each person budgeted to confirm that the Effort percentage and Salary Requested percentages used for each period are the same. Even if the percentages are just slightly different (including decimal rounding), the system will calculate cost share.
- If this is an NIH proposal, and the person’s salary exceeds the NIH salary cap, budget the person with a 12 month appointment type and use the NIH salary cap as the base salary. Do not apply inflation for that person. Salaries exceeding the salary cap will create cost sharing.

If there is a difference between the Effort Percentage and Salary Requested due to sponsor or DFR requirements but this will not be tracked as cost sharing, it is ok to ignore this message. It will not stop you from proceeding. If this proposal does include financial cost share, a cost share budget should be created and the cost share commitment should be completed. For clarification on if a cost share budget is needed or not for your proposal, please reach out to your ORPA GCA.

**Can I budget my personnel’s salary as Total Direct Costs or Other, instead of using the Personnel Costs page? The sponsor does not require a detailed budget.**
Even if the sponsor does not require a detailed budget, personnel should be budgeted at the detail level within Princeton ERA. It is important to capture the proposed effort because proposed effort now appears on the Current &Pending Support report.

**General Cost Types Budgeting Questions**

**How do I update the amount per period for my general cost types? I’m not budgeting the same amount for each period.**
Different amounts can be budgeted for each period on the General Costs page. To do so, add the item on the General Cost Definition page and select “no” for the apply inflation question. Then when you go to the General Costs page, the amount field for each period will be editable.

**Can I enter cents in Princeton ERA?**
Princeton ERA will automatically round cents to the whole dollar. Please budget at the dollar level.

**The rounding of my budget is off, and I need it to be an exact number. What should I do?**
If the rounding of your budget is slightly “off” from the exact number you need it to be, carefully review the budget to ensure all budget items and FA information is entered correctly.

If you have a budget item in which indirects is not charged, you can reduce or increase that item as needed.

If all items have indirects calculated on them, then changing a budget item by $1 may result it rounding in the other direction since with the indirect rate applied the change may really be $2 due to rounding (e.g. reducing the budget $1 would also reduce its FA 62 cents.. which Princeton ERA rounds to $1).
If the rounding is slightly off and the indirect rate applies to all budget items, reduce a budget item by $1 per period. Then add the same budget item again on the General Cost Definition page for $1 but denote that indirects should not be calculated on the item. The budget item will be listed twice, and indirects will be calculated on it except for the $1. This should cause the budget to round as desired.