Office for Sponsored Research

Electronic Sponsored Project Requests (ESPR) System
User Guide

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Updated May 1, 2015
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Updated May 1, 2015
1.0 Introduction to ESPR

1.1 Overview
ESPR is a proprietary Northwestern University application designed to capture information and route it electronically for approvals. This system takes the place of request and approval processed formerly routed via paper and scanned copies of various OSR forms. In order to accommodate various request types, ESPR’s dynamic forms change to indicate what information is needed for each request type. Some information is pre-populated into ESPR based on the InfoEd number of the request, but additional information is typed in or uploaded in a variety of file formats.

1.2 Accessing ESPR

ESPR can be accessed by logging in with your University NetID and password at the following web address:
https://www.espr.northwestern.edu/.

NOTE: If you are logging in from off-campus, you will first need to sign in to VPN. Information about using VPN can be found on NUIT’s website: http://www.it.northwestern.edu/oncampus/vpn/

1.3 ESPR Log-in Troubleshooting
NOTE: ESPR emails are hardcoded for the recipient and the recipient only. For example, you cannot forward an email to a PI and have them click on that link to log-in; The PI has to use the link in the email actually sent to their email address.

There are three options to assist with these issues.

Option 1: Access ESPR Link via e-mail
1) The PI can look in his/her own inbox for the original ESPR email in order to click-through on that link (NOTE: ESPR approval emails cannot be resent from the system)

Option 2: Access via the ESPR System
1) The PI can go to: https://www.espr.northwestern.edu/
2) Log-in to ESPR
3) Navigate to ‘Approvals & Requests”, and click on ‘Approvals’
4) There should be a list of everything in the approval queue
5) Click on the ‘sign’ icon to approve any request you want to approve.

Option 3: If option 1 and 2 do not work, the most likely culprit is an access point issue or an email forwarding issue:
1) **Access point:** Make sure you are using an on-campus computer or VPN. [You may have to use VPN from an NMH computer/if you’re on the hospital network.]

2) **Email Forwarding:** If your email has changed (from what is in the ESPR system) and you set up email forwarding from your old account to your new account, approval links in ESPR emails sent to the original account will NOT work if accessed from the new account (e.g. Your email has changed from an NMFF to an NM account. The NMFF account is still in ESPR, but you set up forwarding from the NMFF to NM account. The approval link that you receive in your NM inbox will not work for you.)

   a. As mentioned above, each approval email from ESPR is hard-coded for a particular email account. So even though (from your perspective) it looks like the email “arrived” (directly) in your new email, it actually came via the NMFF email.

   i. ESPR registers the click-through from the NM email differently than from the NMFF email, so there’s a discrepancy from the system perspective, and an error results.

   b. Log-in to ESPR directly to approve the request
   
   c. Then, send an email to ESPR support and request an email address update.

### 1.4 Required ESPR Request Types (as of May 1, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Relinquishment</th>
<th>No Cost Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Carry-forward of Unobligated Balance&lt;br&gt;• Open New Budget Categories&lt;br&gt;• Revised Budget for an Award&lt;br&gt;• Revised Budget for Submitted Proposal</td>
<td><strong>Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)</strong>&lt;br&gt;*** Except for NDAs (CDAs) for Clinical Trials***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Use Agreement (DUA)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Effort Change for PI or Other Key Personnel&lt;br&gt;• Extended Absence of PI&lt;br&gt;• PI or Co-I Change&lt;br&gt;• Change of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fabricated Equipment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prespending</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Original Award&lt;br&gt;• Continuation Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Material Transfer Agreement (MTA)** | **Subcontract**<br>• Request to Issue New Subaward<br>• Subaward Amendment | **Withdraw Proposal**
2.0 Approvals & Requests
Requests that are still in the approval process are shown in the “Approvals & Requests” menu. Requests that are approved by OSR (Final Step of the Approval Process) are shown in the “Archives” menu.

2.1 Approvals
The default screen when you log-in to ESPR is the Approvals screen. It can be accessed at any time by clicking on the top menu bar on Approvals & Requests > Approvals. This screen shows all proposals that have been routed to you for signature / approval.

![Approvals Screen Icons]

**Approvals Screen Icons**

- A red icon in the status field indicates that the request does not have PI signature.

- A yellow icon in the status field indicates that the request has been signed by the PI but has not received all approvals.

- A green icon in the status field indicates that the request is fully-signed (i.e. has received approval from at least one person in each required step).

**View** and **Status** icons will be available for requests that have started routing. It is also possible to stop a request that is in route by using the **Stop** icon. Stopping a route will delete all approvals that have been applied to the request.
### 2.2 My Requests

The **My Requests** tab shows requests that you have initiated. Requests that have not yet routed can be edited (by clicking the “Edit” icon on the left) or deleted (by clicking the “Delete” button on the right.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
<th>Sent Back On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>Budget: Open New Budget Categories</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>OSR TEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
<th>Sent Back On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>183</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>Data Use Agreement</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>Academic Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
<th>Sent Back On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>182</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>No-cost Extension</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>Academic Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
<th>Sent Back On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>Personnel PI or Co-I Change</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>Academic Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005

### 2.3 Upcoming Requests

The **Upcoming Requests** screen shows requests for which you are an approval that have been created but not yet routed to you for approval. You can view the request itself by clicking on the “View” icon. You can view where the request is in its route but clicking on the “Status” icon. When a request is eventually routed to you for approval, you will see the request in the “Approvals” section, and the “Sign” icon will be available to you to sign off on the request.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Approver/Division/Department/School</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>176</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>Award Reimbursement</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>OSR TEST</td>
<td>Office for Sponsored Research (GCO &amp; DA)</td>
<td>12/09/2014 8:46 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tracking#</th>
<th>Institution#</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Award Department</th>
<th>Approver/Division/Department/School</th>
<th>Routing Started On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>KIM-001</td>
<td>Award Reimbursement</td>
<td>Kimberly Griffin</td>
<td>OSR TEST</td>
<td>OSR TEST</td>
<td>11/25/2014 1:51 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposal Title:** tht346 - EPA-OITA-2011-005
2.4 Creating a New Request
From anywhere in the application, you can click Create Request on the top menu bar to initiate a new request.

1. Begin your request by selecting the request type from the dropdown menu.

2. The selection of some types of requests (e.g. Budget) will cause a subtype dropdown to appear:
3. When the type and sub-type have been selected, enter the InfoEd number. The title and PI for the record will auto-fill based on InfoEd data. The department or center must be manually selected from the dropdown. Click **Create Request** to initiate the request. As noted, enter “NDA” if you are requesting an NDA which does not have a corresponding InfoEd record. (See figure on the following page.)

![Create Request Form](image)

4. Upon clicking Create Request, the specific request type screen will appear to allow you to input the required information for the selected request type. Each type or sub-type of request requires different information. Additional information for OSR can always be optionally uploaded. ESPR allows for the upload of various file types, such as PDFs, Word documents, or Excel spreadsheets.

![Request: Budget Modification: Open New Budget Categories](image)

5. Once information has been entered on this screen, press **Save & Submit for Routing** to route the request to the PI and approvers. Pressing **Save Details** will allow you to access this proposal from the **My Requests** screen at a later time in order to edit or route it. **Cancel & Back to Menu** will return you to the main menu without saving details.
2.5 Archived Requests
While requests that are still in the approval process are shown in the “Approvals & Requests” menu, requests that have already been approved by OSR (Final Step of the Approval Process) are shown in the “Archives” menu.

1. Clicking on the “Archives” menu in the top navigation bar will take you to your archived requests (i.e. all requests that you have initiated or for which you are a delegate.)

2. From the “Archives” screen you can search through archived requests. You can view individual requests as well as view the approval routing for requests by using the “View” and “Status” icons (at left), respectively. Archived requests CANNOT be edited.
3.0 Routing
Routing in ESPR follows a series of steps. Each step must be completed (i.e. the required individual(s) must sign) before the request will progress to the next step in routing. In many cases, there will be multiple individuals listed as approvers on a given step, but only one is required to sign for that step to be considered complete. When a request moves to the next step in routing, ESPR generates an email to the individuals in that step which provides a link to the page in ESPR on which they can approve the request. View and Status icons will be available for requests that have started routing.

3.1 Bypass an Approver
If none of the individuals in a given step are able to log-in to provide electronic signatures, a paper signature may be captured (this includes a copy of an email) and uploaded to ESPR as an attachment. Doing this will allow the routing to continue to the next step.

Upload a Paper Signature
1. Search for the request that requires a signature and click on “Status” (at left) to view the Status page, which shows where the request is in the approval route.
2. In the “Request Signatures” section, click on the “Paper Signature?” icon (at right)
3. This will take you to the Paper Signature Screen. From here, upload the (PI’s) approval as an attachment (a copy of an email will work) and fill out the “Signed By” and “Signed On” fields. Note: Upload of attachment must be completed BEFORE completing the other fields.
3.2 Recall a Request
It is also possible to stop a request that is in route by using one of the two procedures listed below:

Recall by Stopping a Request
As a requestor of the proposal modification, you can recall the request from routing. All the signatures obtained in the routing process thus far will be **REMOVED** and the routing process will be restarted from the beginning.

1. Click on **Approvals & Requests** > **My Requests** menu item. On this "My Requests" page you should see all your requests.
2. A request that is in the routing process will have an option to stop the request from routing indicated by a "**STOP SIGN**" at right.

![Image of Electronic Sponsored Projects Request System](image)

3. When you click on the Stop Sign, a confirmation message will appear in a pop-up window. By clicking “OK”, the request will be withdrawn from the routing.

![Confirmation Message](image)
Recall by Requesting Administrative Changes
As requestor, you can ask the current approver to send back the request for “Administrative Changes”. This will retain the signatures obtained thus far and when you resubmit the request, routing will start from where it was earlier.

1. To see where the request is in the approval process, click on the “STATUS” icon.

2. On the status page determine who currently has the request by looking for the individual closest to the beginning of the route who has NOT yet approved the request (i.e. the topmost entry where the “Signed By” and “Signed On” boxes are empty). In the example below, the PI has the request.

3. Ask the individual to send the request back for “Administrative Changes”. The request will return to an editable state in your “My Requests” queue so that you can make the desired changes. You can then re-route the request from the last place it was in the route, retaining any signatures that had already been received.

3.3 Capture Approvals from Multiple Divisions/Departments
For a given request, ESPR can only capture the approvals for a single (department) route – those of the division/department associated with SP# in InfoEd. For example, say that you are doing a change of PI (personnel change) request, and the new PI (e.g. Nephrology) is in a different division/department than the original PI (e.g. Endocrinology). ESPR will route the request through the route for the originating department (e.g. Endocrinology) but NOT the new department (e.g. Nephrology).

In order to capture all required approvals:
- Gather hard copy or email signatures from the new department and create a PDF of the approvals.
- Upload the approval document as an attachment to the request.
- Submit the request as per usual in order to capture the required approvals of the originating department.
4.0 Other Functions

4.1 Designates
A user can be assigned as a designate for another user.

- Designates can modify forms for the person who they are designated for.
- Designates CANNOT approve on behalf of the person who they are designated for, but designates CAN upload a paper signature on behalf of the person, which will serve as the approval for that step and allow the request to continue to move along the route.

**Add or Delete a Designate**

1. To add a Designate for yourself, begin by clicking on “Designates” from the top menu.

2. This will take you to the View Designates screen where you can see the (other) users designated on your behalf and users who you are designated for.

![Designates Screen](image-url)
3. To add a designate, type in the user’s NetID in the “Add Designate” section. The name field will prepopulate with the user’s name. Click the “Add designate” button.

4. Your designate will be added and you will be able to view them in “Your Designates.” If you want to delete the designate at any time, choose “Delete” (at left.)
5. You will get a pop-up window to confirm the deletion. Click OK, and the user will be removed as a designate for you.

**Request Designate Status**

1. To request to be a designate for another user, navigate to the “View Designates” screen.
2. Type in the NetID for the user you want to be designated for.
3. The user will receive notification of your request.
4. Then the user can follow the prompts to add you as a Designate for him/her.
4.2 Submit Feedback or Report an Issue
The preferred method for submitting feedback on the ESPR System or requesting technical assistance with a problem in ESPR is to use the ESPR webform. This webform is sent to multiple member of the OSR-Info Team as well as the ESPR System developer and allows for better issue tracking.

1. Select **Feedback > Submit Feedback** from the top navigation menu.

2. Your name and email /NetID will automatically be associated with your feedback submission. Depending on the reason for feedback, (1) select “Suggestion” or “Issue” from the “**Feedback Type**” dropdown list. (2) Provide a detailed description in the “**Comments**” section.
5.0 Appendix: Special Circumstances with Budgeting

5.1 Proposed Internal Budget for a Sponsored Project

In addition to being used to request new budget categories to be opened, the “Open New Budget Categories” form can be used (in place of the old OSR-3 form) to inform OSR of accounts to be opened on new projects and/or dollar amounts to be budgeted into each account when new, renewal, continuation or supplemental awards are received.

Getting Started
To initiate a request in ESPR for budget account allocation or for a 191, 192, or 193 line:

1. Click Create Request from the top level menu.

2. For Request Type, choose Budget.

3. For Request Sub Type, choose Open New Budget Categories.

4. Complete the rest of the information on the Create Request form by entering in an InfoEd Proposal #, which will pre-populate relevant fields, or by completing the fields manually (if the Proposal # is unknown.)

5. Click Create Request to continue to the Open New Budget Categories Form.

NOTE: If you need to request both budget account allocation AND a 191, 192, or 193 line, please submit a single ESPR request and follow the instructions for Budget Account Allocation Request.
5.2 Budget Account Allocation Request

On the Open New Budget Categories Form, complete the fields/questions as follows:

1. **Project Chartstring:** If known, then enter the chartstring here. If not, then enter a “chartstring placeholder” of all 0’s: 000-0000000-00000000.

2. **New budget categories:** Click **Add New Budget Categories**. On the Budget Category entry form, select the budget categories to which you would like to allocate funds. In the Justification field associated with each category, enter the amount to be budgeted to that category.

3. **Will you be rebudgeting funds....?** Answer “No”.

4. **Upload Current GM045:** A document must be uploaded to this field in order to submit the request. Instead of a GM045, you can upload a copy of the original budget, budget worksheet, or other relevant document that would be useful to OSR.

5. **Additional Info for OSR:** Enter “Budget Account Allocation Request” along with any additional information you would like to provide to OSR. [Note: If you also need to open a 191, 192, or 193 line, indicate this request in the **Additional Info** field as well and provide any relevant information.]

6. **Upload additional info for OSR:** Optional upload field for anything else you wish to provide to OSR or that your GO/GA has requested from you (and that you have not already uploaded in the **Upload Current GM045** field.)

7. **Save & Submit:** Click **Save & Submit for Routing** if you have completed the request and are ready to submit. Else click **Save Details** if you are not ready to submit but would like to save your work to complete at a later time.
5.3 Open 191 / 192 / 193 Line Request

On the Open New Budget Categories Form, complete the fields/questions as follows:

1. **Project Chartstring**: If known, then enter the chartstring here. If not, then enter a “chartstring placeholder” of all 0’s: 000-0000000-00000000.

2. **New budget categories**: Click **Add New Budget Categories**. On the Budget Category entry form, select any budget category. In the Justification field associated with that category, enter “See additional information”.

3. **Will you be rebudgeting funds….?** Answer “No”.

4. **Upload Current GM045**: A document must be uploaded to this field in order to submit the request. Instead of a GM045, you can upload a copy of the original budget, budget worksheet, or other relevant document that would be useful to OSR.

5. **Additional Info for OSR**: Enter “Open 191 line” (or 192 / 193, as appropriate) along with any additional information you would like to provide to OSR.

6. **Upload additional info for OSR**: Optional upload field for anything else you wish to provide to OSR or that your GO/GA has requested from you (that you have not already uploaded in the **Upload Current GM045** field.)

7. **Save & Submit**: Click **Save & Submit for Routing** if you have completed the request and are ready to submit. Else click **Save Details** if you are not ready to submit but would like to save your work to complete at a later time.
5.4 Reallocating Funds with Same Account Code but Different Chart Strings

The budget chart will not allow you to enter two rows with the same account code, so in order to reallocate funds between the same account code but on different chart strings, you have to work around this limitation by using a placeholder account code for one of the lines and also describing what you want done in the justification field. In other words (or, more accurately, pictures):

You are trying to enter this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Increase Amount</th>
<th>Decrease Amount</th>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Delete Row?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73000 Supplies</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>redistribute budget FROM 60012345</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73000 Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td>redistribute budget TO 60019999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please Select</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Total</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But you receive this error message:

```
System.Data.SqlClient:ORA-00001: unique constraint (ESPR_CSR_PROPEDGTA_LK) violated
```

So instead, enter this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Increase Amount</th>
<th>Decrease Amount</th>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Delete Row?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73000 Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td>redistribute budget FROM 63012345</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7301-Supplies, Restricted</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>redistribute budget TO 60019999 ***THIS SHOULD GO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please Select</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Total</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And your budget changes will be saved in the request like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>Increase Amount</th>
<th>Decrease Amount</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73001-Supplies, Restricted</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>redistribute budget TO 60019999 <em><strong>THIS SHOULD GO TO Acct Code #73000 - Supplies</strong></em> [73001 is just a placeholder]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73000 Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td>5000.00</td>
<td>redistribute budget FROM 60012345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals           | 5000.00         | 5000.00         |                                                    |
| **Grand Total**  | 0.00            |                 |                                                    |