

Colleagues,

I'm pleased to share that OSP's awards team is now fully staffed. Our four new team members are presently undergoing comprehensive training, and we anticipate that they will be fully prepared to handle their workload within the next couple of months. To further bolster our capacity, we have enlisted the services of a full-time consultant and a part-time working retiree. These additional resources will aid in addressing the award backlog and help facilitate the setup of new award actions, until the new staff members are fully trained.

Over the last four months, OSP has been diligently working to alleviate the award backlog. This month, OSP focused on addressing award modification actions received in June. OSP's goal is to completely clear the backlog by the end of October. OSP processes award actions on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to new award setups such as grants and cooperative agreements.

The processing timeline for award actions depends on a few factors:

- a) Completed and approved proposal record along with supporting documentation, like the award budget sheet (ABS).
- b) Resolution of research compliance matters essential for the award, such as COI, IRB, and export control.
- c) The need for bilateral signatures.

Outlined below are the targeted processing times for various award actions:

- New award (grants and cooperative agreements) setup: 7-15 business days.
- NSF No cost extensions: 5 business days from receipt of the completed request in the sponsor portal.
- Request to Spend Funds (RTSF): 2 business days. RTSF is a collaboration between OSP and the Contract & Grant Accounting Office that expedites the process to obtain a new Banner index when there's a delay in receiving the Notice of Award from the Sponsor.

The contracts team currently has one vacant position due to an extended leave, and we anticipate the return of this team member in early December. In the interim, the remaining three team members are sharing the workload. Similar to award actions, contracts are also handled on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the negotiation process for contracts is more intricate and time-consuming. The duration of processing contracts varies, contingent on factors like the sponsor's involvement, compliance, legal requirements, and effective communication.

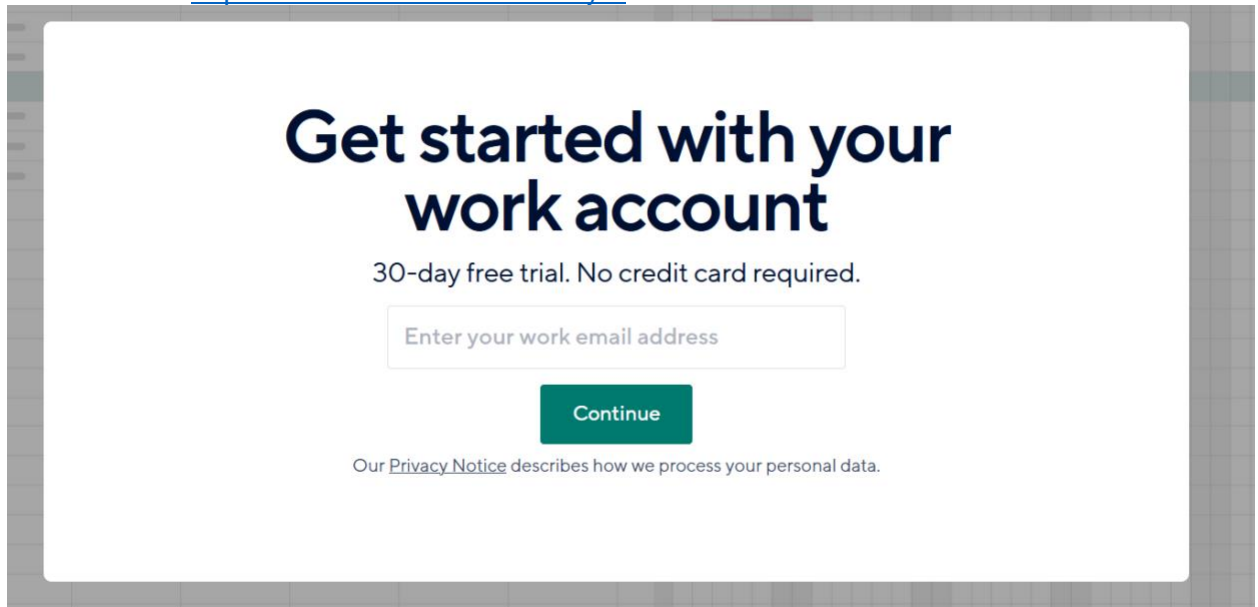
To enhance communication and provide real-time updates, OSP is implementing the following measures:

- The Principal Investigators (PI's) will be included on all communications with the sponsors to ensure they are kept informed about the progress.
- Piloting of an online dashboard (Smartsheet) to the main campus research community. This dashboard, expected to go live in September, will allow for monitoring the status of award actions in real time.

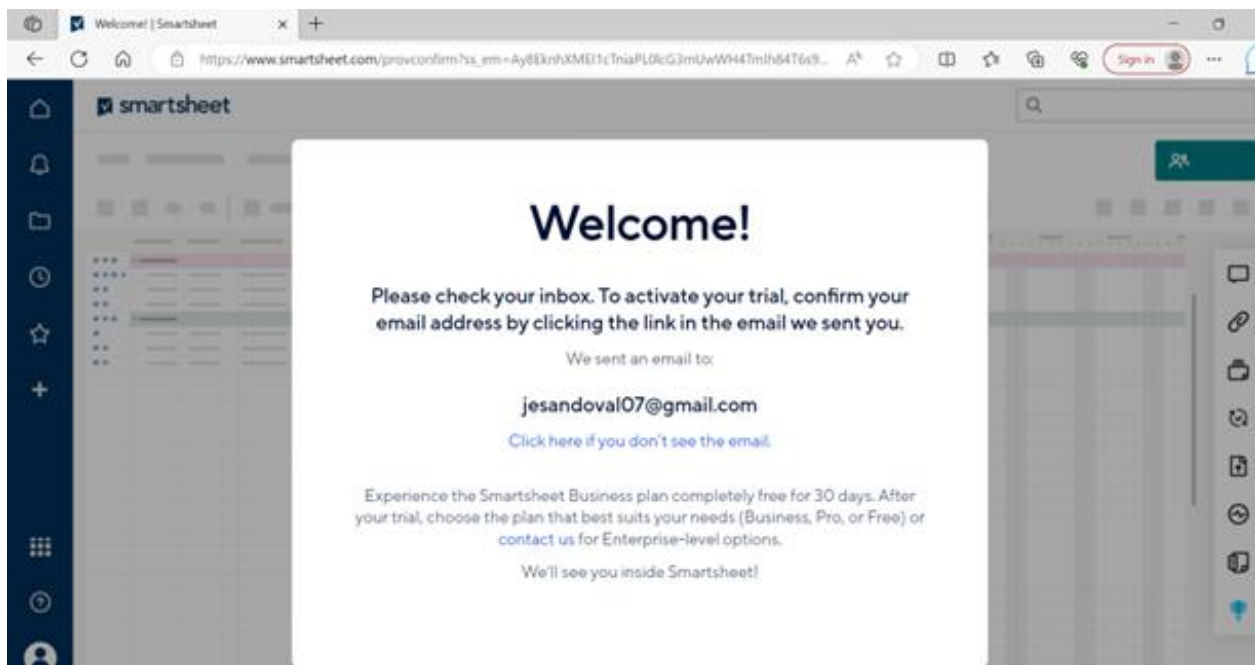
In anticipation of the launch of the pilot online dashboard, the PI's on main campus are requested to set up a free Smartsheet account if they don't already have one. If you already have an account, there is no action required at this time.

To set up an account, follow the steps below.

1. Go to: <https://www.smartsheet.com/try-it>



2. Enter your UNM email address and the basic information that is requested: name, title, phone number and company size. Note: The name is the only required field. After successfully creating an account, the screen below will appear. Note: the account is setup originally as a 30-day free trial, but then automatically switches over to a free user account.



Finally, as a PI, there are several steps you can take to ensure the award setup process goes smoothly:

- a) If you receive an award notice directly from the sponsor and OSP isn't copied on the communication, promptly forward the email to [awards@unm.edu](mailto:awards@unm.edu).
- b) Complete the project COI disclosure before or soon after submitting your proposal. This will save time during the award stage.
- c) Complete the Grants Management training course (GMT 100) in Learning Central ahead of time. This training is mandatory for all PIs and Co-Investigators receiving new awards.
- d) Respond promptly to OSP team member email communication requesting information for award setup or contract review.
- e) For unsolicited contracts, do not negotiate F&A matters with the Sponsor, as OSP is the authorized office for such negotiations.
- f) Recommend the use of UNM's standard template for unsolicited contracts. This accelerates the contract review process. Refer to <https://osp.unm.edu/contracts/contract-templates.html> for template details.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this transitional period. As we strive to enhance our processes, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any feedback, questions or require further assistance.

Have a great fall semester!

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