



University System of Georgia
Creating A More Educated Georgia

Business Procedures Manual

Forward

The University System of Georgia (USG) comprises thirty-five institutions of higher learning, a marine research institute, and a system central office. Included in the institutions of higher learning are four research universities, two regional universities, thirteen four-year comprehensive state universities, seven state colleges, and nine two-year colleges. All public colleges and universities within the University System of Georgia operate under common statutory and policy requirements. Under Board of Regents' policy, it is the responsibility of the Treasurer to "see that the institutions in the University System establish and maintain uniform and effective procedures of accounting, budgetary control, internal checks and audits, inventory controls, and business practices and shall advise institutions on all problems of a fiscal or business nature."

Part of this responsibility is to prepare a manual of business procedures to be followed by each institution. The USG Business Procedures Manual was originally created in 1978. Since that time, the University System of Georgia has grown significantly in size and complexity. This growth has been attended by many changes in public accounting principles, federal and state requirements for higher education and new technical demands that have made the task of financial and human resources management more challenging in today's environment.

In 2000, the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the organization that sets accounting and financial reporting standards for public sector agencies, issued new guidelines fundamentally altering the financial reporting requirements that were in existence until that time. Additionally, as these new requirements were being disseminated nationally, nearly all institutions in the University System of Georgia, individually or collectively, were embarking on a major implementation of new human resources and financial information systems, a process that demanded a reconsideration of business practices and procedures across the organization. Both events were driving factors in the present effort to revise the USG Business Procedures Manual, although clearly such a revision was long overdue.

This manual serves several purposes. Primarily, it sets forth the essential procedural components that each institution within the University System of Georgia must follow to meet both Board of Regents policy mandates and the statutory or regulatory requirements of the state of Georgia and the federal government. Secondly, it is

designed also to provide new financial, business and human resources professionals within the University System of Georgia the necessary information and tools to perform effectively. Finally, it serves as a useful reference document for seasoned professionals at USG colleges and universities who need to remain current with changes in Board of Regents policy and state law.

While much attention is given to general accounting principles and reporting requirements, the main emphasis of the manual is upon those financial and human resource procedures and practices that are unique or central to the state of Georgia and the University System of Georgia.

This manual retains much of the information that existed in previous versions that are still applicable to current operations. The manual has been expanded significantly, however, to address procedures formerly contained in numerous and separate documents.

For example, there are new sections on capitalization, the budget process, and the protection and security of records that were not part of the earlier manual. As a web-based document, the manual provides direct links to reference information – Board of Regents policies, Georgia statutes, and other federal and state resources – to assist the reader to identify the underlying source of some procedures and to provide broader understanding of the basis for others.

Thus, the manual, while focusing on USG procedures, also offers ready access to important policies, statutes and regulations that will aid the business officer in his/her daily performance of duties.