



Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy
Central Administrative Services

AURA Central Administrative Services (CAS) provides AURA Operating Centers funded by NSF with the business services defined herein. These services will be performed in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, AURA policy and CAS procedures.

The AURA CAS Mission is to provide the highest standard of Accounting, Procurement, Award Management, Compliance and Business IT support services in an effective, efficient, accurate and government compliant manner to NSF funded AURA Operating Centers. An exceptional level of responsiveness to AURA Center needs is paramount to the ability of AURA CAS to accomplish its mission.

Procurement

1. AURA CAS will provide procurement services for obtaining goods and services.
2. The CAS REQLESS system will be the software tool used by Center staff to input procurement requests.
3. Center staff will utilize Reqless to delegate approval authorities for requisitions for the procurement of goods and services. It is the responsibility of the Centers to ensure that there are sufficient funds and budget available to cover the procurement and to assign the appropriate cost codes.
4. It is the responsibility of the Centers to determine if a procurement request meets government standards for allowability and reasonableness. During the Procurement process, CAS will review requisitions, and any requisitions which may possibly be of concern in meeting standards for allowability and reasonableness will be held until CAS can consult with the requesting Center. CAS will provide staff training in these areas if requested.
5. All requisitions will be reviewed by CAS procurement management in consultation with the Center staff to determine the appropriate method (sub-award, purchase order, lease, etc.) for the procurement.
6. CAS policy is to adhere to the appropriate government standards regarding procurement such as cost estimating and sole source justification.
7. Upon receipt of proper documentation and authorized Center approval, CAS will process purchase orders, obtain goods or services and enter into contracts on behalf of the Center in amounts not to exceed \$1,000,000. If the purchase request exceeds \$1,000,000, it will be forwarded to the AURA President. If the purchase request exceeds \$3,000,000, it will be forwarded to the AURA Board of Directors. As required, the purchase request may also be forwarded to the funding agency.

8. CAS will make every reasonable effort to obtain the best value on behalf of the Center. CAS Procurement is responsible for identifying sources for purchasing goods and services, however Center staff that initiate or approve requisitions may offer suggestions based upon any research done prior to submitting the requisition.
9. CAS procurement staff will assist Center Management in developing cost estimates for budget preparation and make Center Management aware of cost savings available through consolidated purchase opportunities with other Centers.
10. CAS will provide Center management with complete access to all Center procurement information.

Sub-awards

1. As requested by the Center, CAS will oversee the procurement of complex goods and services that require the use of a sub-award or other agreement. CAS will draft, negotiate and execute all procurement related contracts and MOUs with the approval of Center Management.
2. CAS, in consultation with Center Management, will select bidders, accept or reject bids, issue invoices and terminate contracts for cause.
3. CAS Contract staff will oversee pre- and post-sub recipient monitoring in accordance with government regulations and AURA policy.
4. CAS Contracts Officers will be available for assistance as needed.
5. CAS will provide Center Management complete access to all contract related information.

Property Management

1. Property purchased by the Center with US government funds will be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures of the appropriate funding agency. The CAS Property Administrators will oversee all property that meets all the following requirements:
 - a. Has a unit cost or value in excess of \$5,000
 - b. Has an accepted useful life of one year
 - c. Is of a durable nature and will retain its identity throughout its lifetime.
2. Center staff must approve the retirement, trade-in or other disposal of property.

Logistics

1. CAS will provide logistics services (defined as domestic and international shipping and receiving; export and import control; and mail services) associated with Center activity.
2. The cost of all freight and packing materials for shipments sent on behalf of the Center will be borne by the Center. The cost of handling restricted use instruments and other property will be invoiced to the Center.
3. CAS will provide administrative labor for international shipping (export/import). All customs duties and broker charges for international shipments received by AURA on behalf of the Center will be the responsibility of the Center.

4. Receiving Reports that indicate receipt of materials shall be entered in Reqlless by CAS personnel at the time of delivery. and subsequently forwarded to CAS accounting for payment purposes.
5. CAS, through notices posted on purchase requisition in Reqlless, will provide notification to the Center, specifically all personnel subscribed to activity on a given requisition, when shipment has occurred or receipt of property has been received.

Cash Management and Disbursement

1. Upon receipt of all proper documentation, CAS will disburse Center funds to settle obligations to vendors and employees on behalf of the Centers.
2. CAS will manage cash levels in accordance with NSF requirements while maintaining a sound operational posture.

Accounting

1. The CAS accounting department will maintain financial records and an independent Chart of Accounts for all Center transactions. These financial records will be audited by an external auditor on an annual basis in accordance with auditing standards accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.
2. Center staff will have access to the CAS financial reporting system (CASNET). CAS staff will provide regular training and accommodate to the extent possible special reports as requested by Center staff.
3. Center management will provide CAS with a list of approved users of CASNET.
4. Financial data related to a specific Center will be restricted to that Center.
5. Quarterly and other federally required reports will be prepared and provided to Center Managers. These reports will consist of information that will satisfy funding agency reporting requirements. CAS will assist Center staff in developing and negotiating indirect cost rates and will provide guidance to Center staff for the proper identification and allocation of expenses to direct and indirect cost categories.

Payroll

1. The CAS Payroll department will deliver accurate checks to employees in a timely manner by accurately calculating gross wages and deductions; and by delivering the pay to the employee on payday or when legally required to do so.
2. CAS will deposit in a timely manner:
 - a. Federal and State taxes withheld from employee's gross pay or employer taxes owed by AURA.
 - b. Required State and Local premiums for mandated insurances, such as unemployment insurance.
 - c. Employer contributed and employee deferred payments to AURA retirement plans.
3. CAS Payroll will properly complete internal and external reports and returns as required.

Financial and Compliance Audits

1. CAS will provide all necessary data and other support as required by AURA's external auditors.
2. CAS will provide all necessary data, policies, practices and analyses required by government auditors.
3. AURA's internal auditor will evaluate, on a regular basis, practices within each Center and CAS, and provide AURA with information pertaining to government compliance. In some cases, findings may pertain to the provision of business services or processes related to Center activities associated with business practices such as compliance with approval process or cost allocation. CAS and the Centers are required to modify or correct activities related to government compliance as determined by AURA management.

Award Management

1. CAS will provide award management services to assist AURA and its NSF Centers in managing the full life cycle of governmental and institutional awards and other agreements where AURA receives funding or payments. The life cycle of an award or other agreements involving payments to AURA ranges from the preparation of proposals, the receipt of the award or agreement, the management of the award or agreement, and the closeout of the award or agreement.
2. CAS will provide uniform policies, processes and tools for coordinating, managing, monitoring and verifying the *business and administrative activities* of AURA and its NSF Centers to ensure that all actions required by an award are successfully performed.
3. While the Corporate Office and all service divisions in CAS perform award management functions for AURA and its NSF Centers, the Grants Officer and the Compliance Officer have oversight responsibility to ensure that Corporate and Center award management activities are completed in accordance with NSF requirements and AURA/Center policies and procedures.

Compliance

1. The Compliance Officer will maintain and monitor a compliance program for AURA and its NSF Centers to ensure compliance with award terms and conditions and to prevent illegal, unethical and improper conduct.
2. The Compliance Officer will provide compliance services to ensure AURA and its Centers meet NSF expectations for the stewardship of Federal funds. Compliance services include the provision of: advice and guidance for addressing and managing compliance risk; written opinions related to compliance matters; policy and procedure review, analysis and revision; award management oversight and compliance training on a variety of topics.
3. The Compliance Officer will conduct compliance reviews and monitoring activities to ensure compliance with award terms and conditions and recommends appropriate action to correct deviations.

Business IT

1. CAS will develop, maintain and implement all software tools required for CAS to provide the services outlined in this charter.

These software tools include:

- ReqLess – on-line requisition system for electronic request and approval of procurements of goods and services and staff and visitor travel.
 - WebTimeSheets – on-line time card recording system.
 - CASNET – on-line financial reporting system.
 - Ultipro – on-line human resources information system.
2. CAS will continue to support software that CAS developed and is currently in use by specific Centers (such as WeBud in use at NOAO).
 3. CAS will continue to provide data for upload to software developed by other companies currently in use by specific Centers (such as CONTROL in use by Gemini). However, CAS does not provide software support for programs not developed or implemented by CAS.
 4. CAS will consider making alterations and enhancements as reasonably requested by the Centers.

Additional detail pertaining to all CAS services can be found in Appendix A

Cost for Performance of Work

1. In consideration of the services provided herein, the Centers will pay the approved indirect cost rates for CAS. These rates may vary by site and are calculated annually and submitted to NSF for approval. CAS shall notify the Centers, in writing, of annual changes.
2. Extraordinary costs, such as those listed in **Appendix B** will be charged directly to the Centers.

Evaluation of CAS performance

1. Centers will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the services they receive from CAS. Through the implementation of an on-line survey, Centers will be able to rate performance of the various CAS function, provide recommendations for additional services and address concerns that they may have. Other evaluation tools and methods are being considered for future use.

Appendix A

CAS Services	Description	Who - Lead	Notes	Frequency
Procurement				
General procurements in US		all Buyers	Purchasing@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
General procurements in Chile		all Buyers	ProcurementChile@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Relocations	Provide individualized service	Mayne		On-going
Policy Revisions	Provide guidance and documentation for policy implementation	Baron Helming		On-going
Travel and Service vendors	Secure special rates, maintain website	Mayne		On-going
Training	Provide individual and group training	Baron Helming		On-going
Sub-awards				
Multi-party Contract Management	Coordinate with Centers and partner organizations	all Contracts	(First Point of Contact) Gemini-Godzyk, LSST-Kittleson, NSO-Baron Helming, NOAO-Logan	
Service Agreements	Coordinate with Centers to assume billing and payment accuracy	all Contracts	(First Point of Contact) Gemini-Godzyk, LSST-Kittleson, NSO-Baron Helming, NOAO-Logan	
Carina	Software maintenance and training; system improvements; log in issues	Diaz-Silva		On-going
Property Management				
Tagging		all Property	Property@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Disposal		all Property	Property@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
GSA Excess Coordination		Smith		On-going
Logistics				
Return authorizations in US	Merchandise returns	all Logistics	Logistics@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Return authorizations in Chile	Merchandise returns	all Logistics	LogisticsChile@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
International shipments	Coordinate large and special shipments for Centers and partners	Conrad	Logistics@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Customs advising	Assessing best way to enter goods into US commerce	Wiest	Logistics@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Export advising	Obtain State and Commerce licenses,	Wiest	Logistics@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Accounting				
Accounting - Tucson Office; US\$ accounting system	Account Number (adding new or changing on PO); moving costs; moving labor hours; general accounting questions; Billing\invoicing; unencumbering PO's	Tucson Accountants	AccountingUS@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Accounting - La Serena Office; CL\$ accounting system	Account number questions; payment for rent and\or utilities; TR Reimbursement; general accounting questions; billing\invoicing, etc.	Chile Accountants	AccountingCH@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Accounts Payable - Tucson Office for US\$;	All questions related to payment of invoices	Tucson AP Specialists	AccountsPayable@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Accounts Payable - La Serena Office for CL\$	All questions related to payment of invoices	Chile Accountants	AccountsPayableCH@aura-astronomy.org	On-going

Travel Expense Reimbursement	All questions related to payment of Travel Expense Reimbursements	Tucson AP Specialists	TravelCAS@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Payroll				
Payroll - US Hires	All questions related to payroll disbursements for US Hires	Tucson Payroll Specialists	Payroll@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Payroll - Chilean Nationals	All questions related to payroll disbursements for Chilean Nationals	Chile Payroll Specialist	PayrollCH@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Webtimesheets	Accounts added\removed	Payroll Specialists	Payroll@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Financial Audits				
	All questions or inquiries related to the Financial Audits for NOAO, NSO, Gemini, LSST, WIYN and SOAR	CAS Management	audit@aura-astronomy.org	Annual
Award Management				
Proposal Preparation	Development of budget and proposal documents	Grants Officer		As needed
Award Negotiations	Negotiate award terms	CAS Senior Manager/Procurement		As needed
Process new awards	Notify parties of new awards; insert in Carina & Vela	Grants Officer		AS needed
Assignment of Award Management Duties	Assign award management duties per Vela	Grants Officer		As needed
Subrecipient assessment & monitoring	Subawardee assessment & monitoring	Contracts Officer		As needed
Transfer or amendment of awards	Follow transfer or amendment procedures	Grants Officer		As needed
Award monitoring & compliance verification	Ensure compliance with award terms	Grants Officer & Compliance Officer		On-going
Award Termination & close-out	Pay bills, provide deliverables, close award	Grants Officer & Accounting		As needed
Award management policies & procedures	Develop/revise award management policies & procedures	Compliance Officer & CAS		As needed
Award management tools	Develop Web-based and other tools to manage awards	CAS & Business IT		AS needed
Award management training	Deliver training on award management matters	Compliance Officer & CAS		On-going
Compliance				
Compliance Program	Program to ensure compliance with award terms	Compliance Officer		On-going
Compliance Officer as resource to Centers & AURA	Provide advice & guidance to address compliance matters	Compliance Officer		On-going
Policy & procedure review & analysis	Develop/revise policies & procedures for award compliance	Compliance Officer		On-going
Cost allowability analysis	Provide research on allowability of costs	Compliance Officer		On-going
Compliance training	Provide training on award compliance & ethics	Compliance Officer, CAS		On-going
Compliance reviews & monitoring	Review and monitor business activities & documentation	Compliance Officer		Periodic
BSR and audit preparation	Prep Centers on BSR and audit responsibilities	Compliance Officer		As necessary
Business IT				
Login issues	Issues with any CAS system		Reqless@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
CASNET report questions	Questions regarding using CASNET or data displayed in CASNET	Accounting	AccountingUS@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Webtimesheets	Questions regarding using Webtimesheets or data displayed in Webtimesheets	Payroll	Payroll@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Reqless	Questions regarding using Reqless or data displayed in Reqless	Procurement	Purchasing@aura-astronomy.org	On-going
Strategic planning				
Annual program planning	Assists Centers in gathering data required for budgeting process	Financial Mgr\Sr. Fin. Analyst		Annual

For additional information, see <http://auracas.aura-astronomy.org/?q=node/376>

Appendix B

Extraordinary Costs incurred by CAS that will be charged directly to the Centers include, but are not limited to:

- Center Specific training
- Additional cost of Payroll Processing
 - *AURA is registered as an employer in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Florida, Maryland, New Mexico and Virginia and in Chile. If an AURA Center decides to hire employees in a State or Country where AURA is not registered, AURA CAS reserves the right to determine whether to pay these employees through CAS Payroll or, if circumstances dictate, to outsource that service. In either event additional administrative costs borne by the efforts of CAS to register AURA in the new State or Country, or overhead charged by the outsourcing agency will be expensed to the Center initiating the effort.*