

OMB Circular A-21

Section J

J. General provisions for selected items of cost.

Sections 1 through 54 provide principles to be applied in establishing the allowability of certain items involved in determining cost. These principles should apply irrespective of whether a particular item of cost is properly treated as direct cost or F&A cost. Failure to mention a particular item of cost is not intended to imply that it is either allowable or unallowable; rather, determination as to allowability in each case should be based on the treatment provided for similar or related items of cost. In case of a discrepancy between the provisions of a specific sponsored agreement and the provisions below, the agreement should govern.

1. *Advertising and public relations costs.*

- a. The term advertising costs means the costs of advertising media and corollary administrative costs. Advertising media include magazines, newspapers, radio and television, direct mail, exhibits, electronic or computer transmittals, and the like.
- b. The term public relations includes community relations and means those activities dedicated to maintaining the image of the institution or maintaining or promoting understanding and favorable relations with the community or public at large or any segment of the public.
- c. The only allowable advertising costs are those that are solely for:
 - (1) The recruitment of personnel required for the performance by the institution of obligations arising under a sponsored agreement (See also subsection b. of section J.42, Recruiting);
 - (2) The procurement of goods and services for the performance of a sponsored agreement;
 - (3) The disposal of scrap or surplus materials acquired in the performance of a sponsored agreement except when non-Federal entities are reimbursed for disposal costs at a predetermined amount; or
 - (4) Other specific purposes necessary to meet the requirements of the sponsored agreement.
- d. The only allowable public relations costs are:
 - (1) Costs specifically required by the sponsored agreement;
 - (2) Costs of communicating with the public and press pertaining to specific activities or accomplishments which result from performance of sponsored agreements (these costs are considered necessary as part of the outreach effort for the sponsored agreement); or
 - (3) Costs of conducting general liaison with news media and government public relations officers, to the extent that such activities are limited to communication and liaison necessary keep the public informed on matters of public concern, such as notices of Federal contract/grant awards, financial matters, etc.
- e. Costs identified in subsections c and d if incurred for more than one sponsored agreement or for both sponsored work and other work of the institution, are allowable to the extent that the principles in sections D. ("Direct Costs") and E. ("F & A Costs") are observed.
- f. Unallowable advertising and public relations costs include the following:
 - (1) All advertising and public relations costs other than as specified in subsections 1.c, 1.d and 1.e.
 - (2) Costs of meetings, conventions, convocations, or other events related to other activities of the institution, including:
 - (a) Costs of displays, demonstrations, and exhibits;
 - (b) Costs of meeting rooms, hospitality suites, and other special facilities used in conjunction with shows and other special events; and
 - (c) Salaries and wages of employees engaged in setting up and displaying exhibits, making demonstrations, and providing briefings;
 - (3) Costs of promotional items and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs;
 - (4) Costs of advertising and public relations designed solely to promote the institution.

2. *Advisory councils.*

Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees are allowable as a direct cost where authorized by the Federal awarding agency or as an indirect cost where allocable to sponsored agreements.

3. *Alcoholic beverages.*

Costs of alcoholic beverages are unallowable.

4. *Alumni/ae activities.*

Costs incurred for, or in support of, alumni/ae activities and similar services are unallowable.

5. *Audit costs and related services.*

- a. The costs of audits required by, and performed in accordance with, the Single Audit Act, as implemented by Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations" are allowable. Also see 31 USC 7505(b) and section _____.230 ("Audit Costs") of Circular A-133.
- b. Other audit costs are allowable if included in an indirect cost rate proposal, or if specifically approved by the awarding agency as a direct cost to an award.
- c. The cost of agreed-upon procedures engagements to monitor subrecipients who are exempted from A-133 under section _____.200(d) are allowable, subject to the conditions listed in A-133, section _____.230 (b)(2).

6. *Bad Debt.*

Bad debts, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs, are unallowable.

7. *Bonding costs.*

- a. Bonding costs arise when the Federal Government requires assurance against financial loss to itself or others by reason of the act or default of the institution. They arise also in instances where the institution requires similar assurance. Included are such bonds as bid, performance, payment, advance payment, infringement, and fidelity bonds.
- b. Costs of bonding required pursuant to the terms of the award are allowable.
- c. Costs of bonding required by the institution in the general conduct of its operations are allowable to the extent that such bonding is in accordance with sound business practice and the rates and premiums are reasonable under the circumstances.

8. *Commencement and convocation costs.*

Costs incurred for commencements and convocations are unallowable, except as provided for in Section F.9.

9. *Communication costs.*

Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like are allowable.

10. *Compensation for personal services.*

- a. General. Compensation for personal services covers all amounts paid currently or accrued by the institution for services of employees rendered during the period of performance under sponsored agreements. Such amounts include salaries, wages, and fringe benefits (see subsection f). These costs are allowable to the extent that the total compensation to individual employees conforms to the established policies of the institution, consistently applied, and provided that the charges for work performed directly on sponsored agreements and for other work allocable as F&A costs are determined and supported as provided below. Charges to sponsored agreements may include reasonable amounts for activities contributing and intimately related to work under the agreements, such as delivering special lectures about specific aspects of the ongoing activity, writing reports and articles, participating in appropriate seminars, consulting with colleagues and graduate students, and attending meetings and conferences. Incidental work (that in excess of normal for the individual), for which supplemental compensation is paid by an institution under institutional policy, need not be included in the payroll distribution systems described below, provided such work and compensation are separately identified and documented in the financial management system of the institution.

- b. Payroll distribution.

(1) General Principles.

(a) The distribution of salaries and wages, whether treated as direct or F&A costs, will be based on payrolls documented in accordance with the generally accepted practices of colleges and universities. Institutions may include in a residual category all activities that are not directly charged to sponsored agreements, and that need not be distributed to more than one activity for purposes of identifying F&A costs and the functions to which they are allocable. The components of the residual category are not required to be separately documented.

(b) The apportionment of employees' salaries and wages which are chargeable to more than one sponsored agreement or other cost objective will be accomplished by methods which will-

(1) be in accordance with Sections A.2 and C;

(2) produce an equitable distribution of charges for employee's activities; and

(3) distinguish the employees' direct activities from their F&A activities.

(c) In the use of any methods for apportioning salaries, it is recognized that, in an academic setting, teaching, research, service, and administration are often inextricably intermingled. A precise assessment of factors that contribute to costs is not always feasible, nor is it expected. Reliance, therefore, is placed on estimates in which a degree of tolerance is appropriate.

(d) There is no single best method for documenting the distribution of charges for personal services. Methods for apportioning salaries and wages, however, must meet the criteria specified in subsection b.(2). Examples of acceptable methods are contained in subsection c. Other methods that meet the criteria specified in subsection b.(2) also shall be deemed acceptable, if a mutually satisfactory alternative agreement is reached.

(2) Criteria for Acceptable Methods.

(a) The payroll distribution system will

- (i) be incorporated into the official records of the institution;
- (ii) reasonably reflect the activity for which the employee is compensated by the institution; and
- (iii) encompass both sponsored and all other activities on an integrated basis, but may include the use of subsidiary records. (Compensation for incidental work described in subsection a need not be included.)

(b) The method must recognize the principle of after the fact confirmation or determination so that costs distributed represent actual costs, unless a mutually satisfactory alternative agreement is reached. Direct cost activities and F&A cost activities may be confirmed by responsible persons with suitable means of verification that the work was performed. Confirmation by the employee is not a requirement for either direct or F&A cost activities if other responsible persons make appropriate confirmations.

(c) The payroll distribution system will allow confirmation of activity allocable to each sponsored agreement and each of the categories of activity needed to identify F&A costs and the functions to which they are allocable. The activities chargeable to F&A cost categories or the major functions of the institution for employees whose salaries must be apportioned (see subsection b.(1)b)), if not initially identified as separate categories, may be subsequently distributed by any reasonable method mutually agreed to, including, but not limited to, suitably conducted surveys, statistical sampling procedures, or the application of negotiated fixed rates.

(d) Practices vary among institutions and within institutions as to the activity constituting a full workload. Therefore, the payroll distribution system may reflect categories of activities expressed as a percentage distribution of total activities.

(e) Direct and F&A charges may be made initially to sponsored agreements on the basis of estimates made before services are performed. When such estimates are used, significant changes in the corresponding work activity must be identified and entered into the payroll distribution system. Short term (such as one or two months) fluctuation between workload categories need not be considered as long as the distribution of salaries and wages is reasonable over the longer term, such as an academic period.

(f) The system will provide for independent internal evaluations to ensure the system's effectiveness and compliance with the above standards.

(g) For systems which meet these standards, the institution will not be required to provide additional support or documentation for the effort actually performed.

c. Examples of Acceptable Methods for Payroll Distribution:

(1) Plan Confirmation: Under this method, the distribution of salaries and wages of professorial and professional staff applicable to sponsored agreements is based on budgeted, planned, or assigned work activity, updated to reflect any significant changes in work distribution. A plan confirmation system used for salaries and wages charged directly or indirectly to sponsored agreements will meet the following standards:

(a) A system of budgeted, planned, or assigned work activity will be incorporated into the official records of the institution and encompass both sponsored and all other activities on an integrated basis. The system may include the use of subsidiary records.

(b) The system will reasonably reflect only the activity for which the employee is compensated by the institution (compensation for incidental work described in subsection a need not be included). Practices vary among institutions and within institutions as to the activity constituting a full workload. Hence, the system will reflect categories of activities expressed as a percentage distribution of total activities. (See Section H for treatment of F&A costs under the simplified method for small institutions.)

(c) The system will reflect activity applicable to each sponsored agreement and to each category needed to identify F&A costs and the functions to which they are allocable. The system may treat F&A cost activities initially within a residual category and subsequently determine them by alternate methods as discussed in subsection b.(2)(c).

(d) The system will provide for modification of an individual's salary or salary distribution commensurate with a significant change in the employee's work activity. Short term (such as one or two months) fluctuation between workload categories need not be considered as long as the distribution of salaries and wages is reasonable over the longer term, such as an academic period. Whenever it is apparent that a significant change in work activity that is directly or indirectly charged to sponsored agreements will occur or has occurred, the change will be documented over the signature of a responsible official and entered into the system.

(e) At least annually a statement will be signed by the employee, principal investigator, or responsible official(s) using suitable means of verification that the work was performed, stating that salaries and wages charged to sponsored agreements as direct charges, and to residual, F&A cost or other categories are reasonable in relation to work performed.

(f) The system will provide for independent internal evaluation to ensure the system's integrity and compliance with the above standards.

(g) In the use of this method, an institution shall not be required to provide additional support or documentation for the effort actually performed.

(2) After the fact Activity Records: Under this system the distribution of salaries and wages by the institution will be supported by activity reports as prescribed below.

(a) Activity reports will reflect the distribution of activity expended by employees covered by the system (compensation for incidental work as described in subsection a need not be included).

(b) These reports will reflect an after the fact reporting of the percentage distribution of activity of employees. Charges may be made initially on the basis of estimates made before the services are performed, provided that such charges are promptly adjusted if significant differences are indicated by activity records.

(c) Reports will reasonably reflect the activities for which employees are compensated by the institution. To confirm that the distribution of activity represents a reasonable estimate of the work performed by the employee during the period, the reports will be signed by the employee, principal investigator, or responsible official(s) using suitable means of verification that the work was performed.

(d) The system will reflect activity applicable to each sponsored agreement and to each category needed to identify F&A costs and the functions to which they are allocable. The system may treat F&A cost activities initially within a residual category and subsequently determine them by alternate methods as discussed in subsection b.(2)(c).

(e) For professorial and professional staff, the reports will be prepared each academic term, but no less frequently than every six months. For other employees, unless alternate arrangements are agreed to, the reports will be prepared no less frequently than monthly and will coincide with one or more pay periods.

(f) Where the institution uses time cards or other forms of after the fact payroll documents as original documentation for payroll and payroll charges, such documents shall qualify as records for this purpose, provided that they meet the requirements in subsections (a) through (e).

(3) Multiple Confirmation Records: Under this system, the distribution of salaries and wages of professorial and professional staff will be supported by records which certify separately for direct and F&A cost activities as prescribed below.

(a) For employees covered by the system, there will be direct cost records to reflect the distribution of that activity expended which is to be allocable as direct cost to each sponsored agreement. There will also be F&A cost records to reflect the distribution of that activity to F&A costs. These records may be kept jointly or separately (but are to be certified separately, see below).

(b) Salary and wage charges may be made initially on the basis of estimates made before the services are performed, provided that such charges are promptly adjusted if significant differences occur.

(c) Institutional records will reasonably reflect only the activity for which employees are compensated by the institution (compensation for incidental work as described in subsection a need not be included).

(d) The system will reflect activity applicable to each sponsored agreement and to each category needed to identify F&A costs and the functions to which they are allocable.

(e) To confirm that distribution of activity represents a reasonable estimate of the work performed by the employee during the period, the record for each employee will include:

(1) the signature of the employee or of a person having direct knowledge of the work, confirming that the record of activities allocable as direct costs of each sponsored agreement is appropriate; and,

(2) the record of F&A costs will include the signature of responsible person(s) who use suitable means of verification that the work was performed and is consistent with the overall distribution of the employee's compensated activities. These signatures may all be on the same document.

(f) The reports will be prepared each academic term, but no less frequently than every six months.

(g) Where the institution uses time cards or other forms of after the fact payroll documents as original documentation for payroll and payroll charges, such documents shall qualify as records for this purposes, provided they meet the requirements in subsections (a) through (f).

d. Salary rates for faculty members.

(1) Salary rates for academic year. Charges for work performed on sponsored agreements by faculty members during the academic year will be based on the individual faculty member's regular compensation for the continuous period which, under the policy of the institution concerned, constitutes the basis of his salary. Charges for work performed on sponsored agreements during all or any portion of such period are allowable at the base salary rate. In no event will charges to sponsored agreements, irrespective of the basis of computation, exceed the proportionate share of the base salary for that period. This principle applies to all members of the faculty at an institution. Since intra university consulting is assumed to be undertaken as a university obligation requiring no compensation in addition to full time base salary, the principle also applies to faculty members who function as consultants or otherwise contribute to a sponsored agreement conducted by another faculty member of the same institution. However, in unusual cases where consultation is across departmental lines or involves a separate or remote operation, and the work performed by the consultant is in addition to his regular departmental load, any charges for such work representing extra compensation above the base salary are allowable provided that such consulting arrangements are specifically

provided for in the agreement or approved in writing by the sponsoring agency.

(2) Periods outside the academic year.

(a) Except as otherwise specified for teaching activity in subsection (b), charges for work performed by faculty members on sponsored agreements during the summer months or other period not included in the base salary period will be determined for each faculty member at a rate not in excess of the base salary divided by the period to which the base salary relates, and will be limited to charges made in accordance with other parts of this section. The base salary period used in computing charges for work performed during the summer months will be the number of months covered by the faculty member's official academic year appointment.

(b) Charges for teaching activities performed by faculty members on sponsored agreements during the summer months or other periods not included in the base salary period will be based on the normal policy of the institution governing compensation to faculty members for teaching assignments during such periods.

(3) Part time faculty. Charges for work performed on sponsored agreements by faculty members having only part time appointments will be determined at a rate not in excess of that regularly paid for the part time assignments. For example, an institution pays \$5000 to a faculty member for half time teaching during the academic year. He devoted one half of his remaining time to a sponsored agreement. Thus, his additional compensation, chargeable by the institution to the agreement, would be one half of \$5000, or \$2500.

- e. Noninstitutional professional activities. Unless an arrangement is specifically authorized by a Federal sponsoring agency, an institution must follow its institution wide policies and practices concerning the permissible extent of professional services that can be provided outside the institution for noninstitutional compensation. Where such institution wide policies do not exist or do not adequately define the permissible extent of consulting or other noninstitutional activities undertaken for extra outside pay, the Federal Government may require that the effort of professional staff working on sponsored agreements be allocated between (1) institutional activities, and (2) noninstitutional professional activities. If the sponsoring agency considers the extent of noninstitutional professional effort excessive, appropriate arrangements governing compensation will be negotiated on a case by case basis.
- f. Fringe benefits.

(1) Fringe benefits in the form of regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, such as for annual leave, sick leave, military leave, and the like, are allowable, provided such costs are distributed to all institutional activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted by the employees. See subsection 11.f.(4) for treatment of sabbatical leave.

(2) Fringe benefits in the form of employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation insurance, tuition or remission of tuition for individual employees are allowable, provided such benefits are granted in accordance with established educational institutional policies, and are distributed to all institutional activities on an equitable basis. Tuition benefits for family members other than the employee are unallowable for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 1998. See Section J.45.b, Scholarships and student aid costs, for treatment of tuition remission provided to students.

(3) Rules for pension plan costs are as follows:

(a) Costs of the institution's pension plan which are incurred in accordance with the established policies of the institution are allowable, provided: (i) such policies meet the test of reasonableness, (ii) the methods of cost allocation are equitable for all activities, (iii) the amount of pension cost assigned to each fiscal year is determined in accordance with subsection (b), and (iv) the cost assigned to a given fiscal year is paid or funded for all plan participants within six months after the end of that year. However, increases to normal and past service pension costs caused by a delay in funding the actuarial liability beyond 30 days after each quarter of the year to which such costs are assignable are unallowable.

(b) The amount of pension cost assigned to each fiscal year shall be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Institutions may elect to follow the "Cost Accounting Standard for Composition and Measurement of Pension Cost" (48 Part 9904 412).

(c) Premiums paid for pension plan termination insurance pursuant to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974 (Pub. L. 93 406) are allowable. Late payment charges on such premiums are unallowable. Excise taxes on accumulated funding deficiencies and prohibited transactions of pension plan fiduciaries imposed under ERISA are also unallowable.

(4) Rules for sabbatical leave are as follows:

(a) Costs of leave of absence by employees for performance of graduate work or sabbatical study, travel, or research are allowable provided the institution has a uniform policy on sabbatical leave for persons engaged in instruction and persons engaged in research. Such costs will be allocated on an equitable basis among all related activities of the institution.

(b) Where sabbatical leave is included in fringe benefits for which a cost is determined for assessment as a direct charge, the aggregate amount of such assessments applicable to all work of the institution during the base period must be reasonable in relation to the institution's actual experience under its sabbatical leave policy.

(5) Fringe benefits may be assigned to cost objectives by identifying specific benefits to specific individual employees or by allocating on the basis of institution wide salaries and wages of the employees receiving the benefits. When the allocation method is used, separate allocations must be made to selective groupings of employees, unless the institution demonstrates that costs in relationship to salaries and wages do not differ significantly for different groups of employees. Fringe benefits shall be treated in the same manner as the salaries and wages of the employees receiving the benefits. The benefits related to salaries and wages treated as direct costs shall also be treated as direct costs; the benefits related to salaries and wages treated as F&A costs shall be treated as F&A costs.

- g. Institution furnished automobiles.

That portion of the cost of institution furnished automobiles that relates to personal use by employees (including transportation to and from work) is unallowable regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.

h. Severance pay.

(1) Severance pay is compensation in addition to regular salary and wages which is paid by an institution to employees whose services are being terminated. Costs of severance pay are allowable only to the extent that such payments are required by law, by employer-employee agreement, by established policy that constitutes in effect an implied agreement on the institution's part, or by circumstances of the particular employment.

(2) Severance payments that are due to normal recurring turnover and which otherwise meet the conditions of subsection (1) may be allowed provided the actual costs of such severance payments are regarded as expenses applicable to the current fiscal year and are equitably distributed among the institution's activities during that period.

(3) Severance payments that are due to abnormal or mass terminations are of such conjectural nature that allowability must be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, the Federal Government recognizes its obligation to participate, to the extent of its fair share, in any specific payment.

(4) Costs incurred in excess of the institution's normal severance pay policy applicable to all persons employed by the institution upon termination of employment are unallowable.

11. *Contingency provisions.*

Contributions to a contingency reserve or any similar provision made for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to time, intensity, or with an assurance of their happening, are unallowable, except as noted in the cost principles in this circular regarding self-insurance, pensions, severance and post-retirement health costs.

12. *Deans of faculty and graduate schools.*

The salaries and expenses of deans of faculty and graduate schools, or their equivalents, and their staffs, are allowable.

13. *Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringement.*

a. Definitions.

"Conviction," as used herein, means a judgment or conviction of a criminal offense by any court of competent jurisdiction, whether entered upon verdict or a plea, including a conviction due to a plea of nolo contendere.

"Costs," include, but are not limited to, administrative and clerical expenses; the cost of legal services, whether performed by in house or private counsel; the costs of the services of accountants, consultants, or others retained by the institution to assist it; costs of employees, officers and trustees, and any similar costs incurred before, during, and after commencement of a judicial or administrative proceeding that bears a direct relationship to the proceedings.

"Fraud," as used herein, means –

(1) acts of fraud or corruption or attempts to defraud the Federal Government or to corrupt its agents;

(2) acts that constitute a cause for debarment or suspension (as specified in agency regulations), and (3) acts which violate the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C., sections 3729 3731, or the Anti kickback Act, 41 U.S.C., sections 51 and 54.

"Penalty," does not include restitution, reimbursement, or compensatory damages.

"Proceeding," includes an investigation.

b. (1) Except as otherwise described herein, costs incurred in connection with any criminal, civil or administrative proceeding (including filing of a false certification) commenced by the Federal Government, or a State, local or foreign government, are not allowable if the proceeding

(a) relates to a violation of, or failure to comply with, a Federal, State, local or foreign statute or regulation, by the institution (including its agents and employees); and

(b) results in any of the following dispositions:

(i) In a criminal proceeding, a conviction.

(ii) In a civil or administrative proceeding involving an allegation of fraud or similar misconduct, a determination of institutional liability.

(iii) In the case of any civil or administrative proceeding, the imposition of a monetary penalty.

(iv) A final decision by an appropriate Federal official to debar or suspend the institution, to rescind or void an award, or to terminate an award for default by reason of a violation or failure to comply with a law or regulation.

(v) A disposition by consent or compromise, if the action could have resulted in any of the dispositions described in subsections (i) through (iv).

(2) If more than one proceeding involves the same alleged misconduct, the costs of all such proceedings shall be unallowable if any one of them results in one of the dispositions shown in subsection b.

c. If a proceeding referred to in subsection b. is commenced by the Federal Government and is resolved by consent or compromise pursuant to an agreement entered into by the institution and the Federal Government, then the costs incurred by the institution in connection with such proceedings that are otherwise not allowable under subsection b. may be allowed to the extent specifically provided in such agreement.

- d. If a proceeding referred to in subsection b. is commenced by a State, local or foreign government, the authorized Federal official may allow the costs incurred by the institution for such proceedings, if such authorized official determines that the costs were incurred as a result of –
 - (1) a specific term or condition of a federally sponsored agreement; or
 - (2) specific written direction of an authorized official of the sponsoring agency.
- e. Costs incurred in connection with proceedings described in subsection b, but which are not made unallowable by that subsection, may be allowed by the Federal Government, but only to the extent that:
 - (1) The costs are reasonable in relation to the activities required to deal with the proceeding and the underlying cause of action;
 - (2) Payment of the costs incurred, as allowable and allocable costs, is not prohibited by any other provision(s) of the sponsored agreement;
 - (3) The costs are not otherwise recovered from the Federal Government or a third party, either directly as a result of the proceeding or otherwise; and,
 - (4) The percentage of costs allowed does not exceed the percentage determined by an authorized Federal official to be appropriate considering the complexity of procurement litigation, generally accepted principles governing the award of legal fees in civil actions involving the United States as a party, and such other factors as may be appropriate. Such percentage shall not exceed 80 percent. However, if an agreement reached under subsection c has explicitly considered this 80 percent limitation and permitted a higher percentage, then the full amount of costs resulting from that agreement shall be allowable.
- f. Costs incurred by the institution in connection with the defense of suits brought by its employees or ex employees under section 2 of the Major Fraud Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100 700), including the cost of all relief necessary to make such employee whole, where the institution was found liable or settled, are unallowable.
- g. Costs of legal, accounting, and consultant services, and related costs, incurred in connection with defense against Federal Government claims or appeals, or the prosecution of claims or appeals against the Federal Government, are unallowable.
- h. Costs of legal, accounting, and consultant services, and related costs, incurred in connection with patent infringement litigation, are unallowable unless otherwise provided for in the sponsored agreements.
- i. Costs, which may be unallowable under this section, including directly associated costs, shall be segregated and accounted for by the institution separately. During the pendency of any proceeding covered by subsections b and f, the Federal Government shall generally withhold payment of such costs. However, if in the best interests of the Federal Government, the Federal Government may provide for conditional payment upon provision of adequate security, or other adequate assurance, and agreement by the institution to repay all unallowable costs, plus interest, if the costs are subsequently determined to be unallowable.

14. *Depreciation and use allowances.*

- a. Institutions may be compensated for the use of their buildings, capital improvements, and equipment, provided that they are used, needed in the institutions' activities, and properly allocable to sponsored agreements. Such compensation shall be made by computing either depreciation or use allowance. Use allowances are the means of providing such compensation when depreciation or other equivalent costs are not computed. The allocation for depreciation or use allowance shall be made in accordance with Section F.2. Depreciation and use allowances are computed applying the following rules:
 - (1) the cost of land;
 - (2) any portion of the cost of buildings and equipment borne by or donated by the Federal Government, irrespective of where title was originally vested or where it is presently located; and
 - (3) any portion of the cost of buildings and equipment contributed by or for the institution where law or agreement prohibits recovery.
- b. The computation of depreciation or use allowances shall be based on the acquisition cost of the assets involved. The acquisition cost of an asset donated to the institution by a third party shall be its fair market value at the time of the donation.
- c. For this purpose, the acquisition cost will exclude:
 - (1) the cost of land;
 - (2) any portion of the cost of buildings and equipment borne by or donated by the Federal Government, irrespective of where title was originally vested or where it is presently located; and
 - (3) any portion of the cost of buildings and equipment contributed by or for the institution where law or agreement prohibits recovery.
- d. In the use of the depreciation method, the following shall be observed:
 - (1) The period of useful service (useful life) established in each case for usable capital assets must take into consideration such factors as type of construction, nature of the equipment, technological developments in the particular area, and the renewal and replacement policies followed for the individual items or classes of assets involved.
 - (2) The depreciation method used to charge the cost of an asset (or group of assets) to accounting periods shall reflect the pattern of consumption of the asset during its useful life.

In the absence of clear evidence indicating that the expected consumption of the asset will be significantly greater in the early portions than in the later portions of its useful life, the straight-line method shall be presumed to be the appropriate method.

Depreciation methods once used shall not be changed unless approved in advance by the cognizant Federal agency. The depreciation methods used to calculate the depreciation amounts for F&A rate purposes shall be the same methods used by the institution for its financial statements. This requirement does not apply to those institutions (e.g., public institutions of higher education) which are not required to record depreciation by applicable generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

(3) Where the depreciation method is introduced to replace the use allowance method, depreciation shall be computed as if the asset had been depreciated over its entire life (i.e., from the date the asset was acquired and ready for use to the date of disposal or withdrawal from service). The aggregate amount of use allowances and depreciation attributable to an asset (including imputed depreciation applicable to periods prior to the conversion to the use allowance method as well as depreciation after the conversion) may be less than, and in no case, greater than the total acquisition cost of the asset.

(4) The entire building, including the shell and all components, may be treated as a single asset and depreciated over a single useful life. A building may also be divided into multiple components. Each component item may then be depreciated over its estimated useful life. The building components shall be grouped into three general components of a building: building shell (including construction and design costs), building services systems (e.g., elevators, HVAC, plumbing system and heating and air-conditioning system) and fixed equipment (e.g., sterilizers, casework, fume hoods, cold rooms and glassware/washers). In exceptional cases, a Federal cognizant agency may authorize an institution to use more than these three groupings. When an institution elects to depreciate its buildings by its components, the same depreciation methods must be used for F&A purposes and financial statement purposes, as described in subsection d.2.

(5) Where the depreciation method is used for a particular class of assets, no depreciation may be allowed on any such assets that have outlived their depreciable lives. (See also subsection e.(3))

e. Under the use allowance method, the following shall be observed:

(1) The use allowance for buildings and improvements (including improvements such as paved parking areas, fences, and sidewalks) shall be computed at an annual rate not exceeding two percent of acquisition cost.

The use allowance for equipment shall be computed at an annual rate not exceeding six and two-thirds percent of acquisition cost. Use allowance recovery is limited to the acquisition cost of the assets. For donated assets, use allowance recovery is limited to the fair market value of the assets at the time of donation.

(2) In contrast to the depreciation method, the entire building must be treated as a single asset without separating its "shell" from other building components under the use allowance method. The entire building must be treated as a single asset, and the two-percent use allowance limitation must be applied to all parts of the building.

The two-percent limitation, however, need not be applied to equipment or other assets that are merely attached or fastened to the building but not permanently fixed and are used as furnishings, decorations or for specialized purposes (e.g., dentist chairs and dental treatment units, counters, laboratory benches bolted to the floor, dishwashers, modular furniture, and carpeting). Such equipment and assets will be considered as not being permanently fixed to the building if they can be removed without the need for costly or extensive alterations or repairs to the building to make the space usable for other purposes. Equipment and assets that meet these criteria will be subject to the 6 2/3 percent equipment use allowance.

(3) A reasonable use allowance may be negotiated for any assets that are considered to be fully depreciated, after taking into consideration the amount of depreciation previously charged to the Federal Government, the estimated useful life remaining at the time of negotiation, the effect of any increased maintenance charges, decreased efficiency due to age, and any other factors pertinent to the utilization of the asset for the purpose contemplated.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection e.(3), once an institution converts from one cost recovery methodology to another, acquisition costs not recovered may not be used in the calculation of the use allowance in subsection e.(3).

f. Except as otherwise provided in subsections b. through e., a combination of the depreciation and use allowance methods may not be used, in like circumstances, for a single class of assets (e.g., buildings, office equipment, and computer equipment).

g. Charges for use allowances or depreciation must be supported by adequate property records, and physical inventories must be taken at least once every two years to ensure that the assets exist and are usable, used, and needed. Statistical sampling techniques may be used in taking these inventories. In addition, when the depreciation method is used, adequate depreciation records showing the amount of depreciation taken each period must also be maintained.

h. This section applies to the largest college and university recipients of Federal research and development funds as displayed in Exhibit A, List of Colleges and Universities Subject to Section J.14.h of Circular A-21.

(1) Institutions shall expend currently, or reserve for expenditure within the next five years, the portion of F&A cost payments made for depreciation or use allowances under sponsored research agreements, consistent with Section F.2, to acquire or improve research facilities. This provision applies only to Federal agreements, which reimburse F&A costs at a full negotiated rate. These funds may only be used for (a) liquidation of the principal of debts incurred to acquire assets that are used directly for organized research activities, or (b) payments to acquire, repair, renovate, or improve buildings or equipment directly used for organized research. For buildings or equipment not exclusively used for organized research activity, only appropriately proportionate amounts will be considered to have been expended for research facilities.

(2) An assurance that an amount equal to the Federal reimbursements has been appropriately expended or reserved to acquire or improve research facilities shall be submitted as part of each F&A cost proposal submitted to the cognizant Federal agency which is based on costs incurred on or after October 1, 1991. This assurance will cover the cumulative amounts of funds received and expended during the period beginning after the period covered by the previous assurance and ending with the fiscal year on which the proposal is based. The assurance shall also cover any amounts reserved from a prior period in which the funds received exceeded the amounts expended.

15. Donations and contributions.

a. Contributions or Donations rendered.

Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the institution, regardless of the recipient, are unallowable.

b. Donated services received.

Donated or volunteer services may be furnished to an institution by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor. The value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or F&A cost. However, the value of donated services may be used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements in accordance with Circular A-110.

c. Donated property.

The value of donated property is not reimbursable either as a direct or F&A cost, except that depreciation or use allowances on donated assets are permitted in accordance with Section J.14. The value of donated property may be used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements, in accordance with Circular A-110.

16. *Employee morale, health, and welfare costs and costs.*

- a. The costs of employee information publications, health or first-aid clinics and/or infirmaries, recreational activities, employee counseling services, and any other expenses incurred in accordance with the institution's established practice or custom for the improvement of working conditions, employer-employee relations, employee morale, and employee performance are allowable.
- b. Such costs will be equitably apportioned to all activities of the institution. Income generated from any of these activities will be credited to the cost thereof unless such income has been irrevocably set over to employee welfare organizations.
- c. Losses resulting from operating food services are allowable only if the institution's objective is to operate such services on a break-even basis. Losses sustained because of operating objectives other than the above are allowable only (a) where the institution can demonstrate unusual circumstances, and (b) with the approval of the cognizant Federal agency.

17. *Entertainment costs.*

Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable.

18. *Equipment and other capital expenditures.*

a. For purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Capital Expenditures" means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, and land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in transit insurance, freight, and installation may be included in, or excluded from the acquisition cost in accordance with the institution's regular accounting practices.

(2) "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the institution for financial statement purposes, or \$5000.

(3) "Special purpose equipment" means equipment which is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment include microscopes, x-ray machines, surgical instruments, and spectrometers.

(4) "General purpose equipment" means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.

b. The following rules of allowability shall apply to equipment and other capital expenditures:

(1) Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct charges, except where approved in advance by the awarding agency.

(2) Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of the awarding agency.

(3) Capital expenditures for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life are unallowable as a direct cost except with the prior approval of the awarding agency.

(4) When approved as a direct charge pursuant to subsections J.18.b(1) through (3) above, capital expenditures will be charged in the period in which the expenditure is incurred, or as otherwise determined appropriate by and negotiated with the awarding agency.

(5) Equipment and other capital expenditures are unallowable as indirect costs. However, see section J.14, Depreciation and use allowances, for rules on the allowability of use allowances or depreciation on buildings, capital improvements, and equipment. Also, see section J.43, Rental costs of buildings and equipment, for rules on the allowability of rental costs for land, buildings, and equipment.

(6) The unamortized portion of any equipment written off as a result of a change in capitalization levels may be recovered by continuing to claim the otherwise allowable use allowances or depreciation on the equipment, or by amortizing the amount to be written off over a period of years negotiated with the cognizant agency.

19. *Fines and penalties.*

Costs resulting from violations of, or failure of the institution to comply with, Federal, State, and local or foreign laws and regulations are unallowable, except when incurred as a result of compliance with specific provisions of the sponsored agreement, or instructions in writing from the authorized official of the sponsoring agency authorizing in advance such payments.

20. *Fund raising and investment costs.*

- a. Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are unallowable.
- b. Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred solely to enhance income form investments are unallowable.
- c. Costs related to the physical custody and control of monies and securities are allowable.

21. *Gain and losses on depreciable assets.*

- a. (1) Gains and losses on the sale, retirement, or other disposition of depreciable property shall be included in the year in which they occur as credits or charges to the asset cost grouping(s) in which the property was included. The amount of the gain or loss to be included as a credit or charge to the appropriate asset cost grouping(s) shall be the difference between the amount realized on the property and the undepreciated basis of the property.
(2) Gains and losses on the disposition of depreciable property shall not be recognized as a separate credit or charge under the following conditions:
 - (a) The gain or loss is processed through a depreciation account and is reflected in the depreciation allowable under Section J.14.
 - (b) The property is given in exchange as part of the purchase price of a similar item and the gain or loss is taken into account in determining the depreciation cost basis of the new item.
 - (c) A loss results from the failure to maintain permissible insurance, except as otherwise provided in Section J.25.
 - (d) Compensation for the use of the property was provided through use allowances in lieu of depreciation.
- b. Gains or losses of any nature arising from the sale or exchange of property other than the property covered in subsection a shall be excluded in computing sponsored agreement costs.
- c. When assets acquired with Federal funds, in part or wholly, are disposed of, the distribution of the proceeds shall be made in accordance with Circular A 110, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non Profit Organizations."

22. *Goods or services for personal use.*

Costs of goods or services for personal use of the institution's employees are unallowable regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.

23. *Housing and personal living expenses.*

- a. Costs of housing (e.g., depreciation, maintenance, utilities, furnishings, rent, etc.), housing allowances and personal living expenses for/of the institution's officers are unallowable regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
- b. The term "officers" includes current and past officers.

24. *Idle facilities and idle capacity.*

- a. As used in this section the following terms have the meanings set forth below:
 - (1) "Facilities" means land and buildings or any portion thereof, equipment individually or collectively, or any other tangible capital asset, wherever located, and whether owned or leased by the institution.
 - (2) "Idle facilities" means completely unused facilities that are excess to the institution's current needs.
 - (3) "Idle capacity" means the unused capacity of partially used facilities. It is the difference between:
 - (a) that which a facility could achieve under 100 percent operating time on a one-shift basis less operating interruptions resulting from time lost for repairs, setups, unsatisfactory materials, and other normal delays; and
 - (b) the extent to which the facility was actually used to meet demands during the accounting period. A multi-shift basis should be used if it can be shown that this amount of usage would normally be expected for the type of facility involved.
 - (4) "Cost of idle facilities or idle capacity" means costs such as maintenance, repair, housing, rent, and other related costs, e.g., insurance, interest, property taxes and depreciation or use allowances.
- b. The costs of idle facilities are unallowable except to the extent that:

(1) They are necessary to meet fluctuations in workload; or

(2) Although not necessary to meet fluctuations in workload, they were necessary when acquired and are now idle because of changes in program requirements, efforts to achieve more economical operations, reorganization, termination, or other causes which could not have been reasonably foreseen. Under the exception stated in this subsection, costs of idle facilities are allowable for a reasonable period of time, ordinarily not to exceed one year, depending on the initiative taken to use, lease, or dispose of such facilities.

- c. The costs of idle capacity are normal costs of doing business and are a factor in the normal fluctuations of usage or indirect cost rates from period to period. Such costs are allowable, provided that the capacity is reasonably anticipated to be necessary or was originally reasonable and is not subject to reduction or elimination by use on other sponsored agreements, subletting, renting, or sale, in accordance with sound business, economic, or security practices. Widespread idle capacity throughout an entire facility or among a group of assets having substantially the same function may be considered idle facilities.

25. *Insurance and indemnification.*

- a. Costs of insurance required or approved, and maintained, pursuant to the sponsored agreement, are allowable.
- b. Costs of other insurance maintained by the institution in connection with the general conduct of its activities, are allowable subject to the following limitations:
- (1) types and extent and cost of coverage must be in accordance with sound institutional practice;
 - (2) costs of insurance or of any contributions to any reserve covering the risk of loss of or damage to federally owned property are unallowable, except to the extent that the Federal Government has specifically required or approved such costs; and
 - (3) costs of insurance on the lives of officers or trustees are unallowable except where such insurance is part of an employee plan which is not unduly restricted.
- c. Contributions to a reserve for a self insurance program are allowable, to the extent that the types of coverage, extent of coverage, and the rates and premiums would have been allowed had insurance been purchased to cover the risks.
- d. Actual losses which could have been covered by permissible insurance (whether through purchased insurance or self insurance) are unallowable, unless expressly provided for in the sponsored agreement, except that costs incurred because of losses not covered under existing deductible clauses for insurance coverage provided in keeping with sound management practice as well as minor losses not covered by insurance, such as spoilage, breakage and disappearance of small hand tools, which occur in the ordinary course of operations, are allowable.
- e. Indemnification includes securing the institution against liabilities to third persons and other losses not compensated by insurance or otherwise. The Federal Government is obligated to indemnify the institution only to the extent expressly provided for in the sponsored agreement, except as provided in subsection d.
- f. Insurance against defects. Costs of insurance with respect to any costs incurred to correct defects in the institution's materials or workmanship are unallowable.
- g. Medical liability (malpractice) insurance is an allowable cost of research programs only to the extent that the research involves human subjects. Medical liability insurance costs shall be treated as a direct cost and shall be assigned to individual projects based on the manner in which the insurer allocates the risk to the population covered by the insurance.

26. *Interest.*

- a. Costs incurred for interest on borrowed capital, temporary use of endowment funds, or the use of the institution's own funds, however represented, are unallowable. However, interest on debt incurred after July 1, 1982 to acquire buildings, major reconstruction and remodeling, or the acquisition or fabrication of capital equipment costing \$10,000 or more, is allowable.
- b. Interest on debt incurred after May 8, 1996 to acquire or replace capital assets (including construction, renovations, alterations, equipment, land, and capital assets acquired through capital leases) acquired after that date and used in support of sponsored agreements is allowable, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) For facilities costing over \$500,000, the institution shall prepare, prior to acquisition or replacement of the facility, a lease-purchase analysis in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 30 through 37 of OMB Circular A-110, which shows that a financed purchase, including a capital lease is less costly to the institution than other operating lease alternatives, on a net present value basis. Discount rates used shall be equal to the institution's anticipated interest rates and shall be no higher than the fair market rate available to the institution from an unrelated ("arm's length") third-party. The lease-purchase analysis shall include a comparison of the net present value of the projected total cost comparisons of both alternatives over the period the asset is expected to be used by the institution. The cost comparisons associated with purchasing the facility shall include the estimated purchase price, anticipated operating and maintenance costs (including property taxes, if applicable) not included in the debt financing, less any estimated asset salvage value at the end of the defined period. The cost comparison for a capital lease shall include the estimated total lease payments, any estimated bargain purchase option, operating and maintenance costs, and taxes not included in the capital leasing arrangement, less any estimated credits due under the lease at the end of the defined period. Projected operating lease costs shall be based on the anticipated cost of leasing comparable facilities at fair market rates under rental agreements that would be renewed or reestablished over the period defined above, and any expected maintenance costs and allowable property taxes to be borne by the institution directly or as part of the lease arrangement.
 - (2) The actual interest cost claimed is predicated upon interest rates that are no higher than the fair market rate available to the institution from an unrelated (arm's length) third party.
 - (3) Investment earnings, including interest income on bond or loan principal, pending payment of the construction or acquisition costs, are used to offset

allowable interest cost. Arbitrage earnings reportable to the Internal Revenue Service are not required to be offset against allowable interest costs.

(4) Reimbursements are limited to the least costly alternative based on the total cost analysis required under subsection (1). For example, if an operating lease is determined to be less costly than purchasing through debt financing, then reimbursement is limited to the amount determined if leasing had been used. In all cases where a lease-purchase analysis is required to be performed, Federal reimbursement shall be based upon the least expensive alternative.

(5) For debt arrangements over \$1 million, unless the institution makes an initial equity contribution to the asset purchase of 25 percent or more, the institution shall reduce claims for interest expense by an amount equal to imputed interest earnings on excess cash flow, which is to be calculated as follows. Annually, non-Federal entities shall prepare a cumulative (from the inception of the project) report of monthly cash flows that includes inflows and outflows, regardless of the funding source. Inflows consist of depreciation expense, amortization of capitalized construction interest, and annual interest cost. For cash flow calculations, the annual inflow figures shall be divided by the number of months in the year (i.e., usually 12) that the building is in service for monthly amounts. Outflows consist of initial equity contributions, debt principal payments (less the pro rata share attributable to the unallowable costs of land) and interest payments. Where cumulative inflows exceed cumulative outflows, interest shall be calculated on the excess inflows for that period and be treated as a reduction to allowable interest cost. The rate of interest to be used to compute earnings on excess cash flows shall be the three-month Treasury bill closing rate as of the last business day of that month.

(6) Substantial relocation of federally sponsored activities from a facility financed by indebtedness, the cost of which was funded in whole or part through Federal reimbursements, to another facility prior to the expiration of a period of 20 years requires notice to the cognizant agency. The extent of the relocation, the amount of the Federal participation in the financing, and the depreciation and interest charged to date may require negotiation and/or downward adjustments of replacement space charged to Federal programs in the future.

(7) The allowable costs to acquire facilities and equipment are limited to a fair market value available to the institution from an unrelated (arm's length) third party.

c. Institutions are also subject to the following conditions:

(1) Interest on debt incurred to finance or refinance assets re-acquired after the applicable effective dates stipulated above is unallowable.

(2) Interest attributable to fully depreciated assets is unallowable.

d. The following definitions are to be used for purposes of this section:

(1) "Re-acquired" assets means assets held by the institution prior to the applicable effective dates stipulated above that have again come to be held by the institution, whether through repurchase or refinancing. It does not include assets acquired to replace older assets.

(2) "Initial equity contribution" means the amount or value of contributions made by non-Federal entities for the acquisition of the asset prior to occupancy of facilities.

(3) "Asset costs" means the capitalizable costs of an asset, including construction costs, acquisition costs, and other such costs capitalized in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

27. Labor relations costs.

Costs incurred in maintaining satisfactory relations between the institution and its employees, including costs of labor management committees, employees' publications, and other related activities, are allowable.

28. Lobbying.

Reference is made to the common rule published at 55 FR 6736 (2/26/90), and OMB's governmentwide guidance, amendments to OMB's governmentwide guidance, and OMB's clarification notices published at 54 FR 52306 (12/20/89), 61 FR 1412 (1/19/96), 55 FR 24540 (6/15/90) and 57 FR 1772 (1/15/92), respectively. In addition, the following restrictions shall apply:

a. Notwithstanding other provisions of this Circular, costs associated with the following activities are unallowable:

(1) Attempts to influence the outcomes of any Federal, State, or local election, referendum, initiative, or similar procedure, through in kind or cash contributions, endorsements, publicity, or similar activity;

(2) Establishing, administering, contributing to, or paying the expenses of a political party, campaign, political action committee, or other organization established for the purpose of influencing the outcomes of elections;

(3) Any attempt to influence –

(i) the introduction of Federal or State legislation;

(ii) the enactment or modification of any pending Federal or State legislation through communication with any member or employee of the Congress or State legislature, including efforts to influence State or local officials to engage in similar lobbying activity; or

(iii) any government official or employee in connection with a decision to sign or veto enrolled legislation;

(4) Any attempt to influence –

(i) the introduction of Federal or State legislation; or

(ii) the enactment or modification of any pending Federal or State legislation by preparing, distributing, or using publicity or propaganda, or by urging members of the general public, or any segment thereof, to contribute to or participate in any mass demonstration, march, rally, fund raising drive, lobbying campaign or letter writing or telephone campaign; or

(5) Legislative liaison activities, including attendance at legislative sessions or committee hearings, gathering information regarding legislation, and analyzing the effect of legislation, when such activities are carried on in support of or in knowing preparation for an effort to engage in unallowable lobbying.

b. The following activities are excepted from the coverage of subsection a:

(1) Technical and factual presentations on topics directly related to the performance of a grant, contract, or other agreement (through hearing testimony, statements, or letters to the Congress or a State legislature, or subdivision, member, or cognizant staff member thereof), in response to a documented request (including a Congressional Record notice requesting testimony or statements for the record at a regularly scheduled hearing) made by the recipient member, legislative body or subdivision, or a cognizant staff member thereof, provided such information is readily obtainable and can be readily put in deliverable form, and further provided that costs under this section for travel, lodging or meals are unallowable unless incurred to offer testimony at a regularly scheduled Congressional hearing pursuant to a written request for such presentation made by the Chairman or Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee conducting such hearings;

(2) Any lobbying made unallowable by subsection a.(3) to influence State legislation in order to directly reduce the cost, or to avoid material impairment of the institution's authority to perform the grant, contract, or other agreement; or

(3) Any activity specifically authorized by statute to be undertaken with funds from the grant, contract, or other agreement.

c. When an institution seeks reimbursement for F&A costs, total lobbying costs shall be separately identified in the F&A cost rate proposal, and thereafter treated as other unallowable activity costs in accordance with the procedures of Section B.1.d.

d. Institutions shall submit as part of their annual F&A cost rate proposal a certification that the requirements and standards of this section have been complied with.

e. Institutions shall maintain adequate records to demonstrate that the determination of costs as being allowable or unallowable pursuant to this section complies with the requirements of this Circular.

f. Time logs, calendars, or similar records shall not be required to be created for purposes of complying with this section during any particular calendar month when:

(1) the employee engages in lobbying (as defined in subsections a and b) 25 percent or less of the employee's compensated hours of employment during that calendar month; and

(2) within the preceding five year period, the institution has not materially misstated allowable or unallowable costs of any nature, including legislative lobbying costs. When conditions (1) and (2) are met, institutions are not required to establish records to support the allowability of claimed costs in addition to records already required or maintained. Also, when conditions (1) and (2) are met, the absence of time logs, calendars, or similar records will not serve as a basis for disallowing costs by contesting estimates of lobbying time spent by employees during a calendar month.

g. Agencies shall establish procedures for resolving in advance, in consultation with OMB, any significant questions or disagreements concerning the interpretation or application of this section. Any such advance resolutions shall be binding in any subsequent settlements, audits, or investigations with respect to that grant or contract for purposes of interpretation of this Circular, provided, however, that this shall not be construed to prevent a contractor or grantee from contesting the lawfulness of such a determination.

h. Executive lobbying costs.

Costs incurred in attempting to improperly influence either directly or indirectly, an employee or officer of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to give consideration or to act regarding a sponsored agreement or a regulatory matter are unallowable. Improper influence means any influence that induces or tends to induce a Federal employee or officer to give consideration or to act regarding a federally sponsored agreement or regulatory matter on any basis other than the merits of the matter.

29. *Losses on other sponsored agreements or contracts.*

Any excess of costs over income under any other sponsored agreement or contract of any nature is unallowable. This includes, but is not limited to, the institution's contributed portion by reason of cost sharing agreements or any under recoveries through negotiation of flat amounts for F&A costs.

30. *Maintenance and repair costs.*

Costs incurred for necessary maintenance, repair, or upkeep of buildings and equipment (including Federal property unless otherwise provided for) which neither add to the permanent value of the property nor appreciably prolong its intended life, but keep it in an efficient operating condition, are allowable. Costs incurred for improvements which add to the permanent value of the buildings and equipment or appreciably prolong their intended life shall be treated as capital expenditures (see section 18.a(1)).

31. *Material and supplies costs.*

- a. Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a sponsored agreement are allowable.
- b. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs.
- c. Only materials and supplies actually used for the performance of a sponsored agreement may be charged as direct costs.
- d. Where federally donated or furnished materials are used in performing the sponsored agreement, such materials will be used without charge.

32. *Meetings and Conferences.*

Costs of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information, are allowable. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. But see section J.17, Entertainment costs.

33. *Memberships, subscriptions and professional activity costs.*

- a. Costs of the institution's membership in business, technical, and professional organizations are allowable.
- b. Costs of the institution's subscriptions to business, professional, and technical periodicals are allowable.
- c. Costs of membership in any civic or community organization are unallowable.
- d. Costs of membership in any country club or social or dining club or organization are unallowable.

34. *Patent costs.*

- a. The following costs relating to patent and copyright matters are allowable:
 - (1) cost of preparing disclosures, reports, and other documents required by the sponsored agreement and of searching the art to the extent necessary to make such disclosures;
 - (2) cost of preparing documents and any other patent costs in connection with the filing and prosecution of a United States patent application where title or royalty-free license is required by the Federal Government to be conveyed to the Federal Government; and
 - (3) general counseling services relating to patent and copyright matters, such as advice on patent and copyright laws, regulations, clauses, and employee agreements (but see sections J.37, Professional service costs, and J.44, Royalties and other costs for use of patents).
- b. The following costs related to patent and copyright matter are unallowable:
 - (i) Cost of preparing disclosures, reports, and other documents and of searching the art to the extent necessary to make disclosures not required by the award
 - (ii) Costs in connection with filing and prosecuting any foreign patent application, or any United States patent application, where the sponsored agreement award does not require conveying title or a royalty-free license to the Federal Government, (but see section J.44, Royalties and other costs for use of patents).

35. *Plant and homeland security costs.*

Necessary and reasonable expenses incurred for routine and homeland security to protect facilities, personnel, and work products are allowable. Such costs include, but are not limited to, wages and uniforms of personnel engaged in security activities; equipment; barriers; contractual security services; consultants; etc. Capital expenditures for homeland and plant security purposes are subject to section J.18, Equipment and other capital expenditures, of this Circular.

36. *Preagreement costs.*

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the sponsored agreement, whether or not they would have been allowable thereunder if incurred after such date, are unallowable unless approved by the sponsoring agency.

37. *Professional service costs.*

- a. Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the institution, are allowable, subject to subparagraphs b and c when reasonable in relation to the services rendered and when not contingent upon recovery of the costs from the Federal Government. In addition, legal and related services are limited under section J.13.
- b. In determining the allowability of costs in a particular case, no single factor or any special combination of factors is necessarily determinative. However, the following factors are relevant:

- (1) The nature and scope of the service rendered in relation to the service required.
- (2) The necessity of contracting for the service, considering the institution's capability in the particular area.
- (3) The past pattern of such costs, particularly in the years prior to sponsored agreements.
- (4) The impact on the institution's business (i.e., what new problems have arisen).
- (5) Whether the proportion of Federal work to the institution's total business is such as to influence the institution in favor of incurring the cost, particularly where the services rendered are not of a continuing nature and have little relationship to work under Federal grants and contracts.
- (6) Whether the service can be performed more economically by direct employment rather than contracting.
- (7) The qualifications of the individual or concern rendering the service and the customary fees charged, especially on non-sponsored agreements.
- (8) Adequacy of the contractual agreement for the service (e.g., description of the service, estimate of time required, rate of compensation, and termination provisions).

c. In addition to the factors in subparagraph b, retainer fees to be allowable must be supported by evidence of bona fide services available or rendered.

38. *Proposal costs.*

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids or proposals on potential federally and non federally funded sponsored agreements or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the institution's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as F&A costs and allocated currently to all activities of the institution, and no proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. However, the institution's established practices may be to treat proposal costs by some other recognized method. Regardless of the method used, the results obtained may be accepted only if found to be reasonable and equitable.

39. *Publication and printing costs.*

- a. Publication costs include the costs of printing (including the processes of composition, plate-making, press work, binding, and the end products produced by such processes), distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling. Publication costs also include page charges in professional publications.
- b. If these costs are not identifiable with a particular cost objective, they should be allocated as indirect costs to all benefiting activities of the institution.
- c. Page charges for professional journal publications are allowable as a necessary part of research costs where:
 - (1) The research papers report work supported by the Federal Government: and
 - (2) The charges are levied impartially on all research papers published by the journal, whether or not by federally sponsored authors.

40. *Rearrangement and alteration costs.*

Costs incurred for ordinary or normal rearrangement and alteration of facilities are allowable. Special arrangement and alteration costs incurred specifically for the project are allowable with the prior approval of the sponsoring agency.

41. *Reconversion costs.*

Costs incurred in the restoration or rehabilitation of the institution's facilities to approximately the same condition existing immediately prior to commencement of a sponsored agreement, fair wear and tear excepted, are allowable.

42. *Recruiting costs.*

- a. Subject to subsections b, c, and d, and provided that the size of the staff recruited and maintained is in keeping with workload requirements, costs of "help wanted" advertising, operating costs of an employment office necessary to secure and maintain an adequate staff, costs of operating an aptitude and educational testing program, travel costs of employees while engaged in recruiting personnel, travel costs of applicants for interviews for prospective employment, and relocation costs incurred incident to recruitment of new employees, are allowable to the extent that such costs are incurred pursuant to a well managed recruitment program. Where the institution uses employment agencies, costs not in excess of standard commercial rates for such services are allowable.
- b. In publications, costs of help wanted advertising that includes color, includes advertising material for other than recruitment purposes, or is excessive in size (taking into consideration recruitment purposes for which intended and normal institutional practices in this respect), are unallowable.
- c. Costs of help wanted advertising, special emoluments, fringe benefits, and salary allowances incurred to attract professional personnel from other institutions that do not meet the test of reasonableness or do not conform with the established practices of the institution, are unallowable.
- d. Where relocation costs incurred incident to recruitment of a new employee have been allowed either as an allocable direct or F&A cost, and the newly hired employee resigns for reasons within his control within 12 months after hire, the institution will be required to refund or credit such relocation costs to the Federal Government.

43. *Rental costs of buildings and equipment.*

- a. Subject to the limitations described in subsections b. through d. of this section, rental costs are allowable to the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and, the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed and other options are available.
- b. Rental costs under "sale and lease back" arrangements are allowable only up to the amount that would be allowed had the institution continued to own the property. This amount would include expenses such as depreciation or use allowance, maintenance, taxes, and insurance.
- c. Rental costs under "less-than-arms-length" leases are allowable only up to the amount (as explained in subsection b) that would be allowed had title to the property vested in the institution. For this purpose, a less-than-arms-length lease is one under which one party to the lease agreement is able to control or substantially influence the actions of the other. Such leases include, but are not limited to those between --
 - (1) divisions of a institution;
 - (2) non-Federal entities under common control through common officers, directors, or members; and
 - (3) a institution and a director, trustee, officer, or key employee of the institution or his immediate family, either directly or through corporations, trusts, or similar arrangements in which they hold a controlling interest. For example, a institution may establish a separate corporation for the sole purpose of owning property and leasing it back to the institution.
- d. Rental costs under leases which are required to be treated as capital leases under GAAP are allowable only up to the amount (as explained in subsection b) that would be allowed had the institution purchased the property on the date the lease agreement was executed. The provisions of Financial Accounting Standards Board Statement 13, Accounting for Leases, shall be used to determine whether a lease is a capital lease. Interest costs related to capital leases are allowable to the extent they meet the criteria in section J.26. Unallowable costs include amounts paid for profit, management fees, and taxes that would not have been incurred had the institution purchased the facility.

44. *Royalties and other costs for use of patents.*

- a. Royalties on a patent or copyright or amortization of the cost of acquiring by purchase a copyright, patent, or rights thereto, necessary for the proper performance of the award are allowable unless:
 - (1) The Federal Government has a license or the right to free use of the patent or copyright.
 - (2) The patent or copyright has been adjudicated to be invalid, or has been administratively determined to be invalid.
 - (3) The patent or copyright is considered to be unenforceable.
 - (4) The patent or copyright is expired.
- b. Special care should be exercised in determining reasonableness where the royalties may have been arrived at as a result of less-than-arm's-length bargaining, e.g.:
 - (1) Royalties paid to persons, including corporations, affiliated with the institution.
 - (2) Royalties paid to unaffiliated parties, including corporations, under an agreement entered into in contemplation that a sponsored agreement award would be made.
 - (3) Royalties paid under an agreement entered into after an award is made to a institution.
- c. In any case involving a patent or copyright formerly owned by the institution, the amount of royalty allowed should not exceed the cost which would have been allowed had the institution retained title thereto.

45. *Scholarships and student aid costs.*

- a. Costs of scholarships, fellowships, and other programs of student aid are allowable only when the purpose of the sponsored agreement is to provide training to selected participants and the charge is approved by the sponsoring agency. However, tuition remission and other forms of compensation paid as, or in lieu of, wages to students performing necessary work are allowable provided that --
 - (1) The individual is conducting activities necessary to the sponsored agreement;
 - (2) Tuition remission and other support are provided in accordance with established educational institutional policy and consistently provided in a like manner to students in return for similar activities conducted in nonsponsored as well as sponsored activities; and
 - (3) During the academic period, the student is enrolled in an advanced degree program at the institution or affiliated institution and the activities of the student in relation to the Federally sponsored research project are related to the degree program;
 - (4) the tuition or other payments are reasonable compensation for the work performed and are conditioned explicitly upon the performance of necessary work; and
 - (5) it is the institution's practice to similarly compensate students in nonsponsored as well as sponsored activities.

- b. Charges for tuition remission and other forms of compensation paid to students as, or in lieu of, salaries and wages shall be subject to the reporting requirements stipulated in Section J.10, and shall be treated as direct or F&A cost in accordance with the actual work being performed. Tuition remission may be charged on an average rate basis.

46. *Selling and marketing.*

Costs of selling and marketing any products or services of the institution are unallowable (unless allowed under subsection J.1 as allowable public relations costs or under subsection J.38 as allowable proposal costs).

47. *Specialized service facilities.*

- a. The costs of services provided by highly complex or specialized facilities operated by the institution, such as computers, wind tunnels, and reactors are allowable, provided the charges for the services meet the conditions of either subsection 47.b. or 47.c. and, in addition, take into account any items of income or Federal financing that qualify as applicable credits under subsection C.5. of this Circular.
- b. The costs of such services, when material, must be charged directly to applicable awards based on actual usage of the services on the basis of a schedule of rates or established methodology that
 - (1) does not discriminate against federally supported activities of the institution, including usage by the institution for internal purposes, and
 - (2) is designed to recover only the aggregate costs of the services. The costs of each service shall consist normally of both its direct costs and its allocable share of all F&A costs. Rates shall be adjusted at least biennially, and shall take into consideration over/under applied costs of the previous period(s).
- c. Where the costs incurred for a service are not material, they may be allocated as F&A costs.
- d. Under some extraordinary circumstances, where it is in the best interest of the Federal Government and the institution to establish alternative costing arrangements, such arrangements may be worked out with the cognizant Federal agency.

48. *Student activity costs.*

Costs incurred for intramural activities, student publications, student clubs, and other student activities, are unallowable, unless specifically provided for in the sponsored agreements.

49. *Taxes.*

- a. In general, taxes which the institution is required to pay and which are paid or accrued in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles are allowable. Payments made to local governments in lieu of taxes which are commensurate with the local government services received are allowable, except for--
 - (1) taxes from which exemptions are available to the institution directly or which are available to the institution based on an exemption afforded the Federal Government, and in the latter case when the sponsoring agency makes available the necessary exemption certificates; and
 - (2) special assessments on land which represent capital improvements.
- b. Any refund of taxes, interest, or penalties, and any payment to the institution of interest thereon, attributable to taxes, interest, or penalties which were allowed as sponsored agreement costs, will be credited or paid to the Federal Government in the manner directed by the Federal Government. However, any interest actually paid or credited to an institution incident to a refund of tax, interest, and penalty will be paid or credited to the Federal Government only to the extent that such interest accrued over the period during which the institution has been reimbursed by the Federal Government for the taxes, interest, and penalties.

50. *Termination costs applicable to sponsored agreements.*

Termination of awards generally gives rise to the incurrence of costs, or the need for special treatment of costs, which would not have arisen had the sponsored agreement not been terminated. Cost principles covering these items are set forth below. They are to be used in conjunction with the other provisions of this Circular in termination situations.

- a. The cost of items reasonably usable on the institution's other work shall not be allowable unless the institution submits evidence that it would not retain such items at cost without sustaining a loss. In deciding whether such items are reasonably usable on other work of the institution, the awarding agency should consider the institution's plans and orders for current and scheduled activity.

Contemporaneous purchases of common items by the institution shall be regarded as evidence that such items are reasonably usable on the institution's other work. Any acceptance of common items as allocable to the terminated portion of the sponsored agreement shall be limited to the extent that the quantities of such items on hand, in transit, and on order are in excess of the reasonable quantitative requirements of other work.
- b. If in a particular case, despite all reasonable efforts by the institution, certain costs cannot be discontinued immediately after the effective date of termination, such costs are generally allowable within the limitations set forth in this Circular, except that any such costs continuing after termination due to the negligent or willful failure of the institution to discontinue such costs shall be unallowable.
- c. Loss of useful value of special tooling, machinery, and equipment is generally allowable if:

- (1) Such special tooling, special machinery, or equipment is not reasonably capable of use in the other work of the institution,
 - (2) The interest of the Federal Government is protected by transfer of title or by other means deemed appropriate by the awarding agency, and
 - (3) The loss of useful value for any one terminated sponsored agreement is limited to that portion of the acquisition cost which bears the same ratio to the total acquisition cost as the terminated portion of the sponsored agreement bears to the entire terminated sponsored agreement award and other sponsored agreements for which the special tooling, machinery, or equipment was acquired.
- d. Rental costs under unexpired leases are generally allowable where clearly shown to have been reasonably necessary for the performance of the terminated sponsored agreement less the residual value of such leases, if:
- (1) the amount of such rental claimed does not exceed the reasonable use value of the property leased for the period of the sponsored agreement and such further period as may be reasonable, and
 - (2) the institution makes all reasonable efforts to terminate, assign, settle, or otherwise reduce the cost of such lease. There also may be included the cost of alterations of such leased property, provided such alterations were necessary for the performance of the sponsored agreement, and of reasonable restoration required by the provisions of the lease.
- e. Settlement expenses including the following are generally allowable:
- (1) Accounting, legal, clerical, and similar costs reasonably necessary for:
 - (a) The preparation and presentation to the awarding agency of settlement claims and supporting data with respect to the terminated portion of the sponsored agreement, unless the termination is for default (see Subpart. __.61 of Circular A-110); and
 - (b) The termination and settlement of subawards.
 - (2) Reasonable costs for the storage, transportation, protection, and disposition of property provided by the Federal Government or acquired or produced for the sponsored agreement, except when institutions are reimbursed for disposals at a predetermined amount in accordance with Subparts __.32 through __.37 of Circular A-110.
 - (3) F&A costs related to salaries and wages incurred as settlement expenses in subsections b.(1) and (2). Normally, such F&A costs shall be limited to fringe benefits, occupancy cost, and immediate supervision.
- f. Claims under subawards, including the allocable portion of claims which are common to the sponsored agreement and to other work of the institution, are generally allowable.
- An appropriate share of the institution's F&A costs may be allocated to the amount of settlements with subcontractors and/or subgrantees, provided that the amount allocated is otherwise consistent with the basic guidelines contained in section E, F&A costs. The F&A costs so allocated shall exclude the same and similar costs claimed directly or indirectly as settlement expenses.

51. *Training costs.*

The cost of training provided for employee development is allowable.

52. *Transportation costs.*

Costs incurred for freight, express, cartage, postage, and other transportation services relating either to goods purchased, in process, or delivered, are allowable. When such costs can readily be identified with the items involved, they may be charged directly as transportation costs or added to the cost of such items. Where identification with the materials received cannot readily be made, inbound transportation cost may be charged to the appropriate F&A cost accounts if the institution follows a consistent, equitable procedure in this respect. Outbound freight, if reimbursable under the terms of the sponsored agreement, should be treated as a direct cost.

53. *Travel costs.*

a. *General.*

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the institution. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the institution's non-federally sponsored activities.

b. *Lodging and subsistence.*

Costs incurred by employees and officers for travel, including costs of lodging, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, shall be considered reasonable and allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the institution in its regular operations as the result of the institution's written travel policy. In the absence of an acceptable, written institution policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established under subchapter I of Chapter 57, Title 5, United States Code ("Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances"), or by the Administrator of General Services, or by the President (or his or her designee) pursuant to any provisions of such subchapter shall apply to travel under sponsored agreements (48 CFR 31.205-46(a)).

c. Commercial air travel.

(1) Airfare costs in excess of the customary standard commercial airfare (coach or equivalent), Federal Government contract airfare (where authorized and available), or the lowest commercial discount airfare are unallowable except when such accommodations would:

- (a) require circuitous routing;
- (b) require travel during unreasonable hours; (c) excessively prolong travel;
- (d) result in additional costs that would offset the transportation savings; or
- (e) offer accommodations not reasonably adequate for the traveler's medical needs. The institution must justify and document these conditions on a case-by-case basis in order for the use of first-class airfare to be allowable in such cases.

(2) Unless a pattern of avoidance is detected, the Federal Government will generally not question a institution's determinations that customary standard airfare or other discount airfare is unavailable for specific trips if the institution can demonstrate either of the following:

- (a) that such airfare was not available in the specific case; or
- (b) that it is the institution's overall practice to make routine use of such airfare.

d. Air travel by other than commercial carrier.

Costs of travel by institution-owned, -leased, or -chartered aircraft include the cost of lease, charter, operation (including personnel costs), maintenance, depreciation, insurance, and other related costs. The portion of such costs that exceeds the cost of allowable commercial air travel, as provided for in subsection 53.c., is unallowable.

54. *Trustees.*

Travel and subsistence costs of trustees (or directors) are allowable. The costs are subject to restrictions regarding lodging, subsistence and air travel costs provided in Section 53.