Category Explanations

Categories are used in our accounting system to group transactions by type. Categories can indicate assets, liabilities, revenues or expenses. LCAT in DART provides an alphabetic listing of categories. The categories that we are most interested in are expense categories (category class 5). These categories correspond to the budget/expense categories found on LBSP.

The following are some of the categories used for Payroll distributions:

SalNC – Salary Non-Classified
SalClass – Salary Classified
SalSumAL – Salaries, Summer/Annual Leave
SalGA – Salaries Graduate Assistants
Wages – Wages
WagesStu – Student Wages
Fringes – Fringe Benefits

A related category is:

FBGATuit – Fringe Benefits Graduate Assistant Tuition – Although this category is considered a fringe benefit it is not a payroll distribution. The GATW function in PSB is used to distribute GA Tuition waivers to the appropriate cost center.

Often in non-sponsored program cost centers, the non-payroll expenditures are all posted to the generic Maint (maintenance) category. Sponsored program cost centers do not use the Maint category. Our categories tend to be a bit more specific. Common non-payroll categories for sponsored programs include:

Supplies
TravDom – domestic travel
TravFor – foreign travel
CostDir – The Cost Direct category is used for expenditures on services charged directly to the program. It could include printing, communication charges, mail or shipping charges, fees, etc. Usually when you purchase a tangible item it is Supplies and not CostDir. Note that some items that are direct charged, like telephone or copy charges are normally considered indirect costs and should not be direct charged. There are exceptions to that rule and they are covered in our Direct Cost Policy (Fayetteville Policy 310.1). Anytime we direct charge services to a sponsored program we should be able to document to auditors that the services charged were used exclusively for that program.

PartSupp – Participant support
TravPart – Participant travel
StipPart – Participant Stipend

The participant categories are often used for student expenses on sponsored programs. This is not always the case. Sometimes a Participant may be a public school teacher or a conference attendee. Because the Participant categories are often student transactions, details of the transactions in these categories are edited in our OpenUA Expenditures Transparency Website. FERPA rules would preclude us from reporting student transactions on the website. Edited transactions do not list recipients of
funds, they merely state “Privacy Protection Required”. In the coming months Financial Affairs and the BASIS team may be training staff to use account codes with a “1” as the second digit specifically for transactions with students. This would allow us to edit only those account codes and not broad categories such as PartSupp.

Other categories that may include payments to students include:

Stipends – stipends
Tuit – Tuition and fees expense

Again we are looking at ways to clearly identify payments to students so that we can easily redact student names on OpenUA and avoid FERPA violations. If you are aware of other categories that could include student names as payees please discuss this issue with us.

ProfSvcs – Professional Services Contract
ContReci – Contract Recipients/ Subawards
ContR25K – ContRip/Subawards over $25K

The 3 categories above are used for paying for professional services.

The first category is used when the professional service is purchased from a vendor. Such contracts are often worked out with the academic department (Principal Investigator) and their Buyer in Business Affairs. They are usually specifically budgeted in the award agreement but the relationship of the service provider to the University remains a vendor relationship.

The last two categories listed above are used when the service provider is determined to be a subrecipient. Subrecipients may have performance measured against whether objectives of the program are met, programmatic decision making responsibility, and responsibility for adherence to applicable federal program compliance. Subrecipient contracts are always negotiated and approved by Research and Sponsored Programs in consultation with Principal Investigators. Invoices from subrecipients are always paid by Research Accounting after receiving approval from the Principal Investigator.

Because the Federal government only allows us to charge indirect costs on the first $25,000 paid on subrecipient contracts we are now splitting those POs between ContReci (the first $25,000 of any subrecipient contract) and ContR25K (any amount over $25,000 in a subrecipient contract).

Equipmnt – Equipment – This is used for equipment costing $5,000 or more. That is the State equipment capitalization threshold.

NCapEqmt – This category is used when a sponsor has a different definition of equipment than ours. Generally we will not charge IDC on expenses in this category; but these items are not capitalized.

CostIndi – Indirect costs. Also referred to as Facilities and Administration Costs. These are overhead costs that cover depreciation, maintenance and operations and administration expense that cannot be charged directly. These types of items are charged by a negotiated rate, and Research Accounting is responsible for posting all indirect cost charges to sponsored programs.