

## **University of Tennessee Knoxville Office of Budget & Finance (OBF) Best Practice: Facilities Space Survey (KNOX & UTSI)**

The facilities space survey for the University of Tennessee is conducted annually in the spring (normally April-May timeframe). Each department's help is essential to ensure the university has an accurate record of space and how it is used. UT is required by state and federal law to maintain and report this information as it supports development of the university's F&A rate proposal, helps secure federal research reimbursements, and is used in determining state funding.

The space survey collects data such as:

- Types of rooms;
- Function of rooms;
- Capacity (percent use) and occupants;
- WBS's that fund sponsored research activities.

Each department or unit should have individual(s) who are familiar with IRIS responsible for completing the survey. The individual(s) chosen should know how their department uses each room and how the activities in each room are funded, especially in research-intensive areas. The departments must verify the information, descriptions, and classifications room-by-room. Most buildings on campus have viewable floor plans that are very helpful in completing the survey. These floor plans are accessible through Archibus on the [Facilities Services'](#) website.

An IRIS transaction is used to enter data in the space survey. The Office of Real Property and Space Administration is responsible for system-wide oversight of the survey. Several resources for conducting the space survey are available on the Real Property website at <https://iris.tennessee.edu/iris/real-estate/>. The Knoxville Area survey is coordinated through the Office of Budget and Finance (OBF). Departments will be notified by OBF when the space survey transaction is open and will provide instructions and guidance as well as contact information for assistance.

The following additional information is provided for your consideration as you conduct your space survey.

### **SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR CLASSIFYING RESEARCH LAB SPACE**

Proper classification of space in research labs is a critical part of the space survey. The typical functional classification of space in research labs is Organized Research (1020.2-OR). However, if some of the occupants of a research lab are paid for their lab work from general departmental funds or other funds that are not coded as sponsored research, other functional classifications should be assigned. The function of the fund entered as using the space will determine the functional classification, and the associated space may be classified as Instruction (1010.1), Instruction, Dept. Research (1010.9) Research, Departmental (1020.9), or other appropriate functions as noted in [Appendix B](#) of The UT Physical Facilities Inventory. Similarly, if some of the occupants of a lab are not paid by the university,

such as unpaid students or visiting scholars paid by their home institutions with no PERNR selection available, please provide pertinent information in the Notes field. Include the portion of time that person spent in the room in the survey year (such as .50 FTE, .30 FTE, 2 weeks, etc.) as well as their name and title.

The procedure outlined below is provided to assist you in determining the classification of space in a typical research lab:

1. Identify all the occupants of the lab and the accounts paying their salaries. Also, identify any unpaid lab occupants.
2. If the faculty member/investigator has sponsored research funding, establish the initial functional classification of the lab as 100% OR.
3. If any of the lab occupants are paid for their lab work from accounts that are not coded as sponsored research, estimate the percentage of lab activities paid from non-sponsored accounts.
4. If any of the lab occupants are not paid by the university, estimate the percentage of the unpaid lab activities.
5. If there are any other activities conducted in the lab that are unrelated to sponsored research (e.g., homework or studying), estimate the percentage associated with those activities.
6. Deduct the percentages in steps 3, 4, and 5 from 100% (step 2). The remaining percentage is the final percentage for Organized Research. Example: if the combined percentages in steps 3, 4 and 5 equals 10%, the Organized Research percentage would be 90%. The 10% not classified as Organized Research, should be classified as Instruction, IDR or other appropriate functions.
7. Research labs will often have multiple Organized Research projects taking place in the same room and the research percentage for each project must be distributed on the functional usage screen.

The estimates in steps 3 and 4 should carefully consider how much time each occupant spent in the lab during the fiscal year covered by the space survey. Example: a student working in the lab 15 hours per week for four months should be given much less weight than a technician who works in the lab 40 hours a week the entire year.

#### **STUDENTS IN RESEARCH SPACE**

Special care must be taken when determining the functional classification of research lab space involving GRA or student workers. Research activities of students who are paid from sponsored research funds (including Research Training) should be classified entirely as Organized Research. An exception is made when students paid from OR funds are performing activities within a lab that are unrelated to the Organized Research activities occurring within the lab. Unrelated activities, such as homework or general studying, should be classified as Instruction 1010.1 by entering a departmental fund. Research

activities of students who are paid from general departmental/instructional funds should be classified as IDR, 1010.9.

### **ROOMS CLASSIFIED AS 100% ORGANIZED RESEARCH**

All occupants of a room classified 100% Organized Research must be paid from sponsored research funds, and only Organized Research activities can take place in such room.

### **LARGE GROUP OF ROOMS WITH IDENTICAL CLASSIFICATIONS**

Large groups of rooms with identical classifications (e.g., 95% OR 5% IDR) *may be considered a red flag* by federal investigators and indicate that each room was not individually surveyed. Identical classifications for groups of rooms may be explainable and justifiable; however, these spaces require special scrutiny to ensure that each room was indeed surveyed individually. All labs used by a single PI may justifiably be classified with the same percentages if the occupants of the room are the same.

### **LAB SERVICE ROOMS**

Lab Service rooms should be classified based on the weighted average classification of the labs that they service. Example: A Lab Service Room services Research Labs A and B. The combined space of Research Labs A and B is 1,000 square feet; 900 square feet are classified as OR and 100 square feet are classified as Instruction, then the Lab Service room should be classified as 90% OR and 10% IDR.

### **DOs AND DON'Ts OF THE SPACE SURVEY:**

- **Do** talk to principal investigators (PIs) and get an understanding of all the activities in a room and the people that use the rooms.
- **Do** keep in mind federal negotiators may want to talk to you and/or your PIs.
- **Do** RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR SURVEY AND ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION. An example of supporting documentation is a listing of all individuals working in the department (paid or unpaid) with their associated position title as shown in the campus directory. In order to maximize the recovery of organized research space, the proper supporting data must be available so that the space survey data is defensible and documented. Thus, retention of support is especially important in an F&A base year.
- **Do not** fail to communicate the importance of the survey and why you are doing this to your PIs. From an F&A proposal perspective, the objective of the space survey process is to completely identify all the space dedicated to organized research which is critical to the F&A rate calculation process.
- **Do** have a rational methodology for allocating the space. Professional judgment is key, not an "exact science".
- **Do** ensure that an externally sponsored agreement is funding the activity in the room entirely or in part when the space is coded as organized research.
- **Do** consider sponsored activities that are/were active only part of the year.
- **Do not** forget to prorate the space accordingly based on how it was used.

- **Do** estimate each room's usage for the period of July 1 through June 30 of the fiscal year being surveyed. While the survey is conducted in the spring, usage of the space for the entire FY must be considered back to the previous July 1.
- **Do not** forget any continuation awards, as well as those expected in house by June 30.
- **Do** consider that a faculty member does different things in different places.
- **Do** consider time spent by faculty in the room working with students as part of their course work.
- **Do** consider what graduate students are doing in the rooms and whether or not they are funded.
- **Do** consider time spent by visitors working in the room and whether or not they are funded.
- **Do not** code startup funds, seed money, bridge funds and department funded research as OR; code as Interdepartmental Research (IDR).

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