

FRS Screens

Question: I'm Principal Investigator of a sponsored program. Where do I look in FRS for information to help me manage my award?

Answer: FRS has many screens that help the Principal Investigator to manage her or his award. The following are some summaries, by screen number:

19 - This is the basic screen for cumulative project budget and expense status. It shows your award budget, in the left column, analyzed by expense type (i.e., by expense object code). In the middle two columns it also shows actual expenses to date and encumbrances (e.g., for future payroll and purchases) not yet spent. The right-most column shows the budget balance available. The total budget balance available (BBA) is shown in the penultimate line of the right column. Note the arithmetic: the left column minus the next two equals the right-most column. Therefore, when you overspend a line of your proposed budget, the corresponding line in the right column will become negative. If there are any negative numbers in the right column (on lines corresponding to any of the expense object codes) then at least one of the positive BBA numbers is overstated and hence potentially misleading. For this reason, it is important to rebudget whenever any expense line is in deficit; your grant accountant can help you with a budget transfer.

29 - Whereas screen 19 gives cumulative budget and expense status, screen 29 shows activity in the present fiscal year and in the present month (as shown below)

Obj Description	Cur Mon Act	YTD Actual	PTD Actual	Balance Avail
0310 FED GRNT & CONT	0.00	0.00	29,986.38-	0.00
REVENUES	0.00	0.00	29,986.38	0.00

23A - This is the screen showing information (e.g., date, description, expenses incurred originating from purchases or journal entries and offset account if available) for each expense transaction for the designated fiscal year. If, for example, you add up all the transactions on the 23A screens for an account, they will total the aggregate expenses shown on the 19 screen or the 29 screen for the same period. The 23A screen gives the answer to the occasional question - "How did I get to the aggregate amount shown on my 19 or 29 screen?" A companion to the 23A screen is the 23 screen, showing all transactions, including those that don't result in an expense (e.g., conversion of requisitions to purchase orders).

881 - This screen is the FRS time machine. Use screen 881 to designate a fiscal year of interest. Other screens selected after a change in the 881 screen will refer financial status in the particular fiscal year selected. Beware of the common error of assuming you are looking at current records subsequent to an earlier use of the 881 screen to designate a past fiscal year. When you sign-on to FRS, the default is the present fiscal year (even if you signed-off in another fiscal year) until you use the 881 screen to select a fiscal year.

250, 203, 251, 254, 258, 256, 252 - These are the screens, in typical sequence, that are used to record a purchase requisition. For example, screen 254 describes what you are purchasing. Screen 252 is where you approve the purchase. Substituting 2 for 5 in the second digit of these screen numbers gives information about a designated purchase order, rather than a requisition. Remember that when looking at a purchase requisition you must insert **Rxxxxx on the 25x screens**. When looking for a Purchase Order you must use **Pxxxxx on the 22x screens**

228, 230 - These screens are used to make a receiving report, after receiving requisitioned material.

21 - This useful screen shows outstanding requisitions and purchase orders in your account, their liquidated amounts and remaining balances. Ask Accounts Payable to clear purchase orders no longer needed, if the last payment did not exhaust the encumbered funds.

AP6 - This screen reminds you of qualitative information about your account, like the end date and overhead rate.

INQ - Entering INQ for the screen number results in a summary reminder of FRS screens.

When using these screens, keep in mind that they immediately reflect any purchase transaction you have recorded, but other types of transactions you have initiated may not yet be recorded. For example, Personnel Action Forms, Student Employment Authorization Forms, and Graduate Student Nomination and Action Forms may not be reflected in FRS until several weeks after the PI initiates the forms. Remember that there are fringe benefit charges incremental to salary costs made explicit on the forms. Travel expenses typically take a couple weeks, from the time the Travel Expense Voucher is initiated, to be recorded in FRS. Similarly, there may be a delay in recording expenses from on-campus service centers like Gourmet Dining, Canon Business Services, the Colton/YCEES Analytic Lab, Microelectronics, Media Services, or the Bookstore. Mailroom usage, copier usage and telephone usage are operating expenses automatically charged to projects that use these services; PIs should anticipate those charges. Recall, too, that overhead is charged at the end of each month (based upon the Facilities and Administrative Rate multiplied by monthly expenses minus tuition, capital equipment and subawards greater than \$25,000). Overhead charges are not encumbered, so FRS does not reflect them until they are charged. It is best practice to record a requisition for a subaward or subcontract as soon as the projected amount is known, so this potentially large encumbrance and expense is reflected in FRS. With these factors in mind, Principal Investigators can reliably use FRS to manage their sponsored projects.