

Higher Administrative Authority

(Internal Administrative Authority)*

Overview

The term “Higher Administrative Authority” is often used to describe certain employees who approve university-related activities for internal control purposes. The key objective behind the structure of the Higher Administrative Authority model is to identify an individual other than a requestor of certain activities who can approve those activities. Employees identified as Higher Administrative Authorities by their departments are not, however, necessarily identified as such in university IT systems (e.g., MPathways). Employees serving as Higher Administrative Authorities should be in higher level positions of authority than requestors and may vary depending on the type of activity. As a result, there may be multiple Higher Administrative Authorities within a department.

The Higher Administrative Authority should be an employee who will know if an activity is appropriate and reasonable, a good use of unit resources, and consistent with relevant university and departmental policies. In some cases this may require a two-step approval process. It may be the requestor’s direct supervisor, but could also be a department leader or Budget Administrator Group Manager as long as that person is in a higher level position of authority than the requestor. It is sometimes described as “Dean, Director or Vice President”.

The Higher Administrative Authority role can be delegated, but should be done so in writing with the clear understanding that the delegating person does not give up his/her accountability. A delegation of Higher Administrative Authority is not a delegation to sign contracts or agreements on behalf of the University. It is an internal approval delegation only. The [Authorization by Signature Form](#), which provides further guidance for delegations, can be used to document delegations.

Examples where appropriate:

- An immediate supervisor approval of employee’s time reporting
- A Department Chair’s approval of equipment disposal through Property Disposition
- A Lead Budget Administrator’s approval of request for imprest cash fund
- A Dean’s written delegation of approval to Lead Budget Administrator for approval of Department Chairs’ Travel and Expense reports

Examples where not appropriate:

- Approval by an employee’s subordinate
- Approval by an employee’s peer/colleague without written delegation of authority
- Approval by an employee feeling pressured to approve or not in a position to raise questions or challenge transactions
- Approval by an employee too far removed from details of transaction

Departmental Considerations

- Are Higher Administrative Authorities defined and documented in such a way that all the employees in my department know who they are – or would know where to go to find out?
- Do all the Higher Administrative Authorities in my unit meet the spirit and intent of the description above?
- Do we require a dual approval process in some cases to achieve the described intent?
- Do we have Higher Administrative Authorities for some activities that reside outside our department (e.g., Executive Vice President)?

**This administrative authority is not applicable to Regental Bylaw delegations, SPG 601.24 delegations or other Federal or State statutory authority.*