

Ensuring Grant Success: Detecting and Addressing Challenges in Higher Education Research Funding

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The successful administration of research grants is critical for sustaining higher education institutions. However, Caribbean institutions often encounter significant challenges that can jeopardize grant implementation, leading to delays, underutilization of funds, and even project failure. This presentation, 'Ensuring Grant Success: Detecting and Addressing Challenges in Higher Education Research Funding' addresses the early warning signs of grant mismanagement and offers strategic solutions to mitigate risks associated with research funding.

This session will highlight several critical challenges faced by Principal Investigators (PIs) and institutional grant management offices. Key issues include PIs securing funding but struggling with execution, insufficient project management support, budget misalignment, rigid donor requirements, high import duties affecting procurement, and delays due to regulatory compliance. Additional concerns such as academic misconduct, legal issues involving PIs, and the lack of contingency planning for leadership transitions will also be explored.

The primary objective of this presentation is to equip higher education administrators, grant officers, and researchers with practical strategies to identify and address these challenges early. Attendees will gain insights into best practices for budgeting, financial reporting, risk management, and institutional policy strengthening. Additionally, the session will propose actionable recommendations to support the Sponsored Research framework in Higher Educational Institutions.

This presentation aligns with the conference theme, "Transforming the Administration of Higher Education for Enhanced Sustainability, Inclusivity, and Technological Progress," by emphasizing sustainable grant management practices. A well-managed grant system ensures financial sustainability, promotes inclusive research collaboration, and leverages technology to enhance reporting and compliance. Through improved grant administration, institutions can secure long-term funding, foster innovation, and enhance their global research impact.

Caribbean higher education institutions stand to gain significantly from this discussion by adopting proactive grant management techniques. Strengthening institutional policies and financial

oversight will lead to greater accountability and efficiency. Moreover, addressing issues like donor inflexibility, stringent reporting requirements, and inadequate training will empower institutions to better negotiate funding terms. Implementing these recommendations will enhance the region's research capacity, increase funding retention, and ensure the successful execution of vital research projects.

By attending this session, stakeholders will leave equipped with some tools and insights necessary to transform grant administration, ensuring that research funding translates into tangible academic and societal benefits.