Electronic Sponsored Projects Approval System

Introduction

Electronic Sponsored Projects Approval System (ESPAS) is the first system developed by Information Systems, a Division of the Office of the Vice President for Research, in a series of Electronic Research Administration systems (ERA). Its function is to replace the approval form, “green sheet”, which all applications for research submitted to Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) must have. This system provides Principal Investigators (PI) with the tools to create and route, securely and reliably, the approval form throughout the university anytime or from anywhere they wish.

ESPAS uses the internet for its network, so security was a high priority when developing this system. IS developed an Accounting System so that only UB faculty, staff and some graduate students can access the system. See the Accounting System documentation for details. In addition to the Accounting System, encryption is used in all ESPAS transactions so that data cannot be read over the internet. We use cryptic 20 character codes for several pieces of information like user accounts to help disguise this data. The data is held in an Oracle database which only allows systems to access it, not individuals.

Reliability was another concern when we developed the system. One of the success factors was to have a system which will be up twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. All our servers are built on this premise as well. Hardware fault tolerance is built into every server. Virus scanners check for updates and scan all hard drives everyday. Intruder detection systems are implemented as well. As always each system is backed up on a nightly basis.

ESPAS, we believe, is a solid electronic system which was built with security and reliability in mind. This document is intended to be a user guide in developing and routing an ESPAS transaction and assumes you are familiar with the approval process. The instructions below, on how to use this system, contain fictitious schools, departments and users. Throughout the remainder of this document the term ESPAS transaction is defined as creating an electronic approval form using ESPAS.

System Requirements

Since ESPAS is a web based system all you need is a browser. Preferably Internet Explorer 6.0 (with the latest patches installed) or Netscape 7.0. You also need to enable pop-ups and allow cookies.

System Overview
Again ESPAS was developed to replace SPA’s approval form. The system has several roles built into it such as Preparer, PI, Chair, Dean, Provost and three SPA level roles as well as some system administration roles. It also has several system functions for users to choose from. This section is intended to give you an overview on the system roles. It contains information on the function, with screen shots, of each role except the administrator role. It also contains information on the different options for handling an ESPAS transaction (like creating a new one, editing an existing one, view/copy an already submitted transaction and view an already submitted form) and the approval process for CO-Investigators, Chairs and Deans.

**The Preparer Role**

Preparers are administrative assistants who can develop an ESPAS transaction for PI’s in a particular department. Before doing so they must select a PI for whom they are developing the ESPAS transaction for. Once this has been done they can create the ESPAS transaction as a PI can. The only difference here is that a preparer can only submit an ESPAS transaction to the PI and cannot submit it to the approval queue, the PI must do this. The approval queue is where the PI electronically sends the completed approval form to get electronic signatures. See figure 1 for a screen shot of what the main screen will look like for a preparer.

![Figure 1](image-url)
Once logged in the preparer has several options to choose from. The first, “Select Principal Investigator”, link allows the preparer to select the PI for whom they are creating an ESPAS transaction. Only the preparer sees this option and is only valid for creating a new approval form. If the preparer tries to create a new approval form without selecting a PI the system will force a PI selection. “Edit and Existing Approval Form” allows the preparer to finish, copy or delete an ESPAS transaction that has not been submitted to the approval queue. This section also allows users to create ESPAS transaction templates which can be used to speed the creation process. All that needs to be done is copy the template and finish filling out the form. “View/Copy an already submitted form” contains two sections one that shows proposals in the approval queue and approved proposals. From the Proposals in Queue section you can see where, in the approval process each application sits by clicking on the “Check Status” link. The approved proposal section allows you to view or copy a proposal as does the Withdrawn Proposal section. The “View Approved Proposals within your department” allow you to look at and print the PDF approval form, with your data. The last link on this menu allows users to submit system bugs and enhancements. Finally, the horizontal gray has a couple more links to choose from “Home”, “Proposal Approval” and “Log off”. “Home” will bring you back to the main ESPAS page and “Log off” is just that it will log you off the system. The “Proposal Approval” link is a link used by Co-I’s, Chairs, Deans, possibly the Provost and Sponsored Projects. It will display all ESPAS transactions waiting for your approval. Refer to the ESPAS Home Page section for more detailed instructions on how to use the system.

The PI, Chair, Dean and UB’s Provost Role

PI’s are the individuals who can create and submit an ESPAS transaction. This role has the same privileges as the Preparer but they can also submit an ESPAS transaction to the approval queue. Chairs have the same permissions as the PI’s but can also approve an ESPAS transaction at the department level. Deans have the same permissions as the Chairs but can approve ESPAS transactions for the school. UB’s Provost has the same permissions as the Dean but are required to electronically sign an application form if a Dean is submitting an ESPAS transaction, if the application will establish a new academic program or if The Dean or SPA asks for Provostial approval. Refer to the ESPAS Home Page section for more detailed instructions on how to use the system.

Once logged in the PI, Chair, Dean or UB’s Provost has the same options to choose from as the preparer but without the “Select Principal Investigator” link. Figure 2 is a screen shot of what you will see once logged into ESPAS.
SPA has three levels of approval: Grant Specialist (GS), Sponsored Projects Administrator, and Signing Authority. The GS role within ESPAS is to ensure application accuracy. The Sponsored Projects Administrator looks over the application a second time to ensure accuracy. The Signing Authority is a senior Sponsored Projects Administrator who can approve an application for SPA. Once the application is approved, SPA will send out the proposal to the sponsor and the application becomes an institutional proposal. There are a few functions that can be selected at this level: Incomplete ESPAS Proposals and Approved ESPAS Proposals. Clicking on the “Incomplete ESPAS Proposals” link will list all ESPAS transactions that are being developed by PI’s. This feature gives SPA GS’s and Administrators an idea of what applications are going to come through the system. After clicking the “Approved ESPAS Proposals” a list of all approved proposals is displayed. Figure 3 is a screen shot of what SPA Level Role individuals will see.

ESPAS was designed so that any GS or Sponsored Projects Administrator can login to the system and view all applications in the Proposal Approval queue at their level. For example, a GS can login to ESPAS click the “Proposal Approval” link in the gray horizontal bar and view all applications waiting for a GS level approval. The GS doesn’t need to be the primary or backup for a particular department in order to view applications at this level. In this example a Sponsored Projects Administrator will not see applications for approval at this level. They will only see an application after a GS approves it.
Here we will discuss the functions of the different sections within ESPAS. This section is divided up into two sections one for the Preparer, PI, Chair, Dean and Provost roles and one for the SPA Level roles.

Preparer, PI, Chair, Dean and Provost

Once logged in at this level you have many options to choose from like Create a new Approval Form, Edit an Existing Approval Form, View/Copy an already submitted approval form and Check the status of Your proposals. There is also a horizontal gray bar across the top of the page with three links Home, Proposal Approval and Log off. The “Home” link in the gray bar brings you back to the ESPAS home page. “Proposal Approval” link shows applications in the approval queue waiting for an action from you and “Log off” will log you off the system. Refer to figure 2 for a screen shot of this page.

Clicking the “Create a new Approval Form” link has only one function. This is to start a new ESPAS transaction. It starts by creating a set of new records in a database and sending you to a page where you can start filling out the online form, see figure 8 for page layout. Details on how to fill out this form can be found in the “Creating and Editing an ESPAS Transaction” section later in this documentation.
“Edit an Existing Approval Form” has a couple sections within it: Incomplete Proposals and Returned Proposals, see figure 4 for screen shot.

Incomplete Proposals are applications that were started and never submitted to the approval queue. You can copy, edit or delete ESPAS transactions from this section. Copy will create a new ESPAS transaction with the data which was already entered. What you can do here is create a template so it can be copied over and over again. Clicking the “Edit” link will allow you to finish off an ESPAS transaction and send it to the approval queue and delete will obviously delete an ESPAS transaction.

Returned Proposals is where you will see applications that have been returned to you by either a Co-I, Chair, Dean or Provost. In this section you have the same functions you have in the Incomplete Proposal section as well as a Check Status and a Return Reason function. The Copy, Edit and Delete functions also operate the same as in the Incomplete Proposal section. “Check Status” shows you where in the approval process this particular ESPAS transaction is. Clicking the “Return Reason” link will pop-up a new browser window with the reason this proposal was returned.

As with the “Edit an Existing Approval Form” the “View/Copy an already submitted form” has two sections Proposals in Queue and Approved Proposals, see figure 5.
Proposals in the Proposal Queue has two functions associated with it “Check Status” and “Delete”. Check the Status allows a PI to see where in the approval queue an application sits. A PI can also withdraw their proposal by clicking on the Delete link for that proposal.

The Approved Proposals section also has two functions “View Proposal” and “Copy”. View Proposal allows a PI to verify what was sent to SPA for submission. The Copy option allows a PI to create a new ESPAS transaction with the data contained in that particular proposal.

The final Link on the main ESPAS page is “Check the Status of Your Proposal” which shows you where in the approval process the proposal sits. By clicking on “Check Status” of a proposal you see a screen like in figure 6. It uses a stop light method for indicating where the proposal is in the approval queue. A green light means that this person has approved the proposal. Yellow indicates that this person needs to take action on the proposal and red means it hasn’t hit their email box yet. You can click on any name on this page and the system provides a pop-up with an email link and phone number so you can remind that person that they have an ESPAS transaction waiting.
There are two functions SPA can use once logged into the system “Incomplete EPS Proposals” and “Approved EPS Proposals”.

Incomplete EPS Proposals lists all the ESPAS transactions that are currently under development, see figure 7 for screen shot. By clicking on the view button a pop-up appears displaying some information about the proposal under construction. Clicking the Principal Investigator name allows you to generate an email to that PI. This screen also has some navigational links which will display the next page of proposals.

Approved EPS Proposals will list all applications that have been signed off by the Signing Authority in SPA. The same functions exist on this page as the Incomplete EPS Proposals page.
Creating and Editing an ESPAS Transaction

In this section we will discuss the different modules of an ESPAS transaction along with some of their features. There are six basic modules a user must complete in order to submit an application to SPA like Principal Investigator, Project Information, Sponsor Information, Budget Information, Special Approvals and Investigator Information modules refer to figure 8. ESPAS uses a stop light system which indicates whether or not a module is complete or not. A red light indicates that the module is not filled out while a yellow light indicates that the module is partially filled out. The green light means that the module is completely filled out. All modules must have a green light in order for an ESPAS transaction to be submitted to the approval queue. Getting to this section can be done by clicking the “Create a New Approval Form” on the main ESPAS page, “Copy” or “Edit” link under the Incomplete or Returned Proposal section in Edit an Existing Proposal or “Copy” link under the Approved Proposal section in View/Copy an already submitted form. Once you start filling out or editing the modules there are navigational buttons which help you traverse the six modules. Each module is explained in detail below.

You will also notice off to the right of each module are comment sections. After clicking on the “Comment” link you will see a screen identical to figure 9. You can now enter your comments or questions in the “Comments” text box. Comments will be saved by clicking the “Add” button. At the bottom of figure 9 you can view all the comments entered. Everyone who can access this application can read these comments. You might typically enter module
questions here. Then later you can email the primary SPA Administrator for your department and ask them to answer your questions. This can be done via the “Additional Comments/Questions” section.

You can also upload your project which SPA will accept instead of the two hard copies they require. There is an “Additional Comments/Questions” section that allows you to enter comments on the entire application. From here you can also email the primary Administrator in SPA which is covered later in this documentation. Finally, there is a “Submit Proposal for Approval” link which takes a completed ESPAS transaction and starts to route it for signatures.

Figure 8.
Principal Investigator Information

This module contains information on the PI. To start the process click the Principal Investigator Module on the main ESPAS transaction screen, you will see a screen like figure 10. The system brings forward your information from our accounting system and inserts it for you in this module. This is why it is important to have accurate information in our system about you. You can change this information in the main accounting screen; refer to the VPR Account System Documentation. There are navigational buttons on the top and bottom of every module. The data entry portion of this module, as well as every other module, has two sections the labels side (left) and the data entry side (right). Notice the blue circles with a question mark in it. Clicking these images will pop-up a window describing what the system is looking for. Everything in this module except the Extension and Fax need to be filled out. If the system determines that there is something missing it will gray the row and display red letters for the labels, refer to figure 11.
Again the navigational buttons allow you go through each module without having to go back to the ESPAS transaction page. They also save what you have entered as well except if you click the cancel button. “Save and Return Home” will save your data entry and return you to the ESPAS transaction page. Cancel reverts your data entry and will take you back to the ESPAS transaction page. Finally, the “Save and Continue” button saves your data entry and takes you to the next module, Project Information.

In this module there are text boxes and drop downs. The text boxes are free form so you can type anything in here. The drop downs allow you to pick predefined data entry elements. In this module you must first select a school then select a department because the department list which will be displayed depends on what school was selected.
In this module you enter the project specifics such as activity type, submission type, title, abstract, fiscal administrator, previous submission information, proposal solicitation information, proposed start date, sponsor deadline and proposal submission to sponsor type. Everything in this module must be filled out. You will also see a new navigational button “Save and Previous” which will save your data entry and take you to the previous module. All other buttons have the same features as the buttons in the Principal Investigator Information module. As with the Principal Investigator module if the system determines that there is something missing the row turns gray and the label turns red. This particular module is lengthy so figure 12 only displays a section of the module. After you finish your data entry press the “Save and Continue” button to move on to the Sponsor Information module.
You now must select a sponsor for your application. There are several thousand sponsors to choose from so we had to give you some options to narrow down your search. You can search for your sponsor by category, sponsor type or by typing it in, see figure 13. After you select your sponsor, which is the only requirement, you can finish the data entry for this module, refer to figure 14.

When you search by category, which is the first option, you must first select the category by clicking the drop down and highlighting the category. Once you've selected the category the second drop down fills up with agencies that fall under that category. For example, if you select NIH as your category you can select the NIH agency that falls within the NIH category. The same holds true if you're selecting a sponsor by type which is your second option. The different sponsor types are Federal, Foreign, Foundation, Local Government, Other, Private Non-Profit, Private Profit and State. Your third option is to start typing the name of the sponsor in the “Sponsor List” text box. This performs a fuzzy search for your sponsor. For example, if you key in a “P” as the first letter the list of sponsors displayed with go to all the sponsors that begin with “P”. Keying in an “r” for the second letter will cause the list to display sponsors that begin with “Pr”. Once you find your sponsor click the “Select” button under the type of search you used. If your sponsor does not exist you can click the “Not in The List” button which is the fourth option. Clicking this button will force you to
enter more information about the sponsor. Click the “Save and Continue” button to proceed to the Budget Information module.
Budget Information

You still work out your budget with SPA. SPA will still email you the final budget which is needed for the last item in this module, the uploading of the budget file. Everything in this module must be filled out but you will notice that there are some default values entered for you. Refer to figure 14 for a screen shot of this module. Not all items are displayed in the screen shot because of the length of this module.

First you enter your F&A rate, then the rate type. You must fill out the Direct Cost and F&A Costs. The Total will automatically be calculated for you. Fill out your performance site information. Cost Sharing information always defaults to no. If there is any Cost Sharing click yes then fill out items “a”, “b” and “c”. Finally, you can upload the budget for this application which is the final budget SPA emailed you. Click the “Save and Continue” button to proceed to the Special Approvals module.

Special Approvals

This module has all the yes/no questions you would see on the paper approval form. It defaults to “No” on all questions except for the Human Subjects, Animal Subjects and Graduate Research Assistants. Figure 15 displays a partial image of this module.
Responding “Yes” to any portion of this module may require further data entry. If attachments are required you are able to fax a copy of the attachments to SPA so that you can complete the ESPAS transaction in a timely manner. Carefully answer all the yes/no questions and upload or fax any attachments required for this section. Once your done click the “Save and Continue” button to proceed to the Investigator Information module.

Investigator Information

In this module, the final module, you will be entering your effort on the project, Co-I’s and their effort on the project and departmental credit. This module has two sections within it, “Additional Investigators” and “Allocation of Credit to Department/Unit”, refer to figure 16. Notice there is a new navigational button on this screen called “Save and Finish”. Clicking this button saves your data entry and brings you back to the main ESPAS transaction page.
Additional Investigators lists the PI as well as all Co-I’s on the application. First you add Co-I’s by clicking the “Add Personnel” button then selecting the Co-I’s you want on the project. After clicking the “Add personnel” button you will see a screen like figure 17. A list of Co-I’s displays who have access to the system. Selecting Co-I’s can be done one of two ways scrolling through the list or by keying their last name. Keying their last name also uses the fuzzy search like when you key in a sponsor name in the Sponsor Information module. You can select Co-I’s one at a time by repeating the process or multiple Co-I’s by scrolling through the list and clicking all the Co-I’s you want while holding down the “Ctrl” key on your keyboard.
Once you've select all your Co-I's you need to add their percent effort on the project. You do this by entering information in the Academic Year, Summer Months or Calendar Year text boxes for each investigator in this section. You can enter information in either the Academic Year or Summer Months text box or the calendar year text box but not both. For example, if you enter something in Academic Year or Summer Months or both text boxes you can not enter information in the Calendar year text box. The reverse is true also. After you enter the investigator percent effort click the “Save Changes” button. If you do not click this button and you move off this page the system will not save what you've typed in.

“Allocation of Credit to Department/Unit” contains the department’s credit for the project. By design the department listed in the Principal Investigators module will be listed at 100%. You can add additional departments by clicking on the “Add Department/Unit” button; refer to figure 18 for screen shot. Since the system requires you to enter a percent for the additional department share you must repeat this process for every department. You can select a department by scrolling through the list then clicking on the department you wish to give credit to. Next enter the credit amount and click submit. After clicking submit the system brings you back to the Investigator Information module and displays the new department with the appropriate percentages. You can change the department shares by entering the new share information in each departments text box and then clicking the “Update Credit” button. The total share percentage must equal 100.
After you completed your data entry for this module click the “Save and Finish” button. You will be returned to the main ESPAS transaction page.

Upload Narrative/Research Plan

Clicking this link enables you to upload the text of your proposal refer to figure 19. Although it is not required, at this time, for you to submit your application to the approval queue SPA will need their copies of the proposal. The easiest way to give SPA their copies is to upload the file.

By clicking the “Browse” button a windows pop-up window appears. From here you will have access to your local and network hard drives. Locate the file you wish to upload, click once to highlight the file now click the “Open” button. This will place the file in the text box next to the “Browse” button. Click upload to copy the file to the ESPAS transaction. After you successfully uploaded your narrative you can return to the main ESPAS transaction page by clicking the “Proposal Menu link” or upload another file by clicking on the “Upload Another File” link, refer to figure 20.
Earlier we discussed how to add module comments. This section was designed to add ESPAS transaction comments. Click on the “Additional Comments/Questions” link and will be taken to a screen identical to figure 21. All you need to do is start typing your comments or questions and then click the
“Add” button. You can add as many comments as you wish by repeating this process. If you wish to email the primary Administrator in SPA just click the check box above the “Reset” button then click the “Add” button. The system will then fire off an email to the Administrator with a link so they can access the application and help you fill out portions of the form if you aren’t sure of what to enter. You should first enter comments in the module comments section then add ESPAS transaction comments asking SPA to take a look at your module comments. To get back to the main ESPAS screen click the “Proposal Menu” link.

![Image of ESPAS system](image.png)

**Figure 21.**

**View a PDF Summary of the Proposal**

This link will open up SPA’s approval form with the data entry supplied in the modules. You can use this to print or save, depends if you have Adobe Acrobat installed, a copy of your ESPAS transaction.

**Submit Proposal for Approval**

When you are finished creating your ESPAS transaction you can click the link to submit the proposal for approval. The approval process has several levels for approving a proposal Research, Chair, Dean, Provost and SPA level approvals. The system sends emails with a link to the different levels so the proposal can be looked at and approved or returned. Refer to the “Approval Queue” section of this document for detailed information.
Approval Queue

As stated earlier the approval process has several levels for proposal approval. ESPAS allows simultaneous approvals at each level but the approvals at each level must be done sequentially. For example, if you have Co-I’s identified in the project they would need to approve the proposal before the system would email all the Chairs for their approval.

Research Approvals

If Co-I’s are identified in an application they will receive an email with a link asking them for their approval on this project. After the Co-I clicks the link in the email they will be sent to the VPR Accounting System for authentication. Once a valid login has occurred the Co-I is sent to the “Electronic Sponsored Program Approval System” for this particular proposal, refer to figure 22. The Co-I can now review the application and either Approve or Return it.

Co-I’s can also approve applications by logging in and selecting ESPAS. Once in they can click on the “Proposal Approval” link on the gray bar, see figure 23. This link displays all application waiting for a response from the user. The Co-I can then find the application waiting for their approval and click on the “View” button. This option can be used if the email with the link was accidentally deleted.
Chairs Approvals

After all the Co-I’s approve an application all the chairs get an email very similar to what the Co-I’s received. The Chair will need to click the link in the email and go through the same process as the Co-I did to approve the application. The only difference is that the Chair may see a confirmation link on the main ESPAS approval page. Click the link to see what confirmations are required (refer to figure 24). Chairs can click the check box and click the “Submit” button if they agree with the confirmation. If the Chair does not click any or all check boxes the Dean must in order for the proposal to get submitted to SPA. You can check for Cost Sharing or Tuition assistance in the uploaded budget (Budget module) or in the Budget module (Cost Sharing) and Special Approval module (Tuition Assistance). To view the uploaded budget click the Budget Information link and the very last item you will see is a link titled “View Uploaded File”. Click this link and it will open the budget that SPA helped develop. After the chair has reviewed the application he/she has the ability to approve or return an application. If an application is returned a reason must be given refer to figure 26 for return comments.

The Chair also has the ability to use the “Proposal Approval” link on the gray if they deleted the email with the link. Also, this option holds true for all levels of approval.
After all the Chairs have approved the application an email with a link is sent to the Dean’s. They must also go through the same authentication process as the Chairs and Researchers. Once logged in the Deans see a very similar screen as the Chairs except for the Provostial Approval check box and an Update button, refer to figure 25. You can review the entire proposal or only parts of it by clicking on the modules. You can check for Cost Sharing or Tuition assistance in the uploaded budget (Budget module) or in the Budget module (Cost Sharing) and Special Approval module (Tuition Assistance). To view the uploaded budget click the Budget Information link and the very last item is a link titled “View Uploaded File”. Click this link and it will open the budget that SPA helped develop. Dean’s must agree with any confirmations that the Chair had not agreed with. This can be done by clicking the “Confirmation” link which displays the same confirmation page as the Chairs. Click the check boxes next to the required confirmations if you agree to them. If you don’t then the application must be returned to the PI with an explanation of the return, see figure 26. The Dean can request a Provostial approval by checking that box and clicking the “Approve” or “Update” button. By clicking the “Approve” button the system will insert the Provost approval to the queue and approve the application. The “Update” button request the Provost Approval before the Deans approval. An email will be sent to the Provost asking to approve the application before it gets to SPA. If you agree with everything click the “Approve” button.
The Provost may be required to approve an application for any of the following reasons: 1. Dean or SPA requested a Provost approval. 2. A Dean is submitting an application to SPA. 3. If the application will establish a new academic program. If the Provost is required to sign off on an ESPAS transaction
they will see a screen similar to a Deans approval screen but without the Confirmation link and the Request Provost Approval check box. After the proposal is approved at this level SPA gets notified of the application via email.

**SPA Approvals**

There are three levels of approval for SPA GS, Administrator and Signing Authority. The process for approving ESPAS applications for GS and Administrator levels are similar. However, the Signing Authority level has a few extra options to choose from.

After the Dean signs off on an ESPAS transaction the primary GS for the primary department identified on the application will get an email with a link. Backup GS’s will get Cced as well. After they click the link in the email the GS will be taken to a screen identical to figure 27. However, any GS can log into the system to view and approve an ESPAS transaction by logging into the system and clicking the “Proposal Approval” link. By clicking on the “View” button of the application they can review and approve an ESPAS transaction. They can look over the application by going through the different modules as a Chair, Dean or Provost can. One difference is that they can make changes to the application. This is by design. Notice the GS can only approve the application. If they think it should be turned down they can click the “SPA Return Comments” link and add a comment stating why they think it should be returned, refer to figure 28 for a screen shot. It will then be up to the Administrator to return the application to the PI.

Figure 27.
Once the GS is finished looking over the proposal and clicks the “Approve” button the primary Administrator receives an email, backup is Cced, asking them to review the application, refer to figure 29. Again, any administrator can login to the system look at an ESPAS transaction form and approve it. The only difference between the GS screen and the Administrator privileges is that the Administrator has a “Return” button next to the “Approve” button. Administrators should be aware of the number in the parenthesis next to the “SPA Return Comments” because if it is greater than zero than someone, at the GS level, has added a comment which means it should be read. The Administrator has two choices here either approve or return the application. Returning the application requires that the Administrator give a reason for the return, refer to figure 28. Approving the proposal will email the Signing Authority asking them to finish the application process. If the Administrator has Signing Authority privileges than the proposal will be accepted without an email.
The Signing Authority is the last stop for the ESPAS transaction. This is where the ESPAS transaction becomes an Institutional Proposal, assuming that it is approved. A Signing Authority has the same privileges as an Administrator with the added capability of approving an application for SPA. At this level you can look at the entire application by clicking on any of the links on the main ESPAS transaction page. Again there is a “SPA Return Comments” link and if the number next to it is greater than one than you should read the comments. You can request for a Provostial approval by clicking the check box and either clicking the “Approval” or “Update” button which functions the same way as in the Deans approval process.