PURPOSE

The purpose of this operating procedure is to clarify and define the roles of the Principal Investigator (PI), Department Administrator (DA), and the Research Administrator (RA), with regard to internal routing of proposals in the School of Medicine via the RAMS-SPOT system prior to submission to a sponsor.

This SOP is applicable to proposals submitted for non-sponsor initiated, non-industry funded projects. Please refer to the SOM Clinical Research Administration website for guidance on budget development for sponsor initiated, industry funded projects.

INTRODUCTION

Applications for funding (also called proposals) from external sponsors should contain all information necessary to describe project plans, staff capabilities, and funds requested. Formal proposals are officially approved and submitted by an organization in the name of a principal investigator. A proposal can be considered an offer to do business and thus requires the signature of an institution's authorized official. The authorized official is the only individual(s) formally authorized to bind the institution to grants, contracts, and other agreements. Prior to submission, proposals will be reviewed by the Office of Sponsored Programs to help ensure compliance with internal and external policies, procedures and requirements, including a requirement for a report of expenditures or a provision for an audit (refer to VCU’s Policy Sponsored Program Proposals: Definitions, Solicitation, Review, Approval and Submission). In turn, the School of Medicine must ensure its investigators and personnel are in compliance with all VCU and sponsor requirements through the completion of this internal approval routing process at the time of the proposal submission.

Per VCU policy, the Funding Proposal in RAMS-SPOT must be routed to Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) for final review, approval, and submission no later than 5 business days prior to a sponsor’s proposal submission deadline. Late receipt of the Funding Proposal by OSP will jeopardize submission of the proposal. To ensure the VCU internal deadline is met, the School of Medicine requires Funding Proposals be submitted for SOM approval in RAMS-SPOT no later than 7 business days prior to a sponsor’s submission deadline. This allows for a 2-day review and approval timeline for the School of Medicine prior to routing to OSP for final review, approval, and submission. To ensure the School of Medicine internal deadline is met, the procedures in this SOP should be undertaken a minimum of 12 days prior to sponsor deadline. This requires the PI and DA to provide the RA with information as outlined in this SOP. In addition, if multiple institutions are involved in the submission, additional lead time is recommended. The recommended lead time for involvement of any subawardee – particularly foreign subawardees – is 2 to 3 weeks prior to the internal deadline for PI routing in RAMS-SPOT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VCU Timeline for Internal Routing and Approval of Sponsored Project Proposals</th>
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<tr>
<td>VCU Office of Sponsored Programs internal deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Medicine internal School-level approval deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommended minimum internal timeline to begin processes in this SOP</td>
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Recommended lead time for contacting external collaborators and subawardees

28 days prior to sponsor deadline

PROCEDURE

1. All proposals will be entered into the RAMS-SPOT proposal submission system prior to submission to the sponsor.
   - Proposals that use the Grants.gov submission system will be built directly in RAMS-SPOT. For all other proposals, upload the sponsor’s required submission package and any other relevant materials. See “SOP 101: Preparing Proposal for Submission.”

2. Adhere to all internal submission deadlines.
   - See table above in “Introduction.”

3. Make sure required internal forms have been signed and uploaded.
   - Any PI eligibility exception requests, F&A waiver requests, or VCUHS employee approval forms should be completed, signed by all parties (including the School of Medicine), and uploaded to the RAMS-SPOT Funding Proposal. See the Guide to Gathering Research-Related Signatures in the School of Medicine document uploaded to the SOM Office of Research Administration website.

4. Gather advanced SOM approval of any voluntary cost share commitments.
   - Refer to the SOM Cost Share Policy Statement and the SOM Process for Cost Share Exceptions or Advance Approval in the SOM Research Administrator Wiki.

5. Select which units should approve the proposal.
   - Always select “Medicine.” If personnel from other Schools are involved (for example, a Co-Investigator from School of Pharmacy is budgeted), then select the appropriate School as an additional approver. Give “Unit View Access” to the FP for all departments involved in the proposal.

6. PI submits Funding Proposal in RAMS-SPOT for approval.
   - Only the PI is able to route the proposal for approvals. Follow instructions posted on OSP’s website: https://research.vcu.edu/osp/rams-spot.htm
   - If PI is logging into RAMS-SPOT from an off-campus computer, use of VCU’s VPN will be required.

7. If School approver requests changes, use the “Submit Changes” button when complete.
   - This notifies the School to resume their review of the proposal. PI, RA, or DA may use the “Submit Changes” button.

8. School approver will route the proposal to OSP in RAMS-SPOT after completing their review.
   - OSP cannot submit proposals without School approval.

9. RA will follow internal routing of Funding Proposal through RAMS-SPOT.
   - The RA will follow up with PI, DA, SOM approver, and OSP if delays occur. The RA will exercise good judgment in this monitoring and follow-up, based on the internal routing deadlines. Goal is for on-time submissions of all Funding Proposals for which information is provided to the RA in a timely manner.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal Investigator (PI) The PI is primarily responsible for:

- Providing required details needed to complete the Funding Proposal
- Providing required attachments
- Routing the proposal in RAMS-SPOT for internal approvals
- Ensuring annual financial disclosure is current in the AIRS system

Research Administrator (RA) The RA is primarily responsible for:
• Assisting the PI with routing proposals for School review within RAMS-SPOT however needed

**Department Administrator(s) (DA)** The DA is primarily responsible for:

• Providing any details that require Department input prior to routing the Funding Proposal in RAMS-SPOT for internal reviews and approvals