Guide for New Research Administrators

Welcome to research administration in the VCU School of Medicine! Whether you are new to VCU or just new to research administration, the following information is provided as an onboarding checklist to ensure you have the information you need to do your job. If you have any questions about the content on this page please write to SOMRESADMIN@vcuhealth.org. Confidence in your position comes with time and experience but we hope this guide will provide a path towards gaining that confidence in your role!

In addition to this list, the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants & Contracts Accounting have put together a comprehensive "Getting Started in Research Administration" document.

In the first month...

Enroll in online training on VCU’s Blackboard site:

To get access to the Banner system, self-enroll in the following two courses:

- PAA001: Banner Basic Navigation & System/Data Security
- PAA003: Labor Distribution Training - depends on role, check with supervisor (required for Banner access)
- Banner Finance New Users: Internal Controls & Fiscal Responsibilities
- Banner Finance New Users: Banner FOAPAL-Forms-Transactions

Once PAA001 and PAA003 are complete, Supervisor will put in ticket for Banner Finance access for the new employee in the Landesk system.

Additional trainings to self-enroll in on Blackboard:

- Banner Finance Research Accounting
- Mandatory Sponsored Project and Effort Reporting Training (instructions on how to enroll here)

Attend the next "Grants & Contracts Basic Post Award Accounting" class:

Go to the VCU Training site and search for key word "grants.” You’ll see a list of upcoming in-person classes, sign-up for one that is convenient:

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Join research administration related listservs:

- SOM Research Administrative Listserv - contact SOMRESADMIN@vcuhealth.org to be added
- Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) Listserv
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research Listserv

Browse the SOM Research Administration website, the OSP website, and the Grants & Contracts Accounting (G&C) website to familiarize yourself with various procedures and policies at VCU.

Meet with someone in your department to go over all active, closing, or pending awards in your department/center.

Verify you have received relevant system access:

- RAMS-SPOT proposal submission system - have your Department Administrator send a request to SOMRESADMIN@vcuhealth.org
- Banner Finance access
- Banner HR access - depends on role, check with supervisor
- PI Dashboard and RA Dashboard access - will automatically be granted after Banner access established
- ECRT Effort Reporting system - depends on role, check with supervisor
- NIH eRA Commons account - depends on role, check with supervisor

Schedule a meeting with the SOM Office of Research Administration team for general School of Medicine process overview and to go over the PI Dashboard - contact SOMRESADMIN@vcuhealth.org.
Meet with or write to your department's **OSP Team** and **G&C Accountants** to introduce yourself!

**PRE-AWARD:** If you will be working with investigators to submit proposals, familiarize yourself with the pre-award process:

- Review School of Medicine SOPs on proposal submission, budget development, and internal approvals
- Create a calendar for proposal submissions (or utilize existing one); find out what’s in the pipeline and communicate with your OSP Team
- View OSP’s “Getting Started in RAMS-SPOT: System Overview & Navigation” webinar
- Learn about “Funding Proposal Workflow - Routing and Notifications”
- View all RAMS-SPOT Get Started guides and webinars on OSP’s website
- Bookmark VCU’s Institutional Fact Sheet for use in preparing proposals
- Bookmark VCU’s current Fringe Benefits and Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Rates

**POST-AWARD:** Familiarize yourself with the post-award processes and best practice guides:

- Obtaining SOM Dean’s Office signature on research-related documents
- School of Medicine SOPs on post-award management
- SOM Guidance for Joint Appointment MOUs
- School of Medicine Evaluation of Fixed Price Closeout Requests - Executive Summary
- Review the information on G&C Accounting’s post-award website
- Become familiar with the process for requesting cost share indexes
- Learn about effort reporting in the ECRT system
- Note where to find the research terms and conditions for awards in your department (RAMS-SPOT)

Identify contacts in key areas (i.e. SOM Research Administration, your department’s business office, OSP, G&C Accounting, Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), etc).

Set up a filing system for your department’s sponsored research files (or become familiar with the current system).

Establish a process for monthly reconciliation of awards in your department using the PI Dashboard (i.e. prepare reports, check rate of spending, monitor deficits, meet with PI and discuss expenses and labor charges for that month, etc).

And most of all - ASK QUESTIONS! Writing to SOMRESADMIN@vcuhealth.org is a great place to start if you don’t know who to ask.

You can also read, bookmark, and know the following:

- **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards** (Uniform Guidance - 2 CFR 200)
- **VCU Policy Library** - all research-related policies
- **NIH SF424 (R&R) Application Guide - Forms D**
- **NIH Grants Policy Statement**

If working with research that involves human subjects (clinical research):

**Important links:**

- VCU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- VPRI Clinical Research Compliance program