



School of Medicine Guidance for Joint Appointment MOUs

Purpose

To provide school-level guidance for completion of a Memorandum of Understanding for faculty who conduct sponsored research with **joint** University and Department of Veterans Affairs appointments.

This document applies to all individuals with paid appointments in Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Medicine (VCU) who participate in sponsored research and hold a joint appointment with a Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC).

Requirement

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required to document the appointment title and total professional responsibilities for an investigator who holds paid appointments at both VCU and a VAMC.

VCU's Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) requires, at the point of proposal approval routing, that Schools certify a current MOU is on file for all joint VCU/VAMC appointees.

The MOU must:

- Include disclosure of the breakdown of total professional effort between VCU and the VAMC appointments.
- Include the percentage of effort assigned specifically to research at both VCU and the VAMC.
- Include certification from appropriate parties at both VCU and the VAMC that there is no possibility for dual compensation for the same work; or of an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
- Be updated no less than annually

Relevant Attachment: [SOM Template for VCU/VA Joint Appointment MOU](#)

Process for Maintaining Accurate & Current MOUs:

Annually, SOM will

1. Determine if faculty with joint VA/VCU appointments are currently being compensated for conducting sponsored research at VCU.
2. For each faculty member thus identified, SOM will complete MOU templates and send to Department Administrators for review and editing as necessary.
3. Departments will return the completed MOU with Faculty and Department Chair signatures to SOM within 2 weeks of receipt. *If Department does not return the MOU signed by Faculty and Department Chair within 2 weeks, the Department Chair and Assistant Dean for Research Administration will be notified. If the Department does not return the MOU signed by Faculty and Department Chair within 4 weeks of initial receipt, the Dean will be notified.*
4. SOM will review the MOU, ask for any necessary updates/adjustments, obtain Dean signature, and forward to the VAMC for execution. SOM will request VAMC signatures returned within 2 weeks of receipt. *If the VAMC contact does not return the MOU signed by all parties within 2 weeks of receipt, the ACOS for Research will also be notified.*
5. SOM will distribute fully executed MOUs to the Departments as soon as they are returned from VAMC.

Biannually, SOM will

1. Identify faculty with new joint VA/VCU appointments being compensated for conducting sponsored research at VCU. If new faculty are identified, SOM will follow the above process for initiating a MOU.

Background for VCU/VAMC MOU Requirement

A completed MOU fulfills the requirements of the National Institutes of Health as stated in the Grants Policy Statement dated October/November 2015:

“Investigators with joint appointments at a VAMC (VA hospital) and an affiliated university must have a valid MOU that specifies (at both the university and the VAMC) the title of the investigator’s appointment, distribution of compensation, the responsibilities of the proposed investigator, and the percentage of effort available for research at each institution. The MOU must be signed by the appropriate officials of the recipient and the VAMC, and must be updated with each significant change of the investigator’s responsibilities or distribution of effort and, without a significant change, not less than annually. The joint VA/university appointment of the investigator constitutes 100 percent of his or her total professional responsibilities. However, NIH will recognize such a joint appointment only when a university and an affiliated VA hospital are the parties involved.

A grant application from a university may request the university’s share of an investigator’s salary in proportion to the effort devoted to the research project. The institutional base salary as contained in the individual’s university appointment determines the base for computing that request.

The signature of the AOR of the submitting university on an application to NIH that includes such an arrangement certifies that the individual whose salary is included in the application serves under a joint appointment documented in a formal MOU between the university and the VA, and there is no possibility of dual compensation for the same work or of an actual or apparent conflict of interest.”