

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420**

**VHA HANDBOOK 1200.15(2)
Transmittal Sheet
August 16, 2013**

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA RESEARCH SUPPORT

1. REASON FOR ISSUE. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook defines the criteria for eligibility to receive research support from the Office of Research and Development (ORD). **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 7303.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES. The major change in this VHA Handbook is reflected in paragraph 4, which adds the requirement for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) investigators to use VA email when corresponding about VA research issues, to the extent possible. The 5 year limitation for eligibility for Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service and Clinical Science Research and Development Service was removed as the allowable term may change, subject to funding priorities.

3. RELATED DIRECTIVES. VHA Directive 1200 and VHA Handbook 1200.16.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE. The Office of Research and Development (10P9) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be addressed at (202) 443-5600.

NOTE: Contact information can be found in Appendix A.

5. RESCISSION. VHA Handbook 1200.15, dated May 1, 2006, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION. This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date of August 2018.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: E-mailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List 08/16/13.

CONTENTS

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA RESEARCH SUPPORT

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. Purpose	1
2. Background	1
3. Scope	1
4. Eligibility of the Principal Investigator	1
5. Responsibility of the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Research and Development (R&D)	2
6. Additional Requirements	2
7. Reciprocity	2
8. Exceptions	3
APPENDIX	
A Contact Information	A-1

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA RESEARCH SUPPORT

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook defines the criteria for eligibility to receive research support from the Office of Research and Development (ORD). **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 7303.

2. BACKGROUND

a. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research program is an intramural program. The ORD allocates appropriated medical and prosthetic research funds to VA medical facilities for scientifically meritorious research related to the high-priority health care needs of Veterans to be conducted by VA employees.

b. VA investigators may also obtain funding support for their research from extramural sources, such as other Federal agencies, private voluntary health organizations and foundations, and commercial entities.

c. Unlike agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense, VA does not have the statutory authority to make research grants to colleges and universities, cities, states, or any other non-VA entity.

3. SCOPE

The provisions of this Handbook apply to all research services within the ORD; this includes Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development (BLR&D), Clinical Science Research and Development (CSR&D), Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D), and Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D). **NOTE:** *While the provisions apply to all services, each service may have additional service-specific requirements. Eligibility for ORD Career Development Awards is addressed in VHA Handbook 1200.04 at: http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1458.*

4. ELIGIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

a. Research funds may only be awarded if the Principal Investigator (PI) and any Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) have employment status and activities that demonstrate a primary professional commitment to VA. The eligibility of each prospective PI (and Co-PI) must be established prior to the funding of a research proposal. To demonstrate primary professional commitment to VA, the PI (and Co-PI) must meet all of the following requirements:

(1) **VA Employment Status.** A current VA paid appointment of at least 25 hours per week (5/8ths) is required before a research project can be funded. VA employment status of each PI (and Co-PI, if applicable) must be indicated on the proposal for funding. The signatures of the PI (and Co-PI) and the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Research and Development (R&D) constitute verification and acceptance of the 5/8ths minimum requirement. **NOTE:** *Investigators who receive VA research support, as VA employees, are subject to the Government's ethics laws and rules.*

(2) **Physical Presence at VA.** VA research must be conducted, principally, in a VA facility or VA-leased space. The PI (and Co-PI) must have designated research space within a VA facility or VA-leased space. The specific research performance site address must be indicated on the proposal for funding and verified by the required signatures. Any requests for an exception to the requirement for physical presence in VA space or VA-leased space must be submitted in accordance with procedures described in VHA Handbook 1200.16 at:

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1486.

(3) **VA Information Systems.** To the extent possible, VA investigators should use VA email when conducting VA business. VA investigators must comply with all VA privacy and information security requirements. See VA Handbook 6500 at:

http://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=637&FType=2.

(4) **Commitment to VA.** The PI's (and Co-PI's) curriculum vitae or biographic sketch must provide evidence of past and current roles and responsibilities within VA, including research, patient care, teaching, committee work, etc.

b. Eligibility for VA research support remains in effect either as indicated on the correspondence from the specific service within ORD, or until there is a change in the investigator's status relative to any of the preceding eligibility requirements.

c. Acceptance of VA research funds constitutes acceptance of VHA policy regarding the acknowledgement of VA support in publications and presentations (refer to VHA Handbook 1200.19, at http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1766 for detailed information). All PIs (and any Co-PI) must comply with this policy.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF STAFF (ACOS) FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D)

The ACOS for R&D is responsible for informing the facility Director and the Director of the appropriate research service of any change in the PI's status (for example, if a PI's VA employment status falls below 5/8 time). Written communication to the appropriate research service Director must come from the facility Director with the endorsement of the facility ACOS for R&D and the facility Chief of Staff.

6. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Each research service within ORD may have additional service-specific requirements. These requirements may be found on ORD's Web site at http://www.research.va.gov/services/shared_docs/merit_review_guidance_docs/RequestingAcceptanceIRP.pdf

7. RECIPROCITY

Eligibility determinations are made by the individual research service and these determinations are not reciprocal, except between BLR&D and CSR&D.

8. EXCEPTIONS

To meet special needs of VA, exceptions to the requirements for eligibility are considered on a case-by-case basis. The facility Director, on behalf of the prospective investigator, must submit such requests in writing to the appropriate research service Director, with the endorsement of the facility ACOS for R&D and the facility Chief of Staff. Contact information for the Directors of each research service may be found on ORD's website under each service at <http://www.research.va.gov/services/default.cfm>

AMENDED ON 4/22/2015

August 16, 2013

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APPENDIX A**

CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Inquiries regarding eligibility issues need to be directed to:
 - a. Biomedical Laboratory and Clinical Science Research and Development (10P9B), (202) 443-5600, BLRDCSRd.eligibility@va.gov
 - b. Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (10P9R), (202) 443-5600, rrdreviews@va.gov
 - c. Health Services Research and Development Service (10P9H), (202) 443-5600, Robert.small@va.gov