

SERVICE LEVEL UNDERSTANDING

Effective Date:

July 1st, 2006

Term:

One year, to be reviewed annually 30 days before new fiscal year.

Electronic Submission of Grants in FY07

The upcoming year will see significant changes in the handling of grants by RGC and the RDU as a result of the migration of Federal Agencies (primarily NIH) to online submission of applications. For the first half of the year such submissions will be achieved through the PureEdge system provided by the US Government. In the second half of the year, OHSU will utilize a system-to-system application developed by InfoEd International. At the time this document is undergoing its annual review it is difficult to predict with any certainty how these changes will impact the processes and procedures described in the SLU. It is therefore difficult to make substantial and meaningful changes to last year's document until RGC and RDU have had some experience working in the new environment. Therefore only a few minor changes have been made to the document to reflect the utilization of electronic grant submission systems. All electronic grant applications will be viewed as COMPLEX when referring to the processes, procedures and levels of service described in this SLU.

Purpose of this Document

Research Grants and Contracts (RGC) has an operating budget for the provision of services to entities conducting non-industry sponsored research¹ at OHSU. The purposes of this Service Level Understanding (SLU) are to:

1. Describe the services (Services) to be provided by RGC to Research Departments and Units (RDU) at OHSU.
2. Identify the performance expectations for the Services offered by RGC
3. Identify the obligations and responsibilities of the RDU to permit RGC to meet the stated performance expectations.

Operating Premises

RGC is committed to meeting every grant submission deadline. In the performance of this commitment, RGC may need to set priorities. The provision of the services outlined below is dependent on the RDU meeting its responsibilities as set forth in Schedule 2. Should the RDU be delayed in responding to issues raised by RGC, it may delay the delivery of RGC services. If unforeseen occurrences delay the provision of services by RGC, the RDU will be informed immediately by email and provided with a new timeframe for delivery of services.

¹ Industry sponsored grant and contract services are provided by two offices within Research Development & Administration. All grant and contract services relating to industry sponsored clinical trials are provided by the Clinical Research Program (<http://www.ohsu.edu/research/crp/clintrials.shtml>). All grant and contract services relating to non-clinical industry sponsored research are provided by the Office of Technology & Research Collaborations (<http://www.ohsu.edu/tech-transfer/index.shtml>). RDU should contact the appropriate office to obtain information regarding the services and performance expectations relating to the administration of industry sponsored research.

Services: RGC agrees to provide Services in the manner described herein and in compliance with applicable policies and laws as set forth below:

Research Grant and Contract Services:	See Schedule 1
Research Department/Unit Responsibilities:	See Schedule 2
Administration of this Understanding:	See Schedule 3

SCHEDULE 1

RGC Services

1. General Communication

RGC personnel will respond to RDU phone or email communications within one business day.

2. New Grant Application Receipt

RGC will acknowledge receipt of grant applications by email within one business day. If the application is to be reviewed by anyone other than the designated Grants and Contracts Administrator (GCA) for that RDU, the acknowledgement will identify the alternate GCA who is assuming this responsibility.

3. Grant Application and Contract Proposal Review

Routine grants for which the initial review reveals no outstanding issues will be completely processed (initial review and secondary review) within 6 business days of receipt.

A routine grant will receive a complete review and any comments will be sent to the RDU within 5 business days of receipt in RGC. Complex grants or contract proposals (e.g., P01, P30, P41, P50, T32, U54, RFPs) will be reviewed within 8 business days. If RDU indicates at the time of submission that they perceive potential issues with the grant, RGC will conduct a special pre-review and provide preliminary feedback to RDU within 2 business days.

RGC will respond via email to RDU corrections (1st and subsequent) within two business days of receipt.

RGC Management will perform secondary review of applications and proposals on the same or next business day of submission by GCA. Institutional sign-off or notification that further corrections are required will be provided by email to RDU immediately upon completion of secondary review. Grants requiring further processing after secondary review will be treated as top priority by RGC to resolve.

RGC will notify RDU as soon as signed application pages are ready for pick-up or mailing. RGC will simultaneously provide to RDU:

- A checklist of administrative actions or corrections that RDU must complete before the application is sent to sponsor.
- A Department Award Checklist of administrative actions and regulatory requirements that the PI and RDU are responsible for completing at or before the date that the grant is expected to be awarded.

4. Electronic Submission of Grant Application

Upon receipt of final electronic grant packet from RDU, GCAs will perform final review and make arrangements for approval and electronic submission by Institutional Signing Official (SO) within 4 hours. The SO will perform the electronic submission immediately or no later than 1 hour from the time they receive it from the GCA.

If error and/or warning messages are received by email following submission, the GCA will contact the RDU immediately to resolve them and resubmit the changed/corrected application as necessary. Changed/corrected applications will be treated as the highest priority by RGC staff.

5. Request by Sponsor for Additional or Just-in-Time Information

RGC is responsible for managing requests for additional information or just-in-time information from sponsors and will ensure that sponsor deadlines for this information are met or, as necessary, request extensions to resolve outstanding issues.

In the event that a sponsor request requires RDU action, RGC will notify RDU via email by the next business day after receipt. This communication will include deadline information and the name of the RGC contact for this administrative action.

RGC will acknowledge via email receipt of RDU responses and will notify the RDU via email of any outstanding requirements within two business days of receipt.

RGC Management will perform secondary review of sponsor-requested information within 1.5 business days of completion. Institutional sign-off or notification that further information is required will be provided via email to RDU immediately upon completion of secondary review.

6. Notice of Awards

RGC will forward the sponsor award notices they receive to RDU on the same or next business day.

Unless the award requires administrative actions other than routine evaluation of terms and confirmation of compliance, RGC will forward account set-up packets to SPA within 4 business days of receipt of the award or the documented completion of the Department Award Checklist items by RDU whichever occurs last.

If the award requires additional administrative actions and RGC is responsible for completion (e.g., award negotiation) it will forward the account set-up packet to SPA as soon as it is resolved. If RDU is responsible for completion (e.g., re-budgeting) RGC will notify RDU within 4 business days of receipt of the award. RGC will, within two days of receipt of RDU product, either forward the account set-up packet to SPA or take the next required administrative action (e.g., communicate with sponsor).

In all cases, RGC will notify RDU by email the day the award is sent to SPA.

7. Documents Governing Review of Grant Applications

Grant review in RGC will be guided by the published policies and instructions of the sponsor and, as applicable, the Code of Federal Regulations and OMB Circulars. RGC will also review each grant for conformity with OHSU policies and procedures (see below). For example, NIH grants will be reviewed for conformity to the instructions provided in PHS 398 and PHS 2590, the NIH Grants Policy Statement, as well as additional requirements provided in Program Announcements, Requests for Applications, and the published policies of specific NIH Institutes and Centers. Similar documents provided by DOD, NSF, and non-federal sponsors will determine review criteria for applications to these agencies.

RGC will dedicate itself to the continuing education and support of the research community in understanding the policies and procedures of major sponsors. It will maintain grant development aids on its website, including checklists for standard review and frequently asked questions (FAQs). RGC will use the forum provided by monthly SPIN meetings to announce agency policy changes and discuss their impact on OHSU practices and procedures.

8. Policies and Procedures

RGC will be responsible for the interpretation of sponsor policies and the assessment of their compatibility with those of the University. It will do so with the objective of protecting the University and maintaining regulatory compliance while minimizing the administrative burden on investigators and/or their departmental support staffs. In no circumstance will RGC develop internal policies or procedures that are not directly related to those of granting agencies, except as required by the larger interests of the University, as defined and determined by University policymakers. RGC will be responsive to comments and alternative interpretations of sponsor policies by investigators and their representatives. However, RGC will be the final authority in determining the appropriateness of these alternative interpretations to ensure consistency with RGC guidelines, standard procedures and OHSU policies.

SCHEDULE 2

Research Department/Unit Responsibilities

1. Investigator Support

RDU will provide primary grants administration guidance and support to all investigators within their units in the preparation of grant applications and contract/subcontract proposals, responses to interim sponsor requests, the timely management of all compliance requirements (human, animal, and biohazard protocols, RCR, Conflict of Interest, etc), and other departmental actions required at the time of award.

2. Maintain Expertise

RDU will ensure that department personnel responsible for supporting investigators maintain a high degree of grants administration expertise, including thorough familiarity with the guidelines and regulations of major federal, state, and non-governmental sponsors. RDU grants personnel will attend SPIN meetings on a regular basis and be familiar with written information available in the SPIN Newsletter and the RGC website.

3. Grant Submission Quality and Completeness

RDU will be responsible to render grant applications and contract/subcontract proposals in final or near-final form before submission for review and approval in RGC. Submissions will have been pre-checked for accuracy, completeness, and conformity with sponsor and University policies. Questions regarding interpretation of guidelines or issues of policy or procedure will be directed in advance to RGC.

RDU will ensure that submissions to RGC contain all standard pre-award review materials, as outlined on the RGC website. If RDU foresees that the submission may contain potential issues despite having followed the guidelines and checklists supplied on the RGC web site, it will notify RGC on submission of the grant for review. On receiving such notification RGC will conduct a special pre-review and provide preliminary feedback to RDU within 2 business days.

4. Grant Submission Timeliness

Grant and contract submissions will be made to RGC on the following schedule in advance of the date the application must be mailed to the sponsor:

Routine Grants and Subcontract Proposals: 10 business days
Complex Grants and Contract Proposals: 15 business days

5. Follow-through after Sign-off

RDU will ensure that the following actions are taken after RGC provides institutional approval:

- Complete all agreed correction items before grant submitted
- Return a complete, final copy of the signed application to RGC within 5 business days in pre-addressed envelope provided by RGC

6. Electronic Submission of Grant Application

The final electronic grant application packet must be submitted to the GCA assigned to RDU no later than 3 days prior to the published grant submission deadline. This will ensure that the grant will be submitted by the deadline assuming no errors are detected in the submission process. RDU are encouraged to submit the final grant package to their GCA at least 7 business days prior to the grant submission deadline so that errors can be dealt with while ensuring the grant is received by the published deadline.

If error and/or warning messages are received by email following submission the RDU must contact their GCA immediately to resolve them and resubmit the changed/corrected grant as necessary. The RDU is also responsible for providing the updated cover letter that is necessary for changed/corrected applications. Changed/corrected applications will be treated as the highest priority by RGC staff.

7. Just-in-Time Requests

RDU will be responsible for supporting the investigator in timely responses to sponsor just-in-time requests. This includes:

- Notify RGC of just-in-time requests sent only to PI by the end of the next business day following their receipt.
- Submit sponsor-requested information to RGC for review within 5 business days of departmental notification
- Respond to RGC comments within 2 business days

8. Award Administration

RDU will be responsible for the timely and expeditious processing of all compliance and other departmental award set-up responsibilities in order to facilitate RGC administration of the award. This includes:

- Forward to RGC sponsor award notices, subcontracts, and contracts sent exclusively to PI within two business days
- Treat just-in-time requests as advance award notices, acting immediately to complete all outstanding compliance requirements as soon as possible
- Complete all compliance items on Department Award Checklist before or immediately upon receipt of award
- Respond to RGC notice of additional departmental award actions within two business days

9. Internal Communications

RDU will:

- Respond to RGC phone calls and email communications within one business day
- Respond to RGC review comments (1st and subsequent) within two business days
- Notify RGC within 5 business days of not-funded notice

10. External Communications

RDU will work through RGC in all communications with sponsor grants management personnel or institutional officials of collaborating organizations. PI and RDU will be responsible for communications with sponsor program officials and collaborating PIs.

SCHEDULE 3

Administration of this Understanding

Oversight and Authority

1. Ultimate oversight responsibility (and contact information)

The Vice President for Research is responsible for the activities of Research Grants and Contracts and its Director. The Vice President for Research will resolve any issues arising as from this SLU when the Director of RGC and RDU cannot come to agreement. The Vice President for Research will monitor the activities of RGC and its Director to ensure that they provide the Services described in this document.

Vice President for Research:

Daniel Dorsa, Ph.D.
Office of the Vice President for Research, L335
Tel: 503-494-1085
Email: dorsad@ohsu.edu

2. RGC Responsibility (and contact information):

The Director of RGC is responsible for all activities within RGC and is charged with ensuring that the Services described in this document are provided as stated. When Services are not provided as described in this document, the RDU should immediately contact the Director who will attempt to resolve the issues. The Director will keep a log of all instances when RGC has not met the level of service laid out in this document and will review it with the Vice President for Research at a regular interval.

Director of RGC:

Thomas Marcussen
Research Grants and Contracts, L106
Tel: 503-418-4430
Email: marcusse@ohsu.edu

3. Times of Availability:

Normal working hours for Research Grants and Contracts are Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.