

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA RESEARCH SUPPORT HANDBOOK

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook replaces VHA Handbook 1200.15, dated April 24, 2001.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES

a. Paragraph 2c: States that within Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service and Clinical Science Research and Development Service eligibility expires for non-clinicians in 5 years if they have not obtained Merit Review funding during that time period.

b. Paragraph 3: States that there is reciprocity for eligibility between Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development (BLR&D) Service and Clinical Science Research and Development (CSR&D) Service.

3. RELATED DIRECTIVE. VHA Directive 1200.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE. The Office of Research and Development (12) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be addressed to 202-254-0183.

5. RESCISSION. VHA Handbook 1200.15, dated April 24, 2001, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date of May 2011.

Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 5/3/06
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 5/3/06

CONTENTS

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA RESEARCH SUPPORT HANDBOOK

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. Purpose	1
2. Background	1
3. Requirements	1
4. Reciprocity	2
5. Exceptions	2
6. Inquiries	2
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). Eligibility requirements for ORD Career Development Programs are to be found on the ORD web site at: <http://www.va.gov/research>. **NOTE:** *The provisions of this Handbook apply to all research services within the ORD (Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development (BLR&D), Clinical Science Research & Development (CSR&D), Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D), and Health Services Research and Development Service[HSR&D]).*

2. BACKGROUND

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.

a. 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.

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

3. REQUIREMENTS

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. The PI (and co-PI) must meet all of the following requirements:

a. **VA Employment Status.** A current VA paid appointment of at least 5/8 time 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/acceptance of the 5/8 minimum requirement.

b. **Physical Presence at VA.** VA research must be conducted, principally, on VA premises. The PI (and co-PI) must have designated research space within a VA medical center. The specific research performance site address must be indicated on the proposal for funding and verified by the required signatures. **NOTE:** *See VHA Handbook 1200.16 for further information on conducting research off of VA premises.*

c. **Commitment to VA.** The PIs (and co-PIs) curriculum vitae or biographic sketch is expected to provide evidence of past and current roles and responsibilities within VA, including research, patient care, teaching, committee work, etc.

d. **Terms.** Eligibility for VA research support remains in effect either as indicated on the correspondence from the specific service within ORD or unless or until there is a change in the investigator's status relative to any of the preceding requirements. **NOTE:** *Within BLR&D and CSR&D eligibility for non-clinicians expires in 5 years if the investigator has not received Merit Review funding during that time period.*

(1) The ACOS for R&D is responsible for informing the Director of the appropriate research service of any change in the investigator's status (for example, if a PI's VA employment status falls below 5/8).

(2) By accepting VA research funds, the investigator (and any co-investigators) is expected to comply with VHA policy regarding the acknowledgement of VA support in publications and presentations (refer to VHA Handbook 1200.19 for detailed information).

e. **Additional Requirements.** Each research service within ORD may have additional service specific requirements. These requirements may be found on ORD's website under each service.

4. RECIPROCITY

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

5. EXCEPTIONS

To meet special needs of VA, exceptions to the requirements for eligibility are considered on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be submitted by the medical center Director in a letter to the Director of the appropriate research service, with the endorsement of the ACOS for R&D and the Chief of Staff, on behalf of the prospective investigator, and include detailed supporting documents. All exceptions to VA eligibility rules must be approved by the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO). Any requests for exception to the requirement for physical presence at a VA are to be submitted in accordance with procedures described in the VHA Handbook 1200.16, Off-Site Research. **NOTE:** *Because of the nature and requirements of the NIH K-award, special consideration will be given, on a case by case basis, to requests from facilities seeking eligibility waivers for the duration of the K-Award for investigators who are both recipients of NIH K-Awards and VA employees.*

6. INQUIRIES

Information regarding points of contact for eligibility issues is contained in Appendix A.

CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Inquiries regarding eligibility issues need to be directed to:

a. **Biomedical Laboratory and Clinical Science Research and Development (121E),**
(202) 254-0273

b. **Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (122),** (202) 254-0265

c. **Health Services Research and Development Service (124P),** (202) 254-0270

2. **Information forwarded by mail or overnight delivery needs to be addressed to the Department of Veterans Affairs, as follows:**

a. **Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development**

Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development (121E)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0273

b. **Clinical Science Research and Development**

Clinical Science Research and Development (125)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0273

c. **Rehabilitation Research and Development Service**

Rehabilitation R&D Service (122)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0265

d. **Health Services Research and Development Service**

Health Services R&D Service (124P)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0207