

STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) PROPOSAL REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE (PRS)

1. POLICY: The Proposal Review Subcommittee (PRS) is the entity established to ensure the maintenance of a Research and Development (R&D) program at the VA Medical Center with high scientific standards by performing review of research proposals for scientific quality, appropriateness and relevance of research to, and in support of, VHA's mission. The PRS will serve as a subcommittee to the R&D committee. The members of the subcommittee are appointed by the Medical Center Director. The Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS for R&D) will serve as the Chair of the Committee. Members must have scientific training, and be knowledgeable about research methodology and the review of research projects.

2. PURPOSE: The Proposal Review Subcommittee's major responsibility is the scientific review of new research projects. When requested by the R&D committee, the members of the PRS will assist in the review of other scientific programs.

3. PROCEDURES:

Research proposals will be reviewed by the Proposal Review Subcommittee. Once the proposal is submitted to the Proposal Review Coordinator the following steps are followed:

(1) The coordinator will bring the proposal to the attention of the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOSR&D) who will identify and assign reviewers based on their scientific knowledge and field of research.

(2) The Proposal Review Coordinator forwards the complete proposal packet and review work sheets to the assigned reviewers.

(3) Assigned reviewers have approximately 2 weeks to complete their review. If the reviewers need additional information from the investigator, they forward their questions, comments and suggestions to the Investigator. The Reviewer will provide the written response to the Investigator and the Committee Coordinator. It is the Investigators responsibility to address all areas of concern in the review prior to the next fully convened subcommittee meeting. The Committee Coordinator must be included on all relevant correspondence related to the scientific review to ensure the most current and accurate information is provided on the relevant committee agenda.

(4) The Investigator is expected to submit a response to the questions, concerns or comments provided by the Reviewer but are not required necessarily to modify or amend the submitted proposal. The PRC Chair or the R&D Chair may provide guidance to the Investigator on any issues or concerns as applicable.

(5) The review completed by the PRC will focus on methodology and scientific value. The relevant subcommittee will be responsible for all issues directly related to safety, human protection and animal welfare.

(6) Completed reviews will be made available for discussions by the Subcommittee for Research Safety, IACUC, Institutional Review Board and the Research and Development Committee. The committees may invite the principal investigator and/or the reviewer to present the proposal or the review.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROPOSAL REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE:

- a. Based on the recommendations of the Chair of the subcommittee (the ACOS for Research), the R&D Committee will approve the membership after discussion of the scientific qualifications of the reviewers. However, the members are appointed by the Medical Center Director (MCD) of the VA Medical Center.
- b. Members are appointed for three years. They may be re-appointed by the MCD for additional terms after the approval of the R&D Committee. Members may be appointed to the subcommittee any number of times.
- c. Members will receive a copy of the PRS SOP and all relevant forms as applicable at the time of their appointment.
- d. Membership of the subcommittee is limited to individuals with research experience as ascertained by adequate scientific training, publications, membership in national and international review panels and other criteria set forward by the R&D Committee.
- e. Membership in the proposal review committee will be recognized as contribution of time and effort towards the overall function of VA Research in particular and the VA Medical Center in general. The members are not required to have a VA or WOC appointment but must be knowledgeable regarding the VA's requirements.
- f. The Committee Chair may utilize ad hoc members for specialized areas of research or as needed to support the program.

5. RECORDS MAINTENANCE: The reviews and recommendations of the Proposal Review Subcommittee will be maintained as a paper or electronic copy as per VA regulations based on RCS-10.