

Frequently Asked Questions

For RAMS-SPOT

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Research Administration Management System – Sponsored Programs Online Tracking

Table of Contents

Implementation	2
System Access.....	3
Routing and Approvals	3
Funding Proposal	3
Proposal Title & Contacts	3
Space and Collaboration.....	5
Other Submission Details	5
Budget	5
Personnel.....	6
F&A	6
Federal Grants	7
NIH.....	7
Clinical Trials.....	7
Compliance	7
Uploading	8
Training.....	8
Concerns and Enhancements	8
Miscellaneous	9

Implementation

- When is the RAMS-SPOT pilot testing?

Some form of “hands on” access is tentatively scheduled to begin in March 2015. The RAMS-SPOT production system will be available on March 25. Currently, a plan for pilot testing is being coordinated with CAR members. The pilot will help confirm that routing and notifications are working as designed. If you are interested in participating in the “pilot” phase of the implementation, please contact your CAR committee member.

- When will I be required to use RAMS-SPOT for my proposal submission?

Phase 1 implementation of RAMS-SPOT is scheduled for May through December 2015. During this time, the preparation, routing, review, and submission of all the following: proposals, Confidentiality Disclosure Agreements (CDAs), Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), Data Use Agreements (DUAs), agreements including Master Agreements, and Just in Time requests will be in the RAMS-SPOT system.

- Who will select which proposals will be submitted as pilots?

The CAR committee members will be selecting the pilot participants and proposals for their school.

- Do I have to participate in pilot testing?

As with most system pilots, those who are interested in participating make the best candidates. Unless deemed otherwise by your CAR member, you will not have to participate in the pilot testing of RAMS-SPOT.

- Do I have to submit my NIH application in RAMS-SPOT for the February / March 2015 deadlines?

No. In order to ease the transition to the new system as much as possible, NIH applications for the February / March 2015 deadlines will be submitted in VCUeRA InfoEd.

- After March 2015, can I still submit my NIH application in VCUeRA InfoEd?

No. At this time, NIH applications must be submitted in RAMS-SPOT.

- When will awards be processed in RAMS-SPOT?

Awarding in RAMS-SPOT is scheduled to begin October 2015. Prior to this date, all awards will be processed in VCUeRA InfoEd.

- How will the transition from VCUeRA InfoED to RAMS-SPOT affect year end award reporting?

VCUeRA will be the system of record for award reporting through FY15. Reporting for FY16 will be done in RAMS-SPOT.

System Access

- Is special permission needed to access RAMS-SPOT?

No. All VCU staff, faculty, and students will have access through their VCU eid.

- Is there any mandatory training required prior to creating a proposal?

No. Everyone is strongly encouraged to access the online tutorials and take advantage of training opportunities.

Routing and Approvals

- How will routing and approval work?

When submitting a funding proposal in RAMS-SPOT, you will be required to select the units to approve the funding proposal. The approval list (unit) for each school will be set up and maintained by the CAR committee member. A notification will be sent to unit approvers notifying them that one of the following actions is required.

- Disapprove
- Request for Changes
- Approve

Once approval is received from all units, the funding proposal will move forward.

- Access / routing – when do you get notifications?

Notifications in the form of an email will be sent to unit approvers, and an action will be required in order for the funding proposal to move forward. At this time it is still to be determined if notifications will be included as part of the “Edit Access” and “View Access” selections on the *Proposal Title & Contacts* view in the funding proposal.

- Who needs to approve a funding proposal?

The *Funding Proposal Approval List* for each school (unit) will be setup and maintained by the CAR committee members.

Funding Proposal

Proposal Title & Contacts

- What is the Funding Proposal (FP) number in RAMS-SPOT?

It is the unique tracking number assigned by RAMS-SPOT to a funding proposal.

- With the roll out of the new system, will I still need to request an advanced PT number?

No. All submissions will be required to use RAMS-SPOT and will be automatically assigned an FP number.

- How and when do I get my unique tracking number (FP number)?

A unique tracking number (FP number) will be assigned to each funding proposal after completing the first Smart Form view (*Proposal Title and Contacts*) in RAMS-SPOT. You may see your funding proposal number immediately by clicking “save” or “continue.” The funding proposal number and title will display in the upper right hand corner of the Smart Form view.

- What do I do if my sponsor isn’t listed for selection?

If your sponsor does not appear on the “select sponsor” pop up menu, there is a field where you can type in the name of the sponsor. It is strongly recommended to avoid using acronyms whenever possible and enter the full legal name of the entity.

- What does *Fiscally Administering Unit* mean?

On the *Proposal Title and Contacts* view, you will be required to select the *Fiscally Administering Unit* (FA Unit). The FA Unit is the department responsible for the award’s expenditure oversight, will receive credit for the award, and will receive associated indirect cost return.

- How does *Edit Access* work?

By selecting a *Fiscally Administering Unit* (FA Unit), you are granting “edit access” to that unit. The FA unit will be a list of individuals as determined by the CAR committee member for each school.

- How does *View Access* work?

On the *Proposal Title & Contacts* view, you will have the option of adding one or more *Units with View Access* to the funding proposal. This will give the selected units view access to the funding proposal. The unit will be a list of individuals as determined by the CAR committee member for each school.

Note: It is a recommended internal procedure when adding personnel from other units (schools) to a funding proposal to also grant view access to the unit (school) and contact the appropriate individuals at that department.

- How do you know which OSP team to select?

Charts listing the OSP teams by department and by school can be found on the OSP website under contact information.

Space and Collaboration

- The building list doesn't include my location. What do I do?

This abridged list of buildings on the *Space and Collaboration* Smart Form view relates to our need to report against bond issuances. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of performance sites.

Other Submission Details

- What does the deadline to OSP refer to?

On the *Submission Dates* view of the Funding Proposal, the deadline for submission to OSP is calculated based on the sponsor published deadline. The deadline for submission to OSP will be calculated automatically based on five business days prior to the sponsor published deadline as required by the Sponsored Programs Proposal Submission Deadlines Policy.

If there is not a sponsored published deadline associated with the project, then an OSP deadline will not be automatically generated.

Budget

- How does the system know which items are excluded in an MTDC budget?

When adding *General Costs* for a MTDC budget in the *Primary Budget*, items will be excluded from indirect costs as per the current negotiated agreement. When an item that is excluded, for example: Fellowships, is added to the *General Costs Grid*, the checkbox for "apply indirects (MTDC)" will be blank and indirects will not be calculated for that line item. You may override the default by manually entering a check in the checkbox which will result in indirects being calculated and added to the overall budget for that item.

- What does MTDC mean?

As per Section 200.68 of the Office of Management Budget Uniform Guidance, MTDC (Modified Total Direct Cost) "means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and subawards up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subaward)."

- How will sub accounts work?

When entering the *Primary Budget*, you will be asked if there are internal subaccounts associated with the project on the *Budget Characteristics* view. By selecting "yes", you will then be directed to enter the specific sub account information (unit, direct costs, and indirect costs) on the *Internal Subaccount* table.

Personnel

- How do I enter personnel who have both a 9 month and a 3 month appointment type?

In order to enter a 9 month and 3 month appointment type for the same employee, two separate lines must be added on the *Personnel Grid* in the *Primary Budget*, one for the nine month time and one for the three month time.

- How often are salaries updated in RAMS-SPOT?

Salaries will be updated in RAMS-SPOT monthly.

- Can you override a pre-entered salary?

Yes. You can override a pre-entered salary by typing over the default salary on the *Personnel Grid* in the *Primary Budget*.

- How do I document compliance with the *Minimum Effort for Key Personnel on Sponsored Programs* policy (i.e. documenting at least 1% effort) if sponsor funds don't cover PI effort?

You should create a cost share budget to record voluntary cost share.

F&A

- How will F&A calculations work?

F&A calculations are based on the *Recovery Rate Details* entered on the *Budget Indirect Rate Schedule* in the *Primary Budget*. Your selection of Rate Type (TDC or MTDC) and Rate % (system default = 52.5%) will determine the F&A calculations as costs are added to the *General Costs* budget grid. You may override the system default and enter a different recovery rate if applicable to your project.

- How do cost categories that are exempt from F&A work?

When adding *General Costs* in the *Primary Budget*, cost categories that are exempt from F&A will be added without a check in the "Apply Indirects" checkbox as the default. RAMS-SPOT will automatically exclude F&A from the budget totals for these cost categories (for example: Patient Care Costs). You may override the default by manually checking the "Apply Indirects" checkbox for the line item in which case F&A will be calculated and added to overall budget.

Federal Grants

- How do I submit a Federal Grant through grants.gov?

In the *General Proposal Information* view, select “electronic via grants.gov”. In the *Federal Grant Information* view, select the “funding opportunity number.” Some components of the application, such as the budget, will map to the built SF424. Once the *Smart Form* and the *Budget* are completed, then you will be able to build your SF424.

- Can I create and submit my NSF proposal through research.gov instead of grants.gov?

Yes. In the *General Proposal Information* view, select “other” instead of “electronic via grants.gov.”

NIH

- How will NIH multi-project proposals be submitted?

They will be submitted via the ASSIST system. They will not be submitted as grants.gov packages through RAMS-SPOT. In the *General Proposal Information* view, select “other” instead of “electronic via grants.gov.”

- How much budget detail should I provide in RAMS-SPOT for a multi-project (ASSIST) proposal?

You will need to provide a cumulative budget in RAMS-SPOT. The individual project budgets will be part of the full submission package and saved as a .pdf.

Clinical Trials

- Can I provide a detailed excel spreadsheet as an attachment and use summary amounts in the budget grid?

Yes.

- Is there a way to designate billing compliance documents as preliminary or final?

Yes. You have the ability in the *Budget Clinical Trial / Clinical Research* view to designate preliminary or final to the documents you upload.

Compliance

- Why doesn't the *Funding Proposal* request the IRB and IACUC approval numbers?

Typically this information is pending at proposal time. Specific protocol numbers are usually needed just before the award. Direct funding from DHHS also requires a congruence review which is performed just before award.

- When are the IRB and IACUC approvals required?

They are required at JIT (Just in Time) time.

Uploading

- Should a contract be uploaded as a word .doc rather than a .pdf?

Yes, contracts requiring review and negotiation should be uploaded as word documents.

- Can an excel file be uploaded?

RAMS-SPOT is capable of uploading many different file formats including excel; however, only .pdf files should be uploaded in the SF424 section. The SF424 process will only work with .pdf files.

- What formats can be uploaded for a grants.gov submission?

The grants.gov and SF424 process will only work with .pdf files.

Training

- Will there be training for PI's?

An on-line library of self-paced learning tutorials is available to guide PI's and administrators through the process of entering funding proposals and budgets in RAMS-SPOT. There will also be some form of "hands on" access prior to going live with the new system. Any technical questions should be directed to erahelp@vcu.edu. You can also contact Cathy Short to schedule an onsite training session for your group.

- How will training in RAMS-SPOT be provided?

An on-line library of self-paced learning tutorials is available to guide PI's and administrators through the process of entering funding proposals and budgets in RAMS-SPOT. There will also be some form of "hands on" access prior to going live with the new system. Any technical questions should be directed to erahelp@vcu.edu. You can also contact Cathy Short to schedule an onsite training session for your group.

Concerns and Enhancements

- To whom should you send concerns, suggestions, etc.?

You are welcome to send any concerns, comments, or suggestions about the RAMS-SPOT system to OSP to the attention of Annie Publow, Melanie Wiggins, or Cathy Short.

Miscellaneous

- Will I need to complete an IAF (Internal Approval Form) in addition to entering the Funding Proposal?

No. The Smart Form takes the place of the IAF (Internal Approval Form). It will not be necessary to complete an IAF (Internal Approval Form) in addition to entering a funding proposal in RAMS-SPOT.