# Getting a Research Project Approved at the Charleston VA: Brief Outline & Contact Information

1. **Determine if your project meets the definition of VA Research.**

   **What is VA Research?** VA research is research that is conducted by VA investigators (serving on compensated, WOC or IPA appointments) while on VA time. The research may be funded by VA, by other sponsors, or be unfunded. VA research must have R&D Committee approval.

2. **Determine if you can be a VA Investigator.**

   **What is a VA Investigator?** A VA investigator is any individual who conducts research approved by the VA R&D Committee while acting under a VA appointment on VA time, including full and part-time compensated employees, trainees, without compensation (WOC) employees, and individuals appointed or detailed to VA under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970.

   ***NOTE***: Contractors cannot be VA Investigators. Trainees (e.g. students, residents, or fellows of any profession) may serve as participants, but not PIs within a VA facility.

## All Submission information and forms can be found on the Charleston VAMC website:

3. **Determine what subcommittee approvals you need for your project.**

   VA has subcommittees that report to the R&D Committee. They include the MUSC IRB, IACUC and Subcommittee for Research Safety. Project submissions to these subcommittees can be done all at the same time, but relevant subcommittee approvals must be obtained before you can submit for R&D approval. See the below process flow map for how approvals work.

   Research Flow Map.pdf

   a. **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** All studies involving human subjects or the use of identified human samples or data must be approved by the MUSC IRB.
      - VA PIs obtaining approval from the MUSC IRB must have an MUSC sponsored account to submit to the MUSC IRB. Study team members listed in the IRB submission require a MUSC sponsored account. If you do not have one, contact your PI or department administrator.
      - Projects submitted to the MUSC IRB require a pre-review by the Privacy Officer, the Information Security Officer and the Compliance Officer.
      - The only projects that may be reviewed by another IRB are multi-site VA funded studies such as Cooperative Studies and Merit awards that are reviewed by the VA Central IRB.
   b. **Subcommittee for Research Safety (SRS)** – must review and approve all new projects.
      - Laboratory Annual Self-Inspection Forms (LASIFs) are required for all research laboratories at the VA that involve biological hazards, radiation hazards,

chemicals and/or animals. New PIs have 90 days after initiating work in their laboratories to submit a new LASIF. Annually the SRS reviews completed LASIFs. This document applies only to:

    i. Projects being conducted at the VA
    ii. Projects administered by Charleston Research Institute (CRI) or VA

- If you are not sure what your project requires, you can contact the Administrative Office or the SRS chair for clarification.
- If you are using Recombinant DNA, you will also require Institutional Biosafety Committee approval prior to commencing work. Contact the Administrative Office for more information.

c. **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)** – must approve all projects involving experiments with animals.
    - All protocols must have a veterinary consultation prior to review by the IACUC. Completed ACORPs/animal protocols can be sent to M.A. McCrackin at mary.mccrackin@va.gov.
    - Projects that are funded by VA must be reviewed by the VA IACUC regardless of where the studies will be performed. These projects must use the VA ACORP forms.
    - Projects funded by sources other than VA where procedures are performed at the VA must be reviewed by the VA IACUC. These projects must use the VA ACORP forms.
    - No project involving the use of animal subjects can be undertaken until approved by the IACUC and the R&D Committee.
    - All protocol changes and any changes in personnel must be approved by the IACUC.

d. **Research & Development Committee (R&D):** All relevant subcommittee approvals must be obtained before your project can be submitted for review by the R&D Committee.
    - **NO WORK CAN BE PERFORMED ON A PROJECT UNTIL NOTIFICATION TO INITIATE RESEARCH HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE ACOS/R.**
    - The basic R&D submission can be found on the forms page of the website using the link above.
    - Based on the types of research that you are doing, you may also be required to scan and upload signed copies of any of the following forms (see forms page for more information):
        i. Budget
        ii. Proposal (grant, science portion)
        iii. Assessment of clinical impact
        iv. Conflict of interest for all PIs and CO-Is
        v. Data security checklist
        vi. SRS or Biosafety approvals
        vii. MUSC IRB approvals
            - Human subjects would include additional forms such as:
                a. HIPAA authorization/revocation

b. Drugs
c. Devices
d. Additional data security forms (depending on where the data will reside, who it is transferred to, etc.)
e. If data or specimens are housed off-site, please contact the R&D Chair and Research Administration Office to determine if an offsite waiver is required or if specimens are housed onsite and you need assistance with onsite banking forms.

4. **Determine what training and credentials you will need**

To perform research at the Charleston VA, numerous training requirements must be satisfied for all research personnel (including the PI, technicians, coordinators, etc.).

- If you are not a VA employee, you will need to apply for without compensation status (WOC).
- Current training requirements can be found on the Forms and Training page.

5. **If you need additional assistance, contact one of the following Research personnel:**

The Administrative team is responsible for budgets, travel, timekeeping, human resource actions for all research position descriptions (PDs), VA Merit Submissions, RDIS reports, and procurement and contracting.

| Name | Title | Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| Rudell Ryant, MBA | R&D Coordinator | Rudell.ryant@va.gov |
| Jenna Gillis, MS | IACUC Coordinator | gillis@musc.edu |
| Brittany Shore | SRS Coordinator | Brittany.Shore@va.gov |
| Sarah Jackson, MA | Grants Manager | Sarah.Jackson@va.gov |
| Beth Gibbs, RN | Research Compliance Officer | Beth.Gibbs@va.gov |
| Amy Bradshaw, PhD | IACUC Chair | bradshaw@musc.edu |
| Richard Klein, PhD | SRS Chair | Kleinrl@musc.edu |
| Jeff Jones, PhD | R&D Chair | jonesja@musc.edu |
| John Midolo, MPH, BS | Administrative Officer | John.Midolo@va.gov |
| Charles Holloman | WOC Coordinator | Charles.holloman@va.gov |