

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Holding a faculty appointment at Emory University and at the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) can be cause for confusion, especially when it comes to the (Memorandum of Understanding), a federally required document. Below we have documented the most commonly asked questions related to the MOU. If you have a question that is not addressed here, please contact the appropriate representative in your school:

School of Medicine contact is Patricia Haugaard at [phaugaa@emory.edu](mailto:phaugaa@emory.edu)

School of Public Health contact is Dean Surbey at [psurbey@emory.edu](mailto:psurbey@emory.edu)

School of Nursing contact is Teresa Sussman at [tpoint@emory.edu](mailto:tpoint@emory.edu)

Yerkes Nonhuman Primate Center contact is Martha Walsh at [mwals01@emory.edu](mailto:mwals01@emory.edu)

**What is the VA MOU?** It is an NIH required document that assures the federal government that there is no possibility of overlap in effort and/or dual compensation for the same work.

1. **Who should complete an MOU?** All Emory faculty members who are also *paid* employees of the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and who **engage in federally funded research at either or both institutions that is routed through the University** must complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). *If the Emory Faculty member cost shares salary support with the VA, then an MOU is also required.*
2. **When should an MOU be completed?**
  - a. At a minimum, an annual MOU should be completed each year to confirm current commitment.
  - b. A proposed MOU should accompany all grant proposals outlining what the new commitment would be should the grant be funded.
  - c. A revised MOU should be submitted at the Just in Time stage to document the new distribution of effort based on the new grant funding. (Please note that OSP will not be able to release funding until the signed form is completed.)
3. **Is it allowable for an 8/8<sup>th</sup> VA investigator to also do Emory research?** Yes, this can be accomplished in two ways (either require approval by the VA):
  - a. The additional research time can be added to university effort on the Emory side of the MOU (up to 20 hours Emory + 40 hours VA = 60 hours total professional effort), or
  - b. The additional research time can be added as release time at the VA through the cost sharing process (requires that the investigator is not receiving grant salary for this additional effort).

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4. **Can an 8/8<sup>th</sup> VA investigator add Emory salary to the grant proposal?** Yes, but only if the investigator had a permanent, paid, part-time appointment already established with his/her Emory department with available time on that appointment for the research effort. If there is no paid appointment in place and the research activity supports the VA mission and is performed at the VA, then the Emory research should be cost shared to the VA.
5. **What about K awards for VA faculty?** K awards are different in that the federal government requires the applicant have a full-time appointment at the Academic institution (36 hour or more is considered full time at Emory) with a specific percent of that appointment committed to the K award. (see the NIH K Kiosk for details about each K award) They can also have a paid VA appointment but the total hours cannot exceed 60.
  - a. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-036.html>
  - b. At the time of initial award, all candidates must meet the full-time appointment requirement as well as the minimum 75% effort requirement. Under the new policy, K awardees may request (see below) to reduce their appointment to less than full-time (but not less than three-quarter time) for a period not to exceed 12 continuous months during the K award project period. However, awardees may not simultaneously request a reduction in appointment status from full-time to part-time AND a reduction in percent effort to less than 75% (see above for existing policy on temporary reduction in percent effort). Note that these two options are only available after a K award has been issued. At the time of application and initial award, all candidates must meet the full-time appointment requirement as well as the minimum 75% effort requirement.
6. **Does the proposed MOU need to be routed for signatures and who signs?** A RAS Unit member may initiate the Proposed MOU but the faculty will have to review and submit the MOU for routing. Because the proposed MOU is used as an internal control and is not a federally required document, we require the minimum number of signatures to insure appropriate approval will be in place if the proposal is funded. Approval/Signatures required for a Proposed MOU include: 1) the Faculty involved with the proposal, 2) the VA Associate Chief of Staff for Research (or their designee), and 3) the signatory for the Emory School.
7. **What if I haven't completed an MOU before, how do I get started?** You should log into the Electronic MOU website using your Emory credentials and select "New Faculty Proposed MOU". You can then complete the right hand side of the form or name a proxy to complete it for you.
8. **Can an 8/8<sup>th</sup> VA faculty member perform Emory duties during the 8 hour commitment to the VA?** Not without specific approval. In general the commitment to the VA is very specific and clearly states that only VA related activities can be done during that

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commitment unless doing basic research that is approved by the R&D Committee and done at the VA.

9. **For a dual appointment (effort and salary from both the VA and Emory) should the total professional effort be used to calculate the effort/person months on a grant proposal in which the study will be performed on Emory time?** NO, federal regulations require that only the base salary of the applying institution be used. Therefore, a grant budget submitted through Emory should reflect the Emory base salary and portion of that salary to be paid from the grant.
10. **How do I explain that to NIH?** NIH sees applications from VA faculty with dual appointments regularly. It is recommended that you add a statement of Joint Appointment Disclosure to the budget justification. Example below:
  - a. Dr. XX has an appointment with Emory University and with the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC). This arrangement is defined in a formal joint Appointment Memorandum of Understanding. The institutional base salary used in this application represents the University's salary, and it does not include salary from the VAMC appointment. Dr. XX has a 5/8<sup>th</sup> appointment at the VAMC. He/She is contributing 4.5 person months (33.75%) Emory effort to this application. This represents 15% of their total professional effort. {enter grant specific number in underlined areas}
11. **What is an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA)?** Under VA directive 5334 (9/27/2000) an IPA is the "Temporary assignment of employees between federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments, institutions of higher education, and other eligible organizations." For the purposes of agreements where VA employees are on assignment to Emory, only permanent, full-time Title 5 employees will be considered for temporary assignment. For the purposes of Emory employees on assignment to VA in support of VA funded projects, please contact Tony Laracuenta at [antonio.laracuenta03@va.gov](mailto:antonio.laracuenta03@va.gov). These agreements should be routed through OSP like any other federal agreement. The invoicing for these is managed through the Office of Grants and Contracts.
12. **What is a Memorandum of Personnel Support?** A Memo of Understanding is used when a VA Foundation (known as the Atlanta Research and Education Foundation) employee is going to be assigned to an Emory grant for a specified period of time. (The reverse is unusual but could also be done under the same agreement). These agreements are reviewed by the School and the invoicing is done by the department.
13. **Do I need to include my VA activity on the Other Support pages?** YES, NIH is interested in evaluating each investigator's total professional activity to ensure no scientific or budgetary overlap is occurring with a pending grant application.
14. **I have an 8/8<sup>th</sup> VA appointment with a flexible work commitment so I can spend one day a week at Emory to do my research on my part-time Emory salary. Do I still need to cost**

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**share my university research effort to the VA?** NO, if you have a consistent part-time appointment with salary and the research is being done at Emory then you can put the effort on your Emory salary. Note that it cannot exceed the standing part-time appointment. If, however, the research is being done at the VA, then it should be cost shared to the VA regardless of the Emory appointment.

15. **My proposal is nearing the agency deadline and my MOU has not yet been signed in the online system. Can I submit a paper copy of the MOU to route with the grant proposal?**  
NO, paper MOUs are no longer allowed.