

University-VA Joint Appointments

Faculty, staff and students at Case Western Reserve University (“CWRU”) may, from time to time, be involved in professional activities (teaching, research, service, or clinical care) at both CWRU and a Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital. Generally, this requires a joint appointment at each institution. Moreover, these activities may involve research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The following NIH policy statement pertains to this joint appointment arrangement:

“Investigators with joint appointments at a VAMC (VA hospital) and an affiliated university must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that specifies the title of the investigator’s appointment, the responsibilities (at both the university and the VAMC) of the proposed investigator, and the percentage of effort available for research. The MOU must be signed by the appropriate officials of the grantee and the VAMC, and must be updated with each significant change of the investigator’s responsibilities or distribution of effort and, without a significant change, not less than annually. The joint VA/university appointment of the investigator constitutes 100 percent of his or her total professional responsibilities. However, NIH will recognize such a joint appointment only when a university and an affiliated VA hospital are the parties involved.

A grant application from a university may request the university’s share of an investigator’s salary in proportion to the effort devoted to the research project. The institutional base salary as contained in the individual’s university appointment determines the base for computing that request.

The signature of the Authorized Organizational Official (AOO) of the submitting university on an application to NIH that includes such an arrangement certifies that

- *the individual whose salary is included in the application serves under a joint appointment documented in a formal MOU between the university and the VA, and*
- *there is no possibility of dual compensation for the same work or of an actual or apparent conflict of interest.”*

In order to comply with this NIH policy, faculty, staff and students who are listed (or anticipate being listed) on pending NIH proposals or active NIH awards and who have or anticipate a joint appointment at CWRU and a VA Hospital need to complete a joint appointment Memorandum of Understanding form each year. This form needs to be signed by the appropriate officials at CWRU (i.e., Department Chairperson, Dean’s Office, and Research Administration Office) and the VA hospital (e.g., Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Chief of Staff). It is recommended that, for faculty, the form should be completed each year as part of the faculty reappointment process and, for staff and students, prior to the start of the fiscal or academic year, as appropriate. Per the NIH policy, the form needs to be updated when there is a significant change (i.e., a reduction of 25% or more) in the individual’s responsibilities or distribution of effort. Questions or concerns about this policy should be referred to the appropriate Research Administration office.

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