



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER
AT HOUSTON

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON

Developed by the UT-Houston Research Council June 1999

This document, prepared by the UT-Houston Research Council, provides some practical information to guide research practices at our institution. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid misunderstandings and consequent conflicts among participants in research projects. Research progresses best when investigators focus on the research objectives and are not distracted by any misunderstandings.

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Principal investigators [PI(s)], co-investigators, consultants, and others:

- Always obtain agreement from any person before listing him/her in an application. Letters that state willingness to participate from co-investigators, consultants and others may be required and are appreciated by granting agencies.
- Request salary support (if appropriate) in proportion to effort for any person who will carry out the work of the project.
- Avoid listing unrealistic percent effort or exceeding 100% effort for any person who participates in multiple projects.
- Obtain prior approval from the service provider, if a specialized service (e.g., Cyclotron products) is required for your project, and submit a letter confirming the agreement with the proposal.

Budgets

- Request adequate budget for each phase of the project.
- Reach clear understanding with co-investigators or others about any components of the budget that will be under their control or necessary for them to carry out their part of the project [include salary support for co-investigator(s)].
- Agree at the time of submission on division of the budget if the grant or contract is fully funded.

- Agree at the time of submission on division of the budget if the grant or contract is not fully funded in amount or time.

University policy: the PI controls the budget.

- If the application involves investigators from different departments or schools, agree at the time of submission on division of indirect cost recovery funds. If agreed in writing by investigators, department chairs and deans at the time of submission, indirect cost recovery will go to each department or school as accrued on direct costs expended in each unit. Other arrangements can be made in writing if signed by relevant parties, including deans.

University policy: Unless arrangements are made otherwise, indirect costs will go to the department/school of the PI.

Other requirements

- Any person other than the PI who receives salary support from a federal grant or contract must sign an Effort Report every month attesting that appropriate effort has been expended on the project. PIs are required to sign an Effort Report semi-annually attesting that appropriate effort has been expended on the project.

University policy: If Effort Reports indicate less effort than budgeted and salaried, the PI will be requested to refund the salary difference to the granting agency.

Confidentiality

- Applications for grants or contracts are treated by the University as confidential documents until they are funded.
- Funded grants or contracts with public agencies are essentially public documents. The University will attempt to protect specifically identified confidential elements such as trade secrets, chemical structures, and the like.
- PIs should share information, including budgets and notices of award, with the co-investigator(s) on the particular project for applications and funded projects.

AUTHORSHIPS AND PUBLICATIONS

- All authors share responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the scholarly work.
- Only persons who contributed to the work described in a manuscript should be listed as authors.
- The laboratory or project director has the responsibility to decide who will be included as an author.
- In most instances, the person who designs experiments, collects data, analyzes and interprets the data, and prepares the manuscript will be listed as first author. The laboratory or project director is

often listed as last author.

- Any arrangement of authors is appropriate if the authors agree. The best time to seek agreement is before the work is begun.
- Authors should not be added or deleted without their knowledge and, if possible, consent.

University policy: University administration will not become involved in authorship disputes.

- Use the following formal names of UT-Houston operating units to identify UT-Houston author(s):

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston

The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston

The University of Texas Medical School at Houston

The University of Texas School of Health Information Sciences at Houston

The University of Texas School of Nursing at Houston

The University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston

Harris County Psychiatric Center

The University of Texas Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases

- Retain paper or electronic copies of manuscripts and illustrations at least until the work has been published in final form.

RESEARCH ETHICS

- Truthfulness is a requirement in science.
- Intellectual honesty is an aspect of truthfulness. Intellectual honesty includes appropriate acknowledgment of prior work upon which the present work is based, acknowledgment of sources of ideas or techniques that significantly influenced the present work, and avoidance of compromising the integrity of a scholarly work because of a conflict of interest such as industrial sponsorship.
- Scientists must not engage in or permit falsification of research data, fabrication of scientific data, or plagiarism of the work of others. These particular offenses can lead to serious consequences including dismissal from the University and debarment by the federal government.
- Living research subjects, human or animal, must be treated in accordance with University policies. No research with animals may be conducted without prior approval of the Animal Welfare Committee. No research with humans may be conducted without prior approval of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. There are no exceptions.

SHARED RESOURCES

Equipment

- Some equipment or instruments are deliberately intended to serve as departmental, center, program, school, or university resources and are considered available to anyone in the applicable unit.
- Investigators or their staff members who use shared equipment should take care to leave the facility ready for the next user and follow whatever local rules of use that have been established.
- Investigators should be willing to share reasonably those instruments that have been purchased from personal grant or contract funds depending upon intensity of use of the instrument and responsible behavior of those who seek access.
- Some instruments should not be shared because of fragility or sensitivity or the need for very specialized knowledge and experience on the part of the user.

Facilities

- Shared facilities, such as common instrument rooms, cold rooms, and the like are the joint responsibility of all users.
- Investigators or their staff members who use the rooms must cooperate with other users to maintain functionality of the facility.

Safety

- All safety regulations and procedures must be followed at all times to avoid injury to persons or the environment.

INVENTIONS

Novel techniques, approaches, or unique processes may justify patent protection. If you think you have invented or developed something (substance, process, method, device) that may have value and may require legal protection (e.g., patent protection), consult immediately with the *Director of Technology Management* (713-500-6231 or Bruce.D.Butler@uth.tmc.edu) who will provide you with more information. This is a free service provided by the University. Investigators are advised to take advantage of this service if they have any questions regarding protection of their work.