

**REQUESTING ACCEPTANCE INTO THE BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY AND
CLINICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NONCLINICIAN
INTRAMURAL PROGRAM (Non-Clinician Eligibility)**

1. This guidance document supplements and supports VHA Handbook 1202.1—Merit Review Award Program – and, specifically, para. 4, section a – Eligibility to submit a Merit Review proposal.

2. **Duration of eligibility:** General acceptance into the intramural program is granted for three years. Conditional or Limited permission to submit may also be granted. If Merit Review funding has not been achieved within three years or the term specified, reapplication must be made. As long as funding continues, an investigator is considered eligible, however if Merit Review or Research Career Scientist (RCS) funding has lapsed for three years, reapplication for eligibility must be made. In addition, a person whose status has changed must reapply. This reapplication should be done prior to the change in status.

- a. **Investigators granted general eligibility prior to December 1, 2006** and who have not attained Merit Review funding will remain eligible for 5 years from the date of acceptance.
- b. **Investigators who have received Merit Review or Research Career Scientist funding within the time period December 1, 2001 to November 30, 2006 but have not attained renewal** will remain eligible for 5 years from the last date of funding.

3. **Who may apply:** An applicant need not be a current VA employee. However it is required that individuals accepted into the intramural program will conduct their research at the VA Medical Center, participate in the administration of the local research service, and be available for national service.

- a. An applicant must be a current U.S. citizen in order to submit an application for acceptance into the Medical Research Non-clinician Intramural Program (non-clinician eligibility). If an applicant is not a U.S. citizen, he/she should meet one of the following criteria in order to submit an application for eligibility:
 - i. Have a firm date for being sworn in as a U.S. citizen and submit documentation of this.
 - ii. Have a current VA-paid appointment and submit an SF-52 as a proof of VA-salaried employment.
- b. This program is only for non-clinician investigators with a doctoral degree.
- c. This program is not for clinicians. ORD defines a clinician as a licensed practitioner with a doctoral degree (MD, DO, DDS, etc.) who treats patients at a VA Medical Center (VAMC). Please refer to VHA Handbook 1202.1 for further guidance. (**NOTE:** *For budgetary purposes, a clinician may not request salary from Research Appropriations for the Merit Review Award. Once approved for funding, the clinician may not request budgetary adjustments to pay for salary support from Research Appropriations for the duration of the Merit Review Award.*)

4. **What to submit:** An eligibility request package consists of:

- a. A letter, signed by the ACOS/Research, Chief of Staff, and Medical Center Director requesting non-clinician eligibility for the applicant; this letter should include the applicant name, facility (VAMC-city), or, in lieu of the letter, nominators may utilize the nomination

letter template. This document should include current VA status, current academic appointment, place of birth, and a statement that the applicant will accept a VA-paid appointment of at least 5/8ths time if funded must be included in the letter. The letter should not exceed four pages. (Please note: Applications not documenting the place of birth will not be evaluated.) In addition, this letter should address how the applicant may add to the vitality and capabilities of the research station and how the applicant's work may contribute to VA's programmatic interests. A description of proposed research to be submitted to the Merit Review Award Program; this description is limited to one page and must include the following:

- i. The significance and long term goal of the research work to be proposed.
 - ii. Hypotheses to be addressed.
 - iii. An explanation of clinical relevance and relevance to veterans' care issues.
 - iv. Specific aims.
- b. A full Curriculum Vitae to include the following:
- i. All past and present academic appointments with inclusive dates.
 - ii. All past (last 10 years), present, and pending research support with inclusive dates, applicant's role (e.g. PI, co-I), award type (e.g. R01, R21, K08), project title, grant number, and a brief description of the overall aims of the project (i.e. "Other Supports" in NIH format).
 - iii. A list of all peer-reviewed publications including those in-prepress.
 - iv. A description of any life events which explain breaks in positions, publications, or support may be included ("D Section" in NIH format).
- c. Proof of citizenship; proof of citizenship (e.g. passport) is needed if the applicant was not born in the U.S. For a naturalized citizen, a copy of the naturalization certificate must be included. For a person born on an overseas U.S. military base, appropriate documentation should be supplied. For non-citizens who have a VA-paid appointment, a copy of their current SF-52 (personnel action) must be included in the application.

Note: An e-Promise account (page 18) must be created/updated and transmitted to RDCC prior to submission of the application.

5. **When to submit:** Currently, the deadline for the Spring round is December 15 of the previous year, while the deadline for the Fall round is June 15 of the same year. The deadline refers to the electronically submitted version, but the original letter (4a) must be submitted one week following the deadline for the electronic version.

6. **How to submit:** The scanned letter, description of research, biographical sketch or CV, and a copy of citizenship documentation, if needed, should be together in one PDF file and should be submitted to the electronic mailbox below. The original signed letter (4a) should also be mailed.

7. **Where to submit:** Submit all required materials to the electronic mailbox: BLRDCSRD.eligibility@va.gov. Send the original letter (4a) to: Department of Veterans Affairs, BLRD/CSR (121E), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20420.

8. **Evaluation:** Applicants will be evaluated by an Eligibility review panel, constituting of senior VA and non-VA scientists Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) nominees. Evaluations will

be made on the basis of the applicant's qualifications and potential for enhancing veterans' care and the VA Medical Research Program. Applications will be evaluated each cycle in a national competition for a limited number of available slots.

9. **Questions:** Questions may be addressed to Dr. Alex Chiu at (202) 461-1662 or at either alex.chiu@va.gov or BLRDCSRD.eligibility@va.gov.