

VA-ORD RPPR FAQs (Updated 8/22/2016)

GENERAL

Q: *Is RPPR used only for submission of progress reports? What about final reports?*

A: RPPR is for submission of required annual or other interim performance reporting. Final progress reports are not completed in RPPR; they are completed in the Grants Closeout Module. We will begin looking at implementing a VA-ORD-wide process for submission of final progress reports after the full roll-out of RPPR. Meanwhile, please continue to submit final progress reports based on instructions provided by the awarding R&D Service within VA-ORD.

Q: *What is the role of the Administrative Official (AO) and Signing Official (SO) in relation to RPPR?*

A: The AO role provides an additional reviewer for the VA station, however, it is not required to have an AO as a reviewer of a RPPR. While completing the RPPR, if the station does not have anyone with the AO role, the SO name(s) at the station will also appear in the AO dropdown menu. The SO and AO information will be the same on the report.

If the station does have a user(s) in the AO role, then the PD/PI can route the RPPR to the AO. The AO can review the RPPR and take the following actions: 1) Route back to the PD/PI for corrections; 2) Make corrections to the report and route to the SO for submission to VA-ORD, if final; or 3) Route to the SO for submission to VA-ORD, if final. The PD/PI can also route the RPPR directly to the SO and not involve an AO with the RPPR review at all – this will be dependent on the workflow that has been established within the VA station for the review and submission of completed RPPRs.

The SO, AO, PD/PI may edit, save, view and route the RPPR; a Commons Delegate may edit, save and view the RPPR. Only the SO or Contact PD/PI with submit authority may submit a RPPR.

Only the SO can grant the PD/PI the submit authority (as a delegated task) to submit his/her own final RPPR to VA-ORD. These steps for the SO to follow are detailed below:

- Login to eRA Commons

- Select the Admin menu tab from the Commons navigational bar
- Select the Delegations option from the Admin menu

The My Delegates screen opens. If applicable, the My Current Delegations area of the screen displays a table of your existing delegations. If you have no current delegations, the table will indicate 'No records were returned.'

- Select the link called Institution Delegation
- The Institution Delegations screen will open, displaying Current Submit Progress Report Delegations in a table at the top and Candidates for Submit Progress Report Delegation in a table at the bottom
- The Candidates for Submit Progress Report Delegation table displays all users in your institution who are eligible to be granted Submit Progress Report authority
- In the Candidates for Submit Progress Report Delegation table, mark the Submit Progress Report checkboxes next to the users to whom you wish to grant Submit Progress Report authority
- Verify that you have selected the appropriate users and select the 'Grant Delegation(s)' button
- The Institution Delegations screen will update to display a certification and acceptance agreement
- Read the statement and verify that you are granting the delegate(s) the ability to answer the same statement on behalf of your institution by clicking the 'I Agree' button to confirm the delegation(s)

Q: *As a SO, will I receive notification from eRA Commons when a PD/PI has routed a RPPR to me for review and/or submission to VA-ORD?*

A: When logged into eRA Commons, a SO will be able to see the projects that are assigned to him/her as a SO and any associated required actions (such as RPPR). There is an automatic Commons system communication sent to alert the SO/AO that a RPPR has been routed to him/her for review or submission to VA-ORD. However, it is also recommended that PD/PIs send an email directly to their SO or AO to alert them to login to eRA Commons and access the routed RPPR.

Q: *I received notification from NIH that I have a RPPR due for my project, but after logging into eRA Commons, I am not able locate the project – how can I find it?*

A: There are 2 ways for a PD/PI to find a project in eRA Commons:
 1) RPPR Tab via Institution – if the PD/PI is affiliated with more than one institution in eRA Commons (such as a VAMC and University), the PD/PI will need to check under the specific VAMC from which the VA-ORD project is funded. In Commons, the PD/PI's current affiliated institution is found in the upper right corner of the page under the Commons ID. Click

on the appropriate institution (VAMC) and then the RPPR Tab in order to view the project(s) funded by VA-ORD along with any associated required actions (such as RPPR).

- 2) Status Tab – the PD/PI can check under the Status Tab (under any institution), List of Applications/Grants section, and his/her entire portfolio will be listed along with any associated required actions.

If a PD/PI is still unable to locate the project in Commons for which s/he received notification that a RPPR is due, please contact the eRA Service Desk.

Q: *I am the SO and current reviewer for a RPPR but when submitting a RPPR, I received an error message stating that “Institutional assurances and certifications have not been validated. Have signing official validate in institutional profile.” What needs to be done to resolve this error?*

A: The SO needs to login to eRA Commons and complete the Institutional Assurances and Certifications. These steps can be found in the eRA Commons user guide (http://era.nih.gov/docs/com_ugv2630.pdf Section 5.5 Institutional Assurances and Certifications). All sections must be marked in the assurance and the page saved - do not leave any sections unmarked even if they do not pertain to VA-ORD research – mark them and provide the explanation of “N/A”. The SO can then submit the RPPR without this error. The Assurances and Certifications only need to be completed once per organization.

Q: *I can see the SUBMIT button but it is not active for me - who can submit the RPPR to VA-ORD?*

A: The PD/PI will route the report to the SO either directly or route to the AO who will then route to the SO. The submit button exists for all reviewers (AO, SO) but the button is only active for the SO or for a PI that has been delegated RPPR submit authority/functionality from a SO. The current reviewer must be the SO (or PD/PI as delegated by the SO) for the submit button to be active in order to submit a RPPR to VA-ORD. When the PD/PI is the current reviewer and has been delegated RPPR authority by the SO, the PD/PI will have the option to submit the report.

Q: *Can a RPPR be revised/edited once it has been submitted to agency (to VA-ORD)?*

A: Once the application has been submitted to agency (to VA-ORD) no changes can be made. If the GMS/PO agrees to accept additional documents they can be submitted via PRAM (Progress Report Additional Materials) or can be emailed to the GMS and added to the grant folder via e-Additions. Any

PRAM or documents added will not change the image of the original submission.

Format

Q: *Are there format restrictions that apply to files that are uploaded?*

A: Only PDF files may be uploaded, and the maximum size per PDF is 6 MB. The only location in the RPPR where the user may upload multiple PDFs in response to one question is G.1. Special Notice of Award and Funding Opportunity Announcement Reporting Requirements.

Q: *How should PDF attachments to the RPPR be formatted?*

A: Follow the [VA Application Guide SF424 \(R&R\)](#) instructions, Section 2.6 Format Specification for Text (PDF) Attachments. This section details requirements for file names, font, paper size, margins, figures, etc.

Q: *Does the RPPR support non-ASCII characters such as Greek letters, mathematical equations, images, and "rich" text including bold, italic, underline, superscript, subscript, etc.?*

A: Yes and no. RPPR data is either uploaded as text attachment PDF files, or entered directly into data or text boxes. Any PDF attachment uploaded to the RPPR may include non-ASCII characters, "rich" text, or images. A number of sections of the RPPR require a PDF attachment, including B.2. (accomplishments), and C.5. (other significant products that were developed).

Data fields and text entry boxes only support ASCII characters. Although the system will allow the user to enter non-ASCII characters in RPPR data or text entry fields, upon submission of the RPPR to the agency a PDF of the progress report is system-generated and the non-ASCII characters will not appear correctly. Accordingly, use only ASCII characters in data fields and text boxes and always review the final RPPR prior to submission.

B.2. Major Goals

Q: *In B.2. Accomplishments (What was accomplished under these goals?), does the two page recommended limit for responses to this question include tables and figures?*

A: No, the two-page "limit" for summarizing accomplishments toward the major goals for most NIH awards is exclusive of tables and figures.

C.1. Publications

Q: *In C.1. Publications, why does it state in the second column under “NIH Public Access Compliance” that each publication is “N/A: Not NIH Funded”?*

A: For VA-ORD awards, the second column, NIH Public Access Compliance, is not applicable because VA-ORD awards cannot be reviewed for compliance or be required to be in compliance with the NIH Public Access Compliance policy which is used by the eRA Commons system, and therefore, the status displayed is **“N/A: Not NIH Funded.”**

Q: *In C.1. Publications, why are all of my award-paper associations reported in RPPR – not just those published within the current reporting period?*

A: The publication section has three tables, one with publications associated with the current RPPR, one with all publications that the PD/PI has listed in his/her My Bibliography in NCBI and one that lists all publications reported for the grant family. After a PD/PI reports a publication it will no longer appear in the publications not associated with this project box, however if the PD/PI has many grants and many publications, this box may continue to be lengthy. The first time a PD/PI submits a RPPR, all the award-paper associations a PD/PI has made in My Bibliography are reported as part of a one-time transitional measure to ensure that the required systems can store all the appropriate associations. Future RPPR submissions will only list those award-paper associations the PD/PI has identified for inclusion for that reporting period.

Q: *What is My NCBI and how does it work in relation to RPPR?*

A: My NCBI is a free account system that provides customized services for many NCBI/NLM databases, such as PubMed. It can be linked to eRA Commons accounts and Commons-linked users can associate publications with VA Grants. My NCBI allows users to enter publications into RPPR. PD/PIs and anyone else with VA support who is or was an author (Post-Doctoral, Graduate Student, Scientist and Project Personnel Roles) should have a linked My Bibliography account. My NCBI sign in can be accessed from any NCBI resources, i.e., PubMed, PMC, SciENcv, etc. For the RPPR, C.1. Publications, the tables draw information from the PD/PI's My NCBI account. PD/PIs can log in to their My NCBI account via the **My NCBI** link at the top of the C.1 screen. PD/PIs that do not have a My NCBI account can create one by simply logging in to My NCBI with their eRA Commons credentials, which will automatically create a My NCBI account. Any changes

made to a My Bibliography collection will be reflected in the RPPR once the screen is refreshed (i.e., by clicking the **Save** button). For more information on My NCBI, see:

[Get Started with My NCBI: Access My NCBI, Register, and Sign In](#)
[Edit Your My Bibliography Settings \(Add a Delegate\)](#)

Q: *What can I do if my eRA Commons account is not linked with My NCBI account?*

A: To link the two accounts:

Log into eRA Commons.

Click on Personal Profile.

Scroll down to the Publications – Click View.

Use the link: If you need to login to My NCBI account please use this link: [My NCBI](#)

You may automatically be logged into My NBCI.

If not, please click on the link: See more 3rd party sign in options

Select NIH & eRA Commons

You will be logged into My NCBI.

On the top right hand corner, click on your username/email address to access NCBI Account Settings.

Under linked accounts, click Change.

Select NIH & eRA Commons.

If your publications are still missing after completing the instructions above, you may have two My NCBI accounts and will need further assistance from the eRA Commons Service Desk (<http://grants.nih.gov/support/index.html>; or 1-866-504-9552, press 1 for eRA Commons) to walk you through the process of linking the correct My NCBI account to the award.

Q: *In C.1. Publications, can I manually add publications? If not, can they be included in the uploaded PDF for B.2. Accomplishments?*

A: All publications must be entered into the PD/PI's [My NCBI](#) account using the bibliography management tool [My Bibliography](#). The publications will then automatically appear in the RPPR under C.1. It is not possible to manually add publications in C.1. Publications listed in other parts of the progress report are not captured electronically and will not be listed as resulting from the award in RePORT.

D.1. Participants

Q: *In D.1. Participants, how do I provide an update on individuals who have worked on the project during the reporting period?*

A: In Section D – Participants, question D.1., an update should be provided for the PDs/PIs and each person who has worked at least one person month per year on the project during the reporting period, regardless of whether they are being compensated for their work or the source of their compensation. If graduate students (research assistants), undergraduate students, and high school students, have provided at least one month of effort/support for the project during the reporting period they should be reported in this section; however, they cannot be paid with VA research dollars if they are working in these capacities. While these individuals may provide support on a project, if they are compensated for their work, they must be paid through another mechanism with non-research funds.

Q: *In D.1. Participants, how do I update and save a change to the number of calendar months effort made by the PI or other senior/key personnel?*

A: In Section D – Participants, question D.1., an update can be made by clicking Edit for the entry, making the numerical change, clicking the Add/New button, then clicking the Save button at the top or bottom of the page. You must select the Add/New button to add the changes that you have made to the calendar months – just clicking Save will not save the changes to this section.