

Office of Research (OOR) Service Commitments

Research and innovation are cornerstones of USC's strategic vision of academic excellence and scholarship with consequence. Our success in fulfilling this vision depends on harnessing the creative energies of our faculty, staff and students, while helping them navigate regulatory, financial and contracting requirements associated with the conduct of research.

Implementation of the TARA system now affords USC the opportunity to: track service delivery; make the status of service requests visible to faculty and their departmental administrators online, in real time; and establish standards for service delivery, particularly with respect to the timeliness of support. Toward this end, the departments within the Office of Research announce their statements of service commitment, which follow on the attached pages, representing these areas:

Central Office: institutionally limited proposals, internal research awards, and research training programs.

Animal Resources/IACUC: protocols for animal research and support services for animal research.

Contracts and Grants: for proposal submission, establishment of awards and closeout of awards.

DC Research Advancement: development of interdisciplinary and large federal proposals.

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects/IRB: protocols for the conduct of human subjects research.

USC Stevens Center for Innovation: technology licensing, patents, corporate research relations and material transfer agreements.

In all of these areas the OOR strives to provide a high level of service including:

- *Professional:* providing reliable and consistent customer service;
- *Transparent:* maintaining open and effective communication with clearly defined procedures and guidelines posted at research.usc.edu.
- *Respect:* treating all persons with respect, fairness and courtesy;
- *Accountable:* acknowledging and assuming responsibility for actions and decisions.
- *Responsive:* responding to all inquiries within one business day, including automated referrals when staff are out of office.

Should you wish to offer feedback on the statements of service commitment, please do not hesitate to contact the department heads, or Silvia da Costa, Director of Faculty Research Relations (sdacosta@research.usc.edu).

Central Office Service Commitment

1. **Cores – “Core Ordering and Reporting Enterprise System”**

- ***Bills for charges in any month issued by 19th day of following month, with notification to principal investigator***

CORES supports reservation, tracking, billing and payment for services and goods supplied by core laboratories and other research recharge centers. We commit to work with the USC Financial Office to ensure that monthly invoice spreadsheets are error-free; keep the CORES software updated with the latest version provided by Vanderbilt University; serve as the contact point between USC and Vanderbilt University, informing Vanderbilt of any system or server problems that may be affecting CORES functionality; and keep the CORES website (<http://research.usc.edu/cores/>) updated with educational and training materials and role-specific Quick Guides on CORES use.

We will also provide on-going training to core managers, directors and associates, until they are completely comfortable using the system; provide monthly reports of core activity to School Research Deans and maintain the facilities web page (<http://research.usc.edu/facilities/>) updated with current core facility service and charge information.

To fulfill these standards, core facilities must inform our office of any changes in core services, equipment, rates or contact information and must finalize and update monthly invoices by the 18th of each month.

2. **Institutionally Limited External Competitions and USC Research Awards**

- ***Select limited submission award applications within four weeks of application. Advertise solicitations at least four weeks in advance of USC deadline, with USC deadline at least three months prior to external deadline (unless OOR receives late notice).***
- ***Select USC funded research awards within three months of deadline; advertise solicitation at least two months prior to deadline.***

The OOR will identify and advertise opportunities to relevant USC Schools/Institutes, whose research deans and directors are responsible for promoting opportunities to their own faculty. We will in addition post all institutionally limited and USC funded opportunities on the OOR website (research.usc.edu/institutionally-limited-external-competitions/ and research.usc.edu/for-investigators/funding/usc/). Limited submission solicitations are competitions for awards by outside sponsors for which USC can nominate a limited number of candidates, and for which candidates must receive approval from the OOR prior to submission to the sponsor. Both USC Research Award and Limited Submission applications go through an internal review process.

We will also maintain the USC Application Portal (uscapplicationportal.weebly.com/) for applicants and reviewers; provide a fair and transparent proposal review process, providing faculty with reviewer comments (when available); and serve as the authorized official on behalf of the University, providing letters of nomination and/or support, when applicable.

Investigators who independently identify limited submission solicitations must provide the OOR (vprsch@usc.edu) with the funding opportunity information as soon as it is identified – applicants may not apply directly to the external sponsor without OOR approval.

3. Center for Excellence in Research (CER)

- ***Provide proposal review and feedback within two weeks when complete drafts are provided at least three weeks prior to proposal deadline.***

The OOR offers a peer-to-peer proposal review service for applications to external funding agencies. Educational opportunities, seminars and lectures are also supported and developed by the CER with the aim to foster personal and professional excellence in research, with a particular focus on providing investigators with insights on funding strategies and proposal preparation. Faculty-led research salons and training workshops are offered in person and on-line, through the [Trojan Learn portal](#).

We commit to identify reviewers and serve as the intermediary between applicant and reviewer, maintaining anonymity of the process; provide the applicant with proposal comments and edits within two weeks of proposal submission to OOR. We also commit to identify faculty experts (former federal agency officials, and other experts across all fields of study), with specialized skills and knowledge in seeking funding from government, foundation, and corporate organizations, to lead CER workshops during the academic year; print and distribute the CER Calendar of Events twice yearly (hardcopy and online: <http://research.usc.edu/for-investigators/training/>).

To fulfill these standards, a near-final draft of the proposal should be provided to Rosary Videc (videc@usc.edu) at least three weeks prior to the grant application due date. Inquiries regarding CER events should be directed to uscceer@usc.edu or by phone (213) 740-6709.

3. Exceptional Terms in Agreements

- ***Within one week of request***

Approval from the Vice President for Research is required for exceptional contract terms, which may pertain to sponsored research, licenses, material transfer agreements or other types of agreements. Requests for approval will be reviewed based on the merits of each request. In most cases, a decision as to whether accept or reject the request will be made within seven days. Requests that require an unusual level of investigation may require more than seven days.

Department of Animal Resources and IACUC Service Commitment

The Department of Animal Resources (DAR) is the university-wide department that provides support for USC programs using animals in research and teaching. The DAR provides daily animal care, veterinary care, scientific support, business services, and administration of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

The DAR serves as a resource for knowledge and technical expertise and provides an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation with our research staff members. We ensure that USC remains in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulatory agencies and we are committed to continuous accreditation by the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation for Laboratory Animal Care, International.

The DAR Customer Service Commitment describes our pledge to provide high quality service and how you can help us achieve it.

1. Support from IACUC

Preparation of Protocol Submissions

DAR will provide consultation with a laboratory animal veterinarian on research animal model development and experimental methodologies for any IACUC protocol or research proposal.

Protocol Review

- ***submission to approval status decision within 60 days for protocols that do not require major revisions and that have addressed all stipulations from the IACUC***

When IACUC protocol approval forms are submitted through the iStar system, they will be reviewed during each calendar month based on submission deadlines published on the IACUC web site. The IACUC meeting and approval of protocols for each month normally occurs within 30 days of the deadline for that month. The protocol review process involves assignment of the protocol to a subset of IACUC members for review. A pre-review meeting is held, and after that meeting, a list of questions and stipulations to be addressed is sent to the Principal Investigator with a deadline for response prior to full IACUC meeting. If all questions and stipulations are answered to the committee's satisfaction, IACUC approval will be granted by electronic notification.

In addition to timely response to protocol submissions, IACUC staff members will confirm protocol submissions, respond promptly to questions and relay approval status based on published deadlines. IACUC staff members and veterinarians will also promptly answer questions on protocol submissions, stipulations from the IACUC, or approval status.

Reminders

Courtesy communication from an IACUC staff member regarding deadlines for animal use protocol renewals will be sent beginning 90 days before expiration.

2. Support from DAR

DAR will provide a clean and safe working environment within animal research facilities, and minimize unwanted experimental variation by the control of the animal environmental, animal health and animal well-being.

DAR staff members will make every effort to respond by telephone and/or email, normally within one work day. During absences, an automated message will indicate whom to contact.

Utilizing CORES software, DAR will provide accurate billing for services and timely response to questions about financial issues, offer convenient ordering and convenient transfer of animals and supplies for their care and use.

In the event of facility problems affecting animal studies, and in the event of routine animal health problems, DAR veterinarians and staff will provide expert assessment and communication, normally within one working day. In emergencies, veterinary staff will normally respond to the problem within one hour (including weekends and holidays), with communication to the researcher within one working day.

Veterinarians will train any research staff member needing assistance with an experimental method in animals. Group retraining by a veterinarian for laboratory staff members may be scheduled at a laboratory meeting.

For new faculty, DAR will meet with research staff and students, review and consult on draft IACUC protocols, schedule training, establish financial accounts, and tour animal research facilities.

DAR will also promptly disseminate information about changes in federal regulations, guidelines, IACUC policies, and DAR services.

3. How You Can Help

- Respect animal welfare and others using and supporting our facilities.
- Follow appropriate procedures for animal facility and equipment use, animal handling, research procedures, and workplace safety.
- Adhere to policies emphasized in training materials, our website, and newsletters.
- Ensure that animal research procedures are fully understood by all laboratory staff members and are approved by the IACUC before implementation.
- Request training or retraining for research staff when needed.
- Be mindful of deadlines for submitting IACUC protocols, renewals, and amendments.
- Provide feedback by telling us what we are doing well and how we can improve.

Department of Contracts and Grants Service Commitment

The Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG) supports USC's investigators from proposal development to award closeout, ensuring that our grants and contracts are consistent with university standards for academic freedom, research ethics and fiscal responsibility.

The Department of Contracts and Grants:

- Reviews, approves and submits proposals to extramural sponsors.
- Negotiates and accepts awards on behalf of the University.
- Executes subcontracts.
- Coordinates pre-award and post-award actions.
- Develops and maintains positive sponsor relationships.
- Ensures institutional compliance with Federal and State regulations, sponsor policy and University policy.

1. Support for Proposal Review

The Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG) is committed to supporting USC Investigators by assuring timely review and submission of complete and accurate proposals that have the best chance possible of success in the sponsor review process.

To succeed in this goal, DCG offers an enhanced review for proposals ready for submission three business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline.

Proposals Received Three Business Days in Advance

For final proposals ready for submission and submitted to DCG three business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline or the USC Deadline, if earlier, the review will include:

- Comparing the proposal to the sponsors' guidelines, including:
 - Font type and size
 - Margins
 - Page limits for sections and proposal
 - Completeness for inclusion of all required sections
- Conducting a non-technical review of proposal for grammatical and spelling errors
- Verifying budget calculations, rates and cost-sharing
- Verifying institutional information (e.g., DUNS, contact information, etc.)
- Checking and clearing errors generated by Grants.gov and/or Sponsor's proposal submission system
- Verifying data submitted to Kuali Coeus
- Verifying regulatory reviews (e.g., human/animal subjects, conflict of interest)

Proposals Received Two Business Days in Advance

DCG will review, at minimum, the following:

- Budget for correct rates and cost sharing

- Institutional information (e.g., DUNS, contact information, etc.)
- Quali Coeus data
- Regulatory reviews (e.g., human/animal subjects, radiation safety, conflict of interest)

For Proposals Received Less Than One Business Day in Advance

Due to time constraints, proposals received less than 24 hours (or one business day) in advance of the sponsor's deadline or the USC Deadline, if earlier, will receive a minimum review with the goal to assure (to the degree possible) that it is not rejected from the electronic submission vehicle. Unfortunately, proposals submitted less than 24 hours in advance risk rejection by sponsors, or potentially late submission.

For all proposals, DCG staff will communicate with the Principal Investigator and his/her research administrator when a proposal will receive less than a complete review due to time constraints.

Confirmation of Proposal Submissions

DCG will forward electronic confirmation to the Principal Investigator and his/her research administrator once the proposal is received and accepted by the sponsor.

2. Tips to Facilitate the Proposal Approval Process

The following are some tips to facilitate the proposal approval process:

1. Submit KC proposal at least five business days in advance of the proposal deadline. Please allow more time if your proposal requires signatures in multiple schools, departments, centers or divisions.
2. Forward the proposal guidelines and/or solicitation to DCG so staff can review the proposal along with the solicitation guidelines.
3. Allow time for corrections. Allowing time for corrections helps to ensure the proposal is at its best when it is submitted to the sponsor.
4. Ensure a point of contact is available to make corrections. The Principal Investigator and/or a departmental contact should be available to make corrections until the proposal is ready to submit to the agency.

3. Negotiation of Sponsored Research Agreements

Sponsored Research Agreement negotiation timelines vary depending on agreement and sponsor; however, the DCG staff is committed to facilitating and completing negotiations in a professional and timely manner. Once DCG has all required information, including PI and School approvals, we are committed to initiating negotiations with the sponsor within five business days.

4. Communication with DCG Staff

DCG staff make every effort to be available to communicate with investigators and research administrators by telephone and email during heavy deadlines. When away from the office for more than 24 hours, staff will provide an out of office message

indicating whom to contact during absence. Staff will otherwise normally respond to inquiries within 24 hours of when they are contacted, and usually much sooner.

In addition, during the negotiation of any sponsored research agreement, DCG is committed to providing a biweekly status update to the Principal Investigator and department/center research administrator, as well as to provide information on negotiation progress through the negotiation tracker feature of KC.

5. Additional Resources and Questions

The Department of Contracts and Grants offers a comprehensive online training program developed to meet the needs of today's evolving research environment. The [C&G Curriculum](#) is a valuable resource for proposal preparation and ensures an overall standard level of expertise for research administrators working at a program, department or dean's office level.

The Office of Research through the Center of Excellence in Research offers proposal writing workshops and resources. Additional information can be located at: research.usc.edu/for-investigators/training/

The [Office of Research](#) and [DCG](#) websites provide additional information on procedures for processing grants and contracts, support available from different research administration units of the university, and information tailored for both sponsors and investigators.

For any questions regarding the DCG Service Commitment, please contact Jeri Muniz, Executive Director, Department of Contracts and Grants.

DC Office of Research Advancement Service Commitment

The DC Research Advancement Office is committed to helping USC faculty initiate or expand sponsored research programs. In particular, the office strategically pursues funding opportunities with a targeted focus on large, multidisciplinary research projects. To achieve these goals, the DC Research Advancement Office announces a Service Commitment to all USC faculty.

1. Support for Proposal Development

Requests for Guidance Received More than 60 Days Prior to Due Date

The DC Research Advancement Office will provide: 1) a review of the solicitation; and 2) a competitive assessment of potential for funding. The review and competitive assessment findings will be conveyed directly to the potential PI. If the PI decides to proceed and submit a full proposal, the DC Research Advancement Office can provide some or all of the services listed below:

Team Building

- Identify USC faculty as potential collaborators
- Identify faculty from other universities and organizations as potential collaborators

Proposal Organization and Planning

- Organize conference calls and face-to-face meetings
- Develop outlines of application components
- Create timelines for preparing and submitting applications
- Conduct comparative analyses of existing USC assets
- Conduct analyses of existing projects funded under the targeted program to determine optimal team composition and leadership

Writing & Copy-Editing

- Review drafts for organization and responsiveness to solicitation
- Copy-edit drafts for grammar, clarity and completeness
- Write de-novo text for non-technical aspects of the proposal, e.g., outreach, administrative organization, USC assets
- Creation of graphics, organizational charts and timelines
- Review summary statements and previous reviewer reports to provide guidance on resubmissions
- Generate drafts of support letters from consultants, advisory committee members, and other partners

Budget Preparation

- Assist PIs and school/departmental staff to develop and revise budgets
- Prepare budget justifications

- Identify potential strategies for cost sharing

Administrative & Logistical Activities

- Coordinate collection of required documents from participating collaborators including subcontractors, including biosketches and support letters
- Complete application forms for electronic or paper submission

Proposal Submission

- Coordinate the final on-time submission with the USC Department of Contracts and Grants and other relevant USC offices

Requests for Assistance Less than 60 Days Before Due Date

The DC Research Advancement Office will internally review all requests made less than 60 days before due date. Requests will be evaluated and prioritized based on various factors including:

- Extent to which the proposal involves multiple schools internally at USC and externally with other universities
- Degree to which the proposed research crosses multiple scientific domains
- Budget size, taking into account differences in average funding amounts for humanities/social science vs. science/engineering
- Probability of proposal success
- Current and projected workload of DC Research Advancement Office staff

If approved, the Office of Research Advancement can provide some or all of the services listed above as requested by the PI.

2. Notification of Funding Opportunities

The DC Research Advancement Office tracks current and emerging funding priorities among federal agencies. The office will continue to monitor newly released federal funding opportunities on a daily basis. Faculty will be notified of these new potential funding opportunities via customized email messages.

In addition, the latest news in federal research funding highlights are posted via Twitter and Facebook at these respective URLs: https://twitter.com/usc_dcresearch and <https://www.facebook.com/USCResearchAdvancement>.

3. Federal Outreach

The DC Office of Research Advancement maintains and strengthens ties between USC investigators and federal research sponsors. In addition, the staff also promotes USC research breakthroughs and findings to relevant agencies. Federal program officers have a large amount of discretion in making funding decisions; thus it is useful to

establish a relationship with them before considering applying for federally funded grants. **USC@Federal Mission Agencies ProgramS (MAPS)** is an initiative designed by the DC Research Advancement Office to help faculty identify and meet program officers with similar scientific and research interests. The searchable database can be accessed via this URL: http://web-app.usc.edu/web/ra_maps/search/

For faculty interested in connecting with a federal agency currently not included in the USC@MAPS initiative, DC Research Advancement Office staff will provide guidance as requested. Dr. James Murday, Associate Director for Physical Sciences in the DC Research Advancement Office (murday@usc.edu), is the point of contact for questions about USC@MAPS.

4. Strategy Sessions

Upon request, the DC Research Advancement Office will meet with individual faculty or collaborative research groups to discuss proposal development strategies. Topics include how to assemble a large multidisciplinary team, agency interests, and potential agency matches.

In addition, the Office will conduct a comprehensive search for potential funding opportunities.

5. Submission Procedures

The DC Research Advancement Office works in partnership with faculty and staff to provide support for development of large, complex, multidisciplinary research proposals. The USC Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG) reviews and submits proposals, negotiates and accepts contract and grant agreements, and ensures compliance with sponsor and university policies. The DC Research Advancement Office will work closely with DCG throughout the pre-award process.

DCG is the only USC office authorized to submit on behalf of faculty. Therefore, the DC Research Advancement Office will finalize and transfer all proposal files to DCG **two business days prior to the sponsor's deadline**. If a proposal is not completed two business days prior to the sponsor's deadline and provided to the Office, it is the responsibility of the relevant PI and school/departmental staff to coordinate submission with DCG.

6. Additional Resources and Questions

USC Center of Excellence in Research – DC Research Advancement Office staff frequently participates in the USC Center of Excellence in Research. This university wide resource offers proposal guidance and advice on obtaining federal research funding. Additional information, including the most recent schedule of workshops, can be accessed via this URL: <https://research.usc.edu/about/vp/cer/>

For any questions regarding the DC Research Advancement Office Service Commitment, please contact the Office's executive director, Dr. Steven Moldin (moldin@usc.edu).

OPRS Service Commitment for Review of Human Subjects Research

The Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) and the Health Sciences and University Park IRBs are committed to supporting USC Investigators by assuring timely review of all human subjects research proposals submitted to the IRBs. It is our goal to assist researchers with their submissions by offering study-specific guidance by OPRS and IRB staff as well as by providing an abundance of educational materials. To succeed in this goal, OPRS commits to the following standards for Proposal Submission, Review, and Approval of exempt, expedited and full board review studies.

1. Human Subject Proposal Review

Full Board Studies:

- ***Number of days until approval unless contingencies: 60 days***

Proposals submitted for review are screened by IRB staff for completeness; if necessary, staff will request revisions/clarifications from the investigator. The staff review is available on iStar, the online IRB submission system. IRB staff schedules the study for the next available IRB meeting. The IRB Chair or IRB Director selects primary and secondary (and tertiary when applicable) reviewers. The reviewers' comments, questions, and contingencies are posted in the iStar system and discussed during the Full Board meeting. Study materials and reviewer comments are available to all committee members. Outcome of the meeting will be communicated to the researcher. Changes, if required, must be satisfied before final approval is granted.

Expedited Studies

- ***Number of days until approval unless contingencies: 30 days***

IRB staff initially evaluates all submissions and may request changes/ clarifications from the investigator. IRB staff then prepares a staff review that is forwarded to an expedited reviewer for review and approval. In the staff review, the reasons why the submission meets expedited review criteria are noted by citing the appropriate expedited review category. The expedited reviewer is prompted to either concur or disagree with the staff recommendation for expedited processing and any related contingencies or necessary revisions. Outcome of the review will be communicated to the researcher. Changes, if required, must be satisfied before final approval is granted.

Exempt Studies

- ***Number of days until approval unless contingencies: 10 days***

Reviewers of exempt determinations conduct a review of the project to determine if it qualifies for exempt status. The study is reviewed according to IRB policy, human subjects research regulations, and ethical standards. Additional revisions may be requested by the reviewer. Once approved, the PI is notified and, unless changes are made to the study, no further IRB review is required.

Submissions after Initial Project Approval

In addition to initial review of a study, amendments, continuing review and reportable events are handled in the most expeditious manner commensurate with risk level.

2. Additional Customer Enhancements

Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) Submission

- ***Number of days until approval unless contingencies: 10 days***

A Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) submission is USC-created information request to determine if a project is subject to IRB review and approval. Its purpose is to streamline the system to exclude projects that do not meet the regulatory definitions of human subjects research (not applicable for projects involving FDA-regulated products). If the IRB determines that a project is NHSR, the investigator receives documentation that the project does not meet the definition of human subjects research. However, if the IRB determines that the project is human subjects research, a new study application will be requested by the IRB.

Flex Studies

- ***Number of days until approval unless contingencies: 10 days***

Research that involves no greater than minimal risk and is not federally-funded may qualify for review under a novel USC Flexibility Policy. The Policy was created to provide administrative flexibility in the review of eligible studies without compromising subject protections. Flex studies include projects that do not fit specifically within one of the federally-defined categories of exempt research and involve no greater than minimal risk to subjects. Additionally, the Policy also provides three-year approvals for nonexempt, no greater than minimal risk projects.

Ceded Review

USC has established agreements to simplify the IRB review process for projects taking place between USC and partner sites. Under the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), one Institution will cede the IRB review process and the other Institution will provide the IRB review. USC's agreements with CHLA, Hebrew Union College, Rancho, RAND Corporation, and Cedars may be found at oprs.usc.edu/initiatives/agreements

3. Creative Education for Research Community

Education Sessions

OPRS staff offer regular classroom education as guest lectures to discuss human subjects protections. Researchers can contact OPRS to schedule ad hoc educational sessions for their research team and/or department. Additionally, town hall meetings will be scheduled several times a year to discuss changes affecting the research community such as important changes in Policies, significant modifications to the IRB electronic submission system and accreditation preparation and updates.

Research Coordinator Education

OPRS hosts education sessions for research coordinators at quarterly intervals to discuss and address coordinator needs, share best practices, and provide coordinators a networking opportunity.

IRB Student Mentor

A graduate assistant serves as a UPIRB liaison to meet with student researchers and provide one-on-one assistance with IRB submissions. The mentor also represents USC student interests by participating in IRB deliberations as a full-voting IRB member.

Not-for-cause Assessments

OPRS and IRB personnel conduct assessments of research studies, IRB documentation and the iStar system to identify trends and issues related to researcher and IRB operations. Deficiencies identified in these assessments often drive changes and/or creation of new policy, process and educational materials.

Booklets

OPRS creates many booklets available in hard copy and online to educate researchers and students on various human subjects research topics. Booklets are updated routinely to ensure researchers have up-to-date best practices and guidance. To access OPRS booklets, go to <http://oprs.usc.edu/education/booklets/>

iStar Videos

OPRS and IRB personnel created video tutorials for iStar, the online IRB application system. The videos were created to assist researchers with the intricacies of an expedited or full board review study submission. To access the videos, go to <http://vimeopro.com/scctsiecde/istar-training-videos>

Model IRB Applications

IRB applications selected for accuracy and completeness of actual USC studies are available to assist investigators with their submissions. Model applications include those of exempt, expedited and full board review studies as well as those involving coded data/specimens and Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) projects. To access the model applications, go to <https://oprs.usc.edu/review/modelirb/>

4. Communication and Outreach Activities

The latest information on human subjects research, including guidance, consent templates, policies, educational resources, and contact information can be found at oprs.usc.edu. OPRS also distributes a periodic newsletter to keep the USC research community informed of updates in regulations, policies, best practices, and relevant research news, as well as a bulletin for research coordinators and other research support staff.

The IRBs at University Park and the Health Sciences Campus have designated office hours to encourage researchers to general and study-specific human subjects research issues. For more information, contact your local IRB.

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OPRS and the IRBs encourage researchers to provide feedback on how to improve the IRB review process anonymously by completing the annual IRB survey. OPRS utilizes this data to create educational opportunities, policy changes and iStar system process changes. Researchers are provided results of the survey via the OPRS listserv and can access these on the OPRS/IRB website.

USC Stevens Center for Innovation Service Commitment

USC Stevens Center for Innovation is committed to advancing the creative thinking and breakthrough research at USC for societal impact beyond traditional academic means. We focus on the licensing of technologies, expanding industry collaborations, and supporting start-ups.

To achieve this goal, USC Stevens offers a service commitment for commercialization activities, including timely communication with the inventors of the technology, and clearly articulated processes and procedures.

1. Communication with Inventors

USC Stevens is committed to communicating our procedures and processes to the research USC research community in a clear and concise manner. Information about our processes can be found on our website at: <http://stevens.usc.edu/researchers/commercialization-process/>. In addition, the USC team is committed to in person meetings with faculty and their research teams to discuss the processes and answer questions.

2. Review of Invention Disclosures

- ***Review within 30 days of receipt***

USC Stevens is committed to reviewing all complete disclosures within 30 days of receipt. In order to facilitate the disclosure process, USC Stevens launched an online disclosure portal earlier this year. A link to this portal for disclosing new inventions can be found on the USC Stevens Website: <http://stevens.usc.edu/>

The disclosure review process shall include a conversation between the assigned Licensing Officer from USC Stevens and the Inventors of the technology. During that conversation, the Licensing Officer will gather additional information to help us evaluate the market opportunity, as well as potential partners. Based on the information that is gathered during this conversation, as well as our own research regarding potential commercial value and prior art, USC Stevens will make a decision on whether to file an initial patent application covering the technology. This decision will be communicated to the inventors within 24 hrs. For decisions regarding the ongoing prosecution of patents, USC Stevens will commit to informing the inventors of go/no go decisions at least 60 days in advance of any deadlines, provided that USC Stevens has received notice at least 90 days in advance of such deadline.

3. Negotiation of License and other Agreements

USC Stevens will conduct all negotiations in a professional and expeditious manner. We are committed to the education of USC Stevens' staff and to completing our negotiations using best practices established by professional societies such as the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM). The time to complete negotiations varies depending on agreement and partner. USC Stevens will provide information on the status of negotiations in Sophia, and notify inventors on important milestones.

4. Material Transfer Agreements

- ***Draft agreement to other party within three day of receipt of all required information***

USC Stevens is committed to completing Material Transfer Agreements in a timely manner, utilizing our online portal: <http://stevens.usc.edu/researchers/mta-cda/> Once USC Stevens has all of the required information from the requestor, we are committed to preparing a draft agreement and sending it to the other party within three business days.

5. Sponsored Research Agreements

Industry Engagement

USC Stevens is committed to increasing industry engagement with USC faculty through:

- Development of an understanding of the research capabilities of USC faculty in order to build mutually beneficial relationships with industry.
- Communication of industry needs and strategic areas of interest to USC faculty and to work with faculty to develop an action plan for industry engagement.
- Coordination of in-person meetings and crafting partnering strategies that reflect shared interests to facilitate corporate research funding agreements.
- Interface with the Department of Contract's and Grants, the General Counsel's Office and USC Steven's legal team to expedite funded research agreements.

For more information, contact Vasiliki Anest (anest@stevens.usc.edu)

Intellectual Property Terms Review

- ***Review and redline IP terms within five business days***

USC Stevens reviews unusual intellectual property terms in sponsored projects agreements and service agreements originating from the Department of Contracts and Grants, the Clinical Trials Office and the General Counsel's Office. IP review is ordinarily completed in parallel with other contract review steps. USC Stevens is committed to review and redline the IP terms in agreements within five business days of receipt, provided that USC Stevens has received any required input from third parties.

6. Education of Faculty and Researchers

- USC Stevens is committed to providing seminars relating to technology commercialization for USC faculty and students. USC Stevens will hold seminars on topics such as working with USC Stevens, the patent prosecution process, and venture capital.
- USC Stevens is also committed to holding meetings with its faculty and researchers. Upon request, we will set up a meeting with a faculty member, a lab or other group to give a presentation regarding our procedures and to answer questions.

- USC Stevens provides a service called “Legal Office Hours” for the USC research community, which provides complimentary legal assistance, counseling and information materials to all USC innovators (faculty, staff, students and alumni) and start-up companies. Our services are on-campus and are provided by qualified corporate and intellectual property attorneys. More information on Legal Office Hours can be found here: <http://stevens.usc.edu/about-us/programs/legal-office-hours/>

Legal assistance currently available includes, but is not limited to:

- Patent searches and provisional/non-provisional patent applications
- Patent processing
- Patent protection
- IP ownership
- Trademark and Copyright applications
- Drafting articles of incorporation
- Drafting bylaws for Corporations (for profit and non-profit)
- Contract drafting and contract review
- Creating Limited Liability Companies and Corporations
- Reviewing business plans

Additional information regarding our services and procedures can be found on the USC Stevens Website: <http://stevens.usc.edu/>.

For any questions regarding the USC Stevens Service Commitment, or to provide feedback regarding our service, please contact Jennifer Dyer, Executive Director, USC Stevens Center for Innovation (jennifer.dyer@stevens.usc.edu).