

# VCU Memo

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

## Medical Center

In the tradition of the Medical College of Virginia

### DEPARTMENT of INTERNAL MEDICINE PROFESSIONAL EFFORT DEVOTED TO SPONSORED RESEARCH

When developing research proposal budgets, Principal Investigators are to include an appropriate level of committed effort on sponsored research projects, unless specifically exempted by the sponsor's guidelines.

Effort commitments are typically quantified in the proposal by using a percentage of time (effort), dollar amount of salary and number of months to be devoted to the project. These commitments are paid from (1) the sponsor and/or (2) other, non-federal sources and must be fulfilled within each year (summer months, academic year or calendar year).

The minimum amount of effort that may be committed to a specific research project by a Principal Investigator must be at least 1% of the employee's total '*University effort*<sup>1</sup>.' While, the minimum amount of effort committed may be no less than 1%, it is the expectation of the Department of Internal Medicine that all sponsored research proposals will include an appropriate percentage of effort to fund salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for all project personnel that is consistent with the level effort to be expended to perform the contracted work. In most cases, it is expected that effort will be substantially larger than 1% to be commensurate with his or her responsibilities on that sponsored project. Exceptions to this minimum level of effort are granted for equipment and instrumentation grants, doctoral dissertation grants, fellowship mentors, and augmentation grants.

For proposals where the PI lists less than 5.0% of his/her effort to be devoted to the research project, the Department will also require a written justification that supports the proposed level of effort. This document should accompany the application when submitted for Department review and signature.

Effort devoted to a sponsored research project but is not funded by the sponsor is considered to be cost-sharing and should be documented as such. Therefore, proposals requesting salary funding less than the estimated expended effort must be approved by the Department Chair in advance of the submission.

NOTE: Cost sharing on industry sponsored clinical trials is not allowed.

A special note about proposal submissions to internal VCU funding programs: VCU has a number of internal funding sources, most of which limit the amount of faculty salary dollars that may be requested as part of a project budget. For these submissions, the principal investigator should work with the Department in advance of the submission to determine how the unfunded effort will be covered should the project be selected for funding.

Questions may be directed to Elizabeth Fortune ([efortune@vcu.edu](mailto:efortune@vcu.edu) or 804-828-0404).

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<sup>1</sup> Total University effort ("total effort") is the professional activities for which an individual is compensated by the University, totaling 100%. Typical activities include research, teaching, administration, and any other activity that has been established as being within the scope of responsibility. The denominator of the effort percentage must always be total University effort, irrespective of the total number of hours worked during the effort reporting period.

Example: If a faculty member works an average of 50 hours per week during an effort reporting period and works an average of 10 hours per week on a particular sponsored project, the correct effort percentage for that project would be 20% ( $10/50=.20$ ) of total University effort.