

Updated September 2, 2014

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK BLUEPRINT FOR RESEARCH
Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services
Personnel, Services, Policies and Procedures**

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The overall mission of the Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services (HRC), described in the Research Council Mission Statement, is to promote science to guide innovation in human services interventions. The HRC facilitates research and research administration for the School. The research administration mission of the HRC is to maintain research integrity through research compliance and good business practices. The goal of HRC staff is to facilitate preaward and postaward functions to minimize investigators' administrative responsibilities. The preaward and postaward services of the HRC are available to all faculty members and students who are planning a research proposal for submission, have received proposal approval from the Dean, or have a funded research project administrated by HRC. Further, statistics support is available for preaward and postaward research projects. Editorial services are available for proposal submissions, manuscripts prepared as outcomes of HRC-administrated projects, and PhD manuscripts prepared for peer-reviewed journals. Procedures for accessing our services are explained in this document.

Funding for the Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services is a collaborative effort of the faculty. The primary source of funding is revenue generated through the recovery of indirect costs (RIC). The annual budget for HRC is determined by the Dean based on revenue projections (RIC) and the budget proposal presented by the HRC Director and the Research Council. The Dean augments the RIC with School funds to support the research enterprise.

New faculty members, project staff, and interested students are encouraged to attend an orientation session describing HRC services. Orientations are held during the fall semester, and if needed, during the spring semester.

A. Personnel

The HRC is directed by a full-time faculty member appointed by the Dean. The Director is responsible for the promotion of the HRC and provides administrative oversight of its business operations. A full range of scientific, technical, and administrative support services are provided by the Associate Deans of Research, outside consulting faculty members, and the HRC staff, including:

Research Administration:

- Associate Director/Certified Research Administrator
- Contracts and Grants Coordinator (proposal and preaward)
- Business Administrator/Certified Research Administrator (postaward)
- Research Services Specialist (pre- and postaward)
- Grants Analyst (CIR)

Communications and Publications

- Editor/Writer II
- Editor/Writer I
- Project Assistant, California Social Work Archives (part-time)
- Internal Managing Editor for the USC SSW Journal Holdings (part-time)

Data Analysis and Management

- Senior Biostatistician (part-time, by appointment)
- Biostatistician (PhD)
- Data Manager (master's)

Research Development

- Senior Scientific Research Advisor (part-time, by appointment)
- Research Council Administrator

Facilities and Operations

- Administrative Assistant (HRC and City Center operations)

There are two Associate Deans of Research: Associate Dean of Faculty Research Development and Associate Dean of Research and Director of the HRC. The Associate Deans of Research are responsible for the development of research and research-related scholarly activities for the School and provide oversight of the research program.

Consultants and other sources of technical assistance may be hired as needed pending approval of the Director and availability of funds.

B. Policies

1. The HRC is supported primarily through funds derived from indirect cost recovery on grants, contracts, and special-purpose endowments. The HRC therefore gives **highest priority** to support of multiyear, extramurally funded projects that generate resources to sustain operations.
2. The Research Council provides leadership and oversight for the School's research enterprise. The purpose of the Research Council is to create an environment conducive to high-quality research, address challenges to achieving this goal, and establish policy in support of the research mission of the School. The Council is

representative of all investigators and ensures HRC services fully support faculty members and students through the stages of grant procurement, project implementation, and grant management.

3. A consulting committee of the Faculty Council may be asked to review larger policy issues relating to the purposes and organization of the HRC.
4. Awards from the Larson Endowment may be used to advance School priorities such as curriculum reform or faculty recruitment (e.g., earmarked funds for applications from recruited faculty members in the first year). All awards must conform to the direction of the Endowment and policies established by the Dean and Research Council.
5. The HRC's mission and scientific activities are guided by the Multi-Year Research Plan developed by the Research Council in collaboration with the Associate Deans of Research. (Note for fall 2014 orientation: document currently under revision.)
6. The HRC collaborates with the School's Department of Advancement. Funds generated by Advancement for research purposes and administered by HRC are subject to HRC guidelines. Because such external funds often generate insufficient or no indirect cost recovery, HRC assesses overhead for preaward proposal efforts and other postaward service demands that may be requested.

C. HRC Services for Investigators

USC investigators are responsible for all research-related activities. (See Principal Investigator responsibility statement, *USC's Partnership for Sponsored Research and Other Scholarly Activities*, June 15, 2011.)

HRC personnel assist investigators throughout the life cycle of a sponsored project. **All proposals submitted through the School are subject to the following procedures.**

1. Preproposal Requirement: Dean's Authorization to Proceed

- a. Faculty members interested in pursuing a funding opportunity are required to obtain approval from the Dean prior to beginning a proposal. It is strongly recommended that at this point the Dean receives preliminary information on the planned funding of the project and possible costs that the School may have to incur.
- b. Tenure-track assistant and associate professors are expected to meet with the Associate Deans of Research to discuss needs for scientific or technical assistance or other resources that may enhance the competitiveness of the proposal.
- c. The Principal Investigator (PI) must schedule a preproposal meeting with the HRC Contracts and Grants Coordinator. The purpose of this meeting is to

establish the proposal development and submission calendar; establish a timeline agreement for institutional routing; complete the preproposal checklist for required information; draft the budget; and prepare the Dean's Agreement.

- d. The Principal Investigator must meet with the Dean (second meeting) and the Vice Dean to review the Dean's Agreement and obtain signatures indicating approval to submit. The signed Dean's Agreement is returned to the HRC Contracts and Grants Coordinator for the proposal file. **Proposal development cannot proceed until all approvals are received by HRC staff.**

Note to investigators regarding payroll allocation and effort commitment on grants:

Faculty members select payroll allocation (9-month payout vs. 12-month payout of academic year salary) on an annual basis. Selecting a 12-month payout reduces the amount of effort available to commit to funded projects. Faculty members should consult with the HRC Business Manager and the school's Human Resources Manager for further information regarding being funded at 50% or more by external funds.

2. Proposal Development and Review Guidelines

These guidelines are complementary to the Dean's Agreement process described above.

These guidelines apply to all tenure-track assistant and associate professors and to faculty members on research or clinical lines who submit research proposals.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure adequate support for investigators and proposals and to ensure adequate presubmission scientific review. Tenured full professors are asked to organize their own scientific review process, but are also expected to notify and work closely with HRC staff during the presubmission phase to ensure all submission deadlines, both internal and external, are met.

These guidelines apply to all research proposals solicited by NIH, including K and T mechanisms, and other government agencies and private organizations. They apply to first submissions and resubmissions. PI participation in projects with other institutions that result in subawards to USC is subject to prereview and the Dean's Agreement process. Other programs such as technology and education training grants without significant research components are subject to separate guidelines (contact HRC Contracts and Grants Coordinator for more information).

All tenure-track assistant and associate professors must observe these guidelines to receive support from HRC staff. As detailed below, the proposal review process requires close attention to internal and external deadlines to ensure proposals are submitted as planned. Given the need to attend to these deadlines, it is very important for the PI to begin developing a proposal early, preferably 12 to 16 weeks before the submission deadline (in the case of an NIH Program Announcement). If an investigator is responding to a request for proposals with a short turnaround time (45 to 60 days), this timeline will

be accelerated in consultation with the PI and HRC staff. However, it is essential that all proposals receive adequate scientific prereview before submission. Timeliness increases the odds of a successful submission of proposals.

The PI must discuss proposal ideas with the Dean and the Associate Dean for Faculty Research Development at a very early stage (e.g., 12 to 16 weeks prior to the submission deadline). At this stage, email contact with the Dean might be sufficient. Concurrently (or shortly thereafter), investigators must submit a concept paper to the Associate Dean for Research for Faculty Research Development. The concept paper must contain information sufficient for initial review and critique (e.g., for an NIH proposal: a list of specific aims and a paragraph or two each describing the background and significance, preliminary studies, proposed methods, and proposed analysis plan). The purpose of the concept paper review is to provide PIs with early constructive feedback on their proposed plan and allow ample time to take any major corrective actions. There must also be a plan for contacting appropriate personnel at the funding agency.

For subawards with other institutions, the PI shall provide to the Dean details regarding the external commitment, including the project abstract/summary, statement of work, deliverables, reporting obligations, and effort commitment. This requirement applies to all faculty members regardless of rank.

Once the dean has approved the proposal concept and the PI has discussed the concept paper with the Associate Dean for Faculty Research Development, the PI must make an appointment with HRC staff to develop the budget, prepare the Dean's Agreement, confirm the timeline, and begin the proposal development phase. HRC staff will promptly provide the Dean's Agreement to the PI for the PI to present to the Dean, Vice Dean, and Associate Dean of Field Education (if applicable) for approval. **HRC staff will begin the proposal preparation process only after confirmation from the Associate Dean and receipt of the Dean's Agreement signed by the Dean, Vice Dean, and if applicable, the Associate Dean of Field Education.**

Researchers are to submit a draft final proposal for review to the Associate Dean for Faculty Research Development 3 to 4 weeks before the proposal is due to be submitted to the USC Department of Contracts and Grants, a date to be set at the preproposal meeting. The draft final proposal must include technical information (e.g., for an NIH proposal: background, significance, and data analysis sections) sufficient for a thorough review and critique but need not be polished and formatted to meet funding agency standards. The proposal will be reviewed by at least one internal and one external reviewer (to be selected by the Associate Dean of Faculty Research Development with the advice of the PI) in a review seminar in the format of an NIH mock review. The PI and Associate Dean of Faculty Research Development can select additional internal reviewers, discussants, and project Co-Investigators to participate in the review seminar. The Chair of the Research Council and the HRC Director will be invited to attend. Payment for external reviews will be arranged by the HRC. The purpose of the draft final proposal review is to provide the PI with a comprehensive critique highlighting strengths and weaknesses, leaving enough time for the PI to address reviewers' comments. It is highly

recommended that this review be done at least 3 to 4 weeks prior to the submission deadline.

TARA

TARA (Total Access to Research Administration) is USC's acronym for Kualu Coeus (KC), the award and proposal management function that integrates with sponsored-project accounting in the Kualu Financial System during the postaward phase. All proposals are routed through TARA.

Implementation of TARA dramatically changes the proposal development, routing, and submission process. When fully functional, TARA requires a fully completed proposal—forms, budget, narrative, and certification by all PIs and Co-PIs—before it can be electronically routed for institutional approvals. The system applies business rules and routes through the various levels of the university, securing appropriate USC approvals. When the final institutional review is completed, the proposal is approved and an institutional proposal record is generated by the USC Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG). Ultimately, proposals will be electronically submitted system-to-system through grants.gov or as a PDF file generated by the system for transmitting to any sponsor.

Currently, TARA is not fully developed. Despite multiple attempts, the system-to-system capabilities are not yet functional. To ensure submission, HRC staff is burdened with completing the proposal requirements in TARA and a duplicate application file outside TARA.

We request your cooperation in integrating our School processes with the new system. **TARA does not change the requirement regarding the Dean's approval to submit or the Dean's Agreement process as outlined in the HRC Blueprint. The Dean's Agreement must be signed and returned to HRC prior to proposal development.**

Important Timeline Changes

It is of utmost importance to clear your proposal concept with the Dean well in advance of the submission date. Grants.gov recommends your proposal be submitted 3 business days before the deadline. The complexity of the proposal dictates the time needed to prepare and route the proposal in TARA.

The timelines are as follows:

- a. Complex proposals with subcontracts, dual PIs, or multiple Co-PIs: Initiate the proposal a minimum of 75 business days (15 weeks) before the submission deadline. It is especially important to initiate complex proposals well in advance because TARA requires new tasks be completed prior to routing:
 - PIs and Co-PIs, including non-USC employees, are required to certify the proposal.

- Nonemployee access must be requested through iVIP to be included in Quali Identity Management.
 - Requests must be processed to add subcontracting organizations currently not in the system.
 - Certification of subcontractor conflict of interest policy and signed consortium agreements must be obtained and uploaded prior to routing.
- b. Single investigator proposals without subagreements: Initiate the proposal a minimum of 60 business days (12 weeks) before the submission deadline.
 - c. Outgoing subcontract proposals: Initiate the proposal a minimum of 45 business days (9 weeks) prior to the submission deadline.
 - d. Proposals received 30 business days or less will receive support on an as-available basis.

Preapplications also require approval of the Dean prior to responding to a call for proposals; however, HRC participation in the preapplication process is limited to assisting with development of an estimated budget and verifying the correct rates are used. Preapplications are not routed for institutional signatures. Responsibility for submission rests with the PI.

Investigators who provide Dean's approval to HRC with less time than the timeline outlined above may find staff unable to provide full support for TARA proposal development and routing. HRC staff will prepare the Dean's Agreement for approval, but time constraints may limit staff assistance with entering institutional information and the budget into TARA. Under these circumstances, the PI must assume responsibility for completing and aggregating the proposal and routing it in TARA.

Also, please note TARA does NOT automatically notify HRC staff of proposals initiated in the system. The Dean's approval and Dean's Agreement process is the only approved way to engage HRC staff to assist with a proposal. Proposals routed by PIs without a signed Dean's Agreement will not be approved in TARA. Proposals will be returned to the initiator.

If the timeline to submit the proposal is inadequate or prereview has not occurred, the Associate Dean may recommend to the Dean that approval of the proposal should be withheld, which will prevent the submission from proceeding.

3. Preaward

PIs who receive requests for additional information prior to funding should contact the Contracts and Grants Coordinator to facilitate the response to the funding agency (i.e., response to scientific concerns, other support forms, Institutional Review Board approvals, and human subjects' certifications).

PIs may be the first to receive notification of award letters, grant agreements, or contracts. Documents of this nature should be forwarded to the HRC Associate Director.

Awards received by the USC Department of Contracts and Grants are distributed to the PI via TARA. Award notifications are sent to PIs via system-generated email. Due to system limitations, HRC staff may not be recipients of these notifications. Notifications should be forwarded upon receipt to the Grants and Contracts Coordinator for review to assess if the budget and/or terms and conditions have been modified, presenting a risk of undue burden to the School, prior to acceptance.

4. Award

Upon receipt of a newly executed award, HRC staff will contact the PI to set up an award transition meeting to transfer the award from preaward to postaward status. **This meeting is MANDATORY within 30 days of receipt of all new awards.** HRC gives highest priority to supporting PIs during new project implementation; however, failure to participate in the award transition meeting within the first 30 days will result in a hold being placed on expenditures until the meeting has occurred.

The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate project implementation and includes:

- Review of award terms and conditions.
- Review of budget allocations.
- Review of subrecipient responsibilities and budget.
- Initiation of departmental pay authorizations.
- Discussion of the project financial management.
- Explanation of the process to certify expenditures on the monthly Account Status Report (ASR) and effort certifications questions.
- Instruction on submitting requests and processing payments via HRCgrant@usc.edu, eMarket, and TARA.
- Information about whom to contact for questions and assistance.

5. Postaward

- Consult the HRC Business Administrator to ensure all financial transactions comply with the applicable cost principles prior to processing expenditures.
- Contact the Department Contracts and Grants Coordinator for all postaward NONFINANCIAL activities (e.g., no-cost extensions, Research Performance Progress Report submissions, postaward inquiries to sponsor).
- Consult the School's Information Technology group for specifications prior to purchasing project-related computers and other technology equipment.
- Contact the Home Department Coordinator for assistance with job classification and vacancy posting requirements.

6. Statistics Support

Statistics services are available at HRC. Statistics services include research proposal preparation and consulting, postaward consultation, data analysis support, and publication support. The HRC gives **highest priority** to support of multiyear, extramurally funded projects in which an HRC Statistics Core staff member is **budgeted**. Second priority is all other projects able to pay for services as provided. Faculty members are encouraged to consult with the Associate Dean for Faculty Research Development regarding statistics support needs. Decisions about priorities and time allocation are made by the HRC Director.

The USC SSW PhD Program is currently budgeted for 10% FTE for statistics support.

7. **Editorial Services**

Editorial services are available at HRC. These services include language and grammar editing, crosschecking of searchable references, proofing, and manuscript formatting in accordance with requirements of the journal to which submissions will be made. The HRC gives **highest priority** to support of manuscripts associated with multiyear, extramurally funded projects administrated by HRC. Second priority is all other projects that are able to pay for services as provided.

USC SSW PhD Program: Students are provided editorial support as assigned for writing projects. A “writing project” is defined as research manuscripts prepared for submission to professional, peer-reviewed journals. To the extent workload permits, book chapters may also be considered for editing. Further details of editing procedures are indicated in *HRC Editorial Support Services for Doctoral Students*, December 10, 2010 (contact HRC Editor/Writer to obtain memo).

Decisions about priorities and time allocation for editorial services are made by the HRC Director.

D. **Research Compliance**

Maintaining high standards of integrity in the conduct of research is of utmost importance to the School and the University (see [USC research ethics and compliance guides](#)).

To conduct research at USC, all investigators are required to complete the [Grants Management Education Program](#) offered by the Office of Compliance.

The HRC has instituted appropriate policies and procedures necessary for adherence to relevant laws and regulations. All research administration functions are conducted in accordance with the applicable sponsor and University and School policies and procedures. Although on a day-to-day basis many of these processes are transparent, to meet institutional compliance requirements, PIs are required to:

- Complete an annual financial conflict of interest disclosure in diSClose.
- Submit an application for the protection of human subjects through iSTAR.

- Certify proposals in TARA.
- Meet monthly with the HRC Business Administrator to certify project account transactions via the ASR process.
- Certify effort on sponsored projects via eCERT.

In accordance with University policies and procedures, signature authority for these responsibilities may not be delegated.

Note for fall 2014: These systems are currently in the process of transitioning to TARA, the university's research administration portal. HRC staff is available to assist with accessing project information in TARA and account information in the Quali Financial System.

E. Resources for Investigators

- USC Rates at a Glance
- DCG
- Research Advancement
- Office of Compliance
- Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
- Sponsored Projects Accounting
- USC Travel Regulations
- OMB Circular A-21 (federal cost principles)
- OMB Circular A-110 (administrative requirements)
- NIH Grant Policy Statement
- DoDGARs Part 32

F. Space Allocation

Currently, the HRC provides office space for research-involved faculty members, staff, and students at the AT&T Building (City Center) located in downtown Los Angeles. Depending on the nature of the research project and with approval and financial support from the Dean, projects may be located at other on-campus and off-campus facilities.

The HRC strives to accommodate all requests for research space. Space is limited and is allocated by criteria originally approved in 2006 by the Hamovitch Advisory Committee. Criteria for space allocation were developed based on the following assumptions:

- The HRC's existence is dependent on indirect cost recovery; projects with full indirect cost recovery are given highest priority.
- Space allocation decisions are based on need; the higher the FTE % of a position, the higher the space priority.
- Space allocation is individualized to the greatest extent possible, and is as representative of the research faculty member and type of research as possible.
- Utilization of and demand for space is reviewed annually.

- Space for research and research training is given the highest priority.

In the spirit of the criteria cited above, the following hierarchy is used to determine space allocation:

1. Extramural Funding

- Federal research grants with full on-campus indirect cost recovery.
- Federal research grants with reduced indirect cost recovery.
- Other government research grants; priority determined by the period of performance, award level, recovery of facilities and administrative costs through direct and indirect costs.
- Private foundation research grants; priority determined by the period of performance, award level, recovery of facilities and administrative costs through direct and indirect costs.
- Federal training grants.
- Fellowship awards.
- No-cost extensions.

2. Institutional Funding

Because institutionally funded projects are typically small awards with minimal or no indirect cost recovery, awardees of successful proposals to the Larson Endowment for Innovative Research and Teaching, Zumberge Research and Innovation Fund, Urban Initiative, or other similar initiatives may negotiate with the Director for research space.

3. Additional Research-Related Space at City Center

HRC staff occupies City Center Suite 360. Research project personnel may be assigned shared offices or workstations in Suite 360 or on the 14th floor of the AT&T Building. Allocation of project research space is subject to the approved space allocation policy outlined above.

The School has created a collaborative research and scholarly environment on the 14th floor of the AT&T Building. The space houses the Roybal Institute, CIR, research faculty, clinical teaching faculty, cluster postdoctoral fellows and staff, students, and other assigned research and administrative personnel. Roybal Institute and CIR are responsible for assigning offices and workstations within their designated areas. Single-occupancy offices for faculty and administrators are assigned by the Dean's Office in accordance with School policy. The open workstation environment includes audiovisual-equipped conference rooms, team tables, and huddle rooms to encourage research collaboration and scholarly dialogue among occupants.

G. Research Clusters of Excellence

A significant amount of the school's research is organized by and conducted under the auspices of Research Clusters of Excellence, overseen by the Research Council and administrated by HRC. Research clusters are guided by the Associate Dean for Faculty Research Development, who works closely with the Chair of the Research Council and Research Council Administrator to ensure that the clusters are supported in their scientific mission. The clusters are self-governing units that establish distinct personnel functions, policies, and procedures to fulfill their missions and goals. These personnel functions, policies, and procedures are aligned and consistent with the policies and procedures of the School and University. Each cluster has a director who is responsible for setting its agenda of research and accomplishing its mission. Cluster members include research and clinical faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and doctoral students. The clusters include faculty and student affiliates from other schools at USC and other universities and organizations. Cluster membership is determined by the cluster director with the support of members. Cluster resources are allocated through open discussions of members with the director remaining responsible for final decisions. A committee of cluster directors develops joint policy and procedures on an ad hoc basis. Policies and procedures of clusters are currently informal, but as the clusters grow the committee is expected to draft formal policies and procedures as needed. Further information on the clusters can be obtained from the Associate Dean of Research for Faculty Research Development and from the following links:

- [Research Clusters of Excellence](#)
- [Aging, Social Integration, and Community Development](#)
- [Behavior, Health, and Society](#)
- [Child Development and Children's Services](#)
- [Homelessness, Housing, and Social Environment](#)
- [Management, Organizations and Policy Transformation](#)
- [Military and Trauma](#)
- [Serious Mental Illness, Mental Health Services, and Recovery](#)
- [Doctoral Student Information](#)
- [Postdoctoral Scholars Information](#)

H. Mandatory Disclosures by Research Faculty

Federal funders require conflict of interest disclosures. USC employees are asked to manage disclosures at disclose.edu; diSClose is a system provided by USC for use by USC employees to disclose a possible conflict of interest or relationship with industry.

Researchers who are proposing or have received support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (including NIH, CDC, HRSA, and AHRQ) must also make an **annual disclosure** of all financial interests related to their institutional responsibilities to USC, regardless of whether any of these interests give rise to a conflict of interest related to their research. The annual disclosure must be completed using the diSClose system before a proposal can be submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and any identified conflicts must be managed before an account can be established.

The HRC and the School are not given access to alerts issued by the system to the researchers and/or the disclosure information. Consequently, HRC is NOT able to monitor disclosures on behalf of researchers.

HRC researchers are asked to be attentive to disclosure requests.

I. Organizational Chart

