**Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) Committee SOP**

**Objective:**

The objective of the RGS committee is to serve as review panel of grant proposals from Department of Clinical Sciences’ (DCS) residents ideally prior to submission for external funding. The main goal of the committee is to provide the resident and resident advisor feedback to improve their proposal prior to submission and increase the potential for funding. Additionally, one of the committee’s goals is to improve the overall grantsmanship and scientific writing skills of DCS residents. These goals and objectives are achieved through the generation of an individual review report for each proposal with specific comments and recommendations for improvement. After reviewing each proposal, the RGS committee will approve the proposal or request a resubmission in which the resident needs to address the concerns and comments of the committee’s review prior approval. A maximum of 3 reviews of each proposal will be provided to the resident by the RGS committee. All residents must submit their proposal to the RGS committee no later than January of the last year of their residency.

All DCS residents can access to up to $5,000.00 funding from DCS for their research proposals should their external grant submission not be funded; however, even if external or DCS funding are not needed to complete resident research proposals, it is required that all DCS residents enrolled in a graduate program (MS or PhD) submit a research proposal to the RGS Committee and that the proposal is approved by RGS before graduation (residency completion). Residents enrolled in graduate programs that have submitted a research proposal to an external funding agency and received funding from that agency are not required to have a full RGS committee review of the proposal provided that the proposal is submitted along with a statement by the primary mentor that the resident contributed significantly to the writing of the proposal. An exception to this would be a situation where the mentor anticipates requesting extra (non-matched) funds through the DCS for the resident research project described in that proposal.

The DCS and RGS committee expectation is that funding (external or other sources) has been sought for all proposals requesting departmental funding, including non-traditional proposals such as surveys, retrospective studies, or other type of studies that may not fit the type of application requested by federal, state, or other private funding agencies.

Prior to submitting a proposal for RGS review for departmental funding, PI’s are encouraged to consult with the RGS committee co-chairs with any concerns or questions regarding the suitability of funding methods they have pursued. When the grant is submitted for review, the cover letter accompanying the grant should address methods of funding that have been unsuccessfully pursued. Depending on the nature of the study, the RGS committee may request that the PI demonstrate that any or all of the following methods have been sought:

a) Funds from external agencies in which the topic of research could be of high relevance (i.e., the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) Foundation, the Veterinary and Comparative Clinical Immunology Society [VCCIS], American Board of Veterinary Practitioners Foundation [ABVP], American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [ASPCA], etc.).

b) Funds from private entities that may benefit from the results from the research/study to be performed (i.e., pharmaceutical companies that manufacture medications to be used, private veterinary specialty clinics, etc.)

c) Collaboration within the university, college, or department with experts in other fields to reduce the potential for paying consultation, statistical analysis, and/or other related fees.

d) Existing start-up or professional development funds.

**Pilot Study Funds:**

DCS residents have the ability to access pilot study funds (maximum of $2500) provided they submit a pilot study proposal according to the DCS guidelines. These funds are intended to support research endeavors directly related to the primary resident project and may include things such as validation of an assay, collection of data from 1-2 clinical cases/study subjects to include in future full proposal, or other related activities. The proposal should clearly indicate the future related research the pilot data will support for that resident or a future resident and the relevant funding sources that will be approached for the future study. Funded pilot proposals can count towards a resident’s graduate student grant requirement.

Funds awarded for pilot studies will be subtracted from the maximum $5000 for DCS resident research funding. Residents may only submit one pilot proposal per study. Should residents wish to apply for additional DCS funding to support their primary research project, they must submit a full proposal according to the DCS guidelines and accounting for whatever funds were allocated for the pilot study (example, if $1000 DCS funds were provided as pilot funds, a maximum of $4000 may be requested from DCS).

**Functions:**

The RGS committee meets monthly every 1st or 2nd Wednesday of the month. Review of each proposal submission is performed by at least 2 members of the committee and 1 of the co-chairs following the guidelines of the proposal review form (please see below monthly grant reviews section). For a proposal to be evaluated in the monthly RGS meeting, residents must submit proposals through the submission portal (webmaster@vetmed.auburn.edu) ([https://www.vetmed.auburn.edu/academic-departments/department-clinical-sciences/resources/resident-grant-proposals/](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vetmed.auburn.edu%2Facademic-departments%2Fdepartment-clinical-sciences%2Fresources%2Fresident-grant-proposals%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cmfc0003%40auburn.edu%7Cad501fa51bba4e4717a208db459bde8e%7Cccb6deedbd294b388979d72780f62d3b%7C1%7C0%7C638180307971532408%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=A2%2BGMAYiLdgRi5r6zyNFmsy%2B%2B1wRrujckeLycGYl9QY%3D&reserved=0)) no later than 5 pm CST of the last Wednesday of the previous month. During monthly RGS Committee meetings, each submitted proposal is presented by one of the assigned reviewers and discussed thoroughly by all attendants. Following review of proposals, RGS co-chairs gather (by email) completed proposal review forms from assigned reviewers and additional comments from attending members and generate either an approval or a resubmission letter with specific comments. The letters are sent by one of the committee co-chairs (usually the one assigned to lead the meeting that specific month – see below) to the resident and resident advisor. If a re-submission letter is sent, the resident has 4 weeks to address the RGS committee reviewers’ comments and submit a re-submission letter addressing individual comments made by reviewers and re-submit the proposal highlighting the changes made on the proposal after revision. When an approval letter is sent, RGS reviewers’ comments are only for consideration and resubmission is not required. To obtain DCS funding and/or complete the resident/graduate student requirement for graduation, each resident must contact the DCS department head and submit the RGS approval letter and an amended budget (that reflects up to $ 5,000.00 from DCS) if necessary.

Letters of approval or resubmission will be sent to resident and resident advisors within a week of each RGS monthly meeting. The templates for the proposal review form, approval, and resubmission letters as well as DCS proposal submission guidelines can be found in the CVM website.

**Research and Graduate Study Committee SOP for monthly grant reviews**

The purpose of structuring grant reviews as described below is to improve the balance of proposal review responsibilities on the committee. For newer faculty and/or those with less experience writing/reviewing grants, the hope it to provide them the opportunity to develop these grant skills. As chairs rotate off the committee, this will improve the transition of new chairs. Finally, the distribution of responsibilities described below more closely reflects protocol on most other grant review agencies.

**Co-Chairs 2024:** Manuel Chamorro, Kara Lascola

**Co-Chairs-elect 2024:** Dana LeVine, Thomas Passler

**Committee Members:**  Jessica Klabnik, Douglas Castro, Tom Jukier, Megan Grobman, Andrew Leisewitz, Candace Lyman, Mariano Mora, Anthony Moore, Reid Hanson

**I. Distribution of Grant review responsibilities among committee members on a rotating basis.**

(a). For each monthly meeting, chair responsibilities will alternate between co-chairs.

(b). Two committee members will be assigned to each submitted proposal as a primary or secondary reviewer.

(c). Committee members not assigned to a proposal are expected to have read the proposal(s) and participate in discussion if they are able to attend the meeting. They are welcome to submit written evaluations to the secondary reviewer or chair as well, but must do so by the day of the meeting.

**Specific responsibilities of chair and primary and secondary reviewers.**

(a). Primary reviewer:

 Confirm receipt of proposal assignment from chair, present summary of assigned proposal at meeting, complete the Proposal Review Form (including their comments/critique), submit the completed proposal review form to chair day of meeting.

(b). Secondary reviewer:

 Confirm receipt of proposal assignment from chair, provide specific written comments/critique for assigned proposal, be prepared to discuss grant, record additional comments/critiques brought up by committee during meeting, submit their comments as well as any additional comments recorded in meeting to chair after the meeting.

(c) Chair:

 Send submitted (resubmitted) proposals to assigned reviewers when notified through online submission portal (webmaster@vetmed.auburn.edu), set date and notify RGS committee for monthly meeting, email all proposal submission materials to rest of RGS committee no later than 7-days before meeting, read all submitted proposals and be prepared to step in to present if needed, also keep track of any additional comments/critiques brought up by committee during discussion of proposal, incorporate additional comments/critiques and finalize proposal review form, draft letter of acceptance/resubmission and email to graduate student and mentor.

For resubmissions, the original primary and secondary reviewers will be reassigned to that proposal

Chairs will also rotate through primary and secondary reviewer duties.

The RGS committee meets the 1st or 2nd Wednesday of each month. For a proposal to be considered for review it must be submitted by 5 pm on the last Wednesday of the month preceding the meeting. Exceptions may be made for proposals submitted after 5pm on the last Wednesday of the month. These are at the discretion of the chairs.

We recognize that everyone on this committee has other work related responsibilities and that schedules can be unpredictable. If a committee member has been assigned as a reviewer for a proposal and is unable to fulfill this role, it is the responsibility of that committee member to find a replacement other than the secondary reviewer or chair already assigned to the proposal.