

Vanderbilt University: SOP for NIH S10 Shared Instrumentation Grants

These guidelines pertain to all faculty Principal Investigators (PIs) who have Primary Appointments in one of the Vanderbilt University Schools or Colleges, including the Vanderbilt School of Medicine Basic Sciences (VBS), regardless of whether the instrument is placed in a VU or VUMC core.

- *The School or College of the PI and its Dean are referred to here as the “Primary College” and “Primary Dean”.*
- *The School or College of a Major User of the proposed instrumentation that is different from that of the PI is here referred to as the “Secondary College” and its Dean(s) as “Secondary Dean(s)”.*
- *NIH requires that information regarding Major Users be included as part of the S10 application. S10 proposals frequently identify Major Users from at least one or two Secondary Colleges (i.e., VU Major Users included on a VUMC PI’s S10 proposal or vice versa). When there are major users based in multiple colleges and/or VUMC, each college and VUMC will contribute matching/support funds based on the % of total instrument use from their colleges. Matching/support funds are transferred between colleges either VU→VUMC or VUMC→VU after all Colleges/Entities negotiate their shared % of promised funds and an appropriate mechanism to recover the funds is established.*

If you are faculty with a Primary Appointment in a VUMC department, VUMC has a separate S10 process and set of guidelines. To submit an internal proposal to VUMC, please complete the [VUMC S10 Internal Proposal Form](#). Please contact [Amy Martinez](#) in the VUMC Office of Research with any questions about the VUMC S10 program.

S10 Program Announcement

- The Associate Dean for Research of Vanderbilt School of Medicine Basic Sciences (VBS) will forward the S10 Program Announcement to its faculty as soon as they become available. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) will do the same for all other non-VBS VU faculty. Normally, the submission deadline for the S10 programs is around May 31st.
- Interested faculty should carefully read the NIH program description for the program of interest, including proposal preparation instructions. Links to these RFAs will be provided.
- Faculty will need to submit a [pre-proposal in REDCap](#) by the date stated in the S10 Program Announcement. For 2018, the pre-application deadline is April 2. Prospective PIs should be aware of and note the following:
 - The pre-application process is complicated and will take some time to work through. Therefore, it is essential that PIs begin working on their applications early.
 - Pre-applications are nearly always given the green light for full proposal submission to the NIH.
 - Most of the pre-application process involves preparing documents required for the full proposal. So, most of the work remaining to be done after the pre-proposal is submitted will be writing the full project.
 - If more time is needed, PIs can save the data from completed questions, come back to the survey later and begin answering questions exactly where they left off. To do this, go to the bottom of the survey and select “**Save and Return**”. A unique “**RETURN CODE**” will be assigned by REDCap and it will be required to sign back in to the survey. To finish, applicants simply go back to the survey and select the “**RETURNING**” option in the upper right corner. The survey will ask for your “**RETURN CODE**” as your login credential.
- Note that the Dean of Vanderbilt School of Medicine Basic Sciences (VBS) will usually provide matching funds **ONLY** if the instrument to be acquired will be housed and maintained within a VU or VUMC core. This is the case even with the PI is from a different school or college. When considering this, note that:
 - A PI who wishes to submit an S10 grant application without a commitment to place it under Core Management should realize that the lack of an institutional commitment letter may be viewed unfavorably by NIH reviewers and administrators.

- In rare cases, PIs may be able to line up matching funds from some other source, such as directly from their department. If this occurs, the matching letter included in the grant would come from their department's Chair. With justification provided, PIs can request a waiver of the requirement to house the instrument within a core in order to obtain matching/support funds. These requests should be rare and made directly to the Dean of VBS before preparing a full pre-proposal.
- PIs from non-VBS schools or colleges should consult with their primary Dean to determine if there are any pre-requisites to securing matching commitments that apply to them such as that outlined immediately above.

S10 Pre-Proposal Submission

All Faculty with primary appointments in a VU department must complete a pre-proposal in the [VU 2018 S10 RedCap Survey](#) regardless of whether the instrument will be housed in a VU or VUMC core. The following list of items includes information which will be requested from the PI in the pre-proposal survey:

- Description of the proposed instrument(s).
- Vendor's quote for the proposed instrument and any associated accessories, maintenance contract, etc.
- Identify in which VU or VUMC Core Facility or Shared Resource the proposed instrument will be housed.
- Identify the physical location for the proposed instrument.
- Will any renovations be required prior to instrument installation? If so, please describe.
 - A renovation budget will be required before the application has final approval for NIH submission.
 - For PIs who are primary in VBS, Dr. Tharp can assist with obtaining estimates from VU Plant Operations or VUMC Facilities Management. PIs from other schools will work with staff in their Dean's office to obtain estimates (see contact list at end of this document).
- Will this instrument generate large amounts of data that need to be stored and/or transferred to the labs of remote users? If so, what is the IT plan for data storage and transfer?
 *Note for VBS faculty or equipment going in to a VBS core: As a general principle, if there is the need for storage of large data sets, it is preferred and optimal that the site of storage should be physically located at or very near the instrument which is generating the data. This should be carefully taken into account during planning for instrument acquisition and storage.

The IT info should include:

- Will a local storage device need to be purchased and installed with the new instrument? (If so, please read the program announcement carefully and consult with the NIH S10 program officer to see if it is advisable to request such a device as part of the instrument acquisition proposal that will be submitted).
- If large amount of data will need to be transferred from the instrument to remote sites, is it feasible to do this in a timely fashion through the existing VU/VUMC network switches and pipes or will there need to be an IT upgrade project to enhance the existing system?
- What is the budget required to cover the cost of the potential IT needs alluded to above?
- Provide information on the instrument's user group by providing projections for usage per the guidelines below.
 - At least 3 of the Major Users must be a PD/PI on a distinct active NIH research award in an area of basic, translational or clinical research. As long as this requirement is satisfied additional major users do not need to have NIH funding.
 - Please work closely with the Core Director to generate a spreadsheet to identify both Major Users (total usage of 15% or more) and Minor Users (5% - 15%). Also indicate the % time that will be devoted to users who are external to Vanderbilt (non-VU/non-VUMC). Upload the data into the survey.
 - Per NIH guidelines, 75% of the instrument use must be dedicated to NIH-funded projects.

- Spreadsheets must include the following for each major and minor user: Name, Primary Department, Project Title that will utilize instrument or short description, relevant NIH grant number (if applicable), and the Estimated % of Total Usage.
- Provide an abstract
 - The abstract is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the requested instrument and the need of the research projects for the instrument.
 - State the application's broad, long-term objectives, concisely describing how access to the instrument will enhance the health-related goals of the research projects.
 - The abstract should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and should be understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader.
 - Please Note: **The abstract should be no longer than 30 lines of text.**
- Are there other equipment details to be considered?
- Are there other required costs beyond the equipment purchase and renovations (i.e., warranties, maintenance plans, personnel support, etc.)?
- Provide a complete 5-year budget for the project.
 - Include all applicable expenses needing to be funded (i.e., Renovation and IT costs, instrument and consumable purchases, upkeep and service contracts and etc.).
 - Please note: Under the S10 mechanism, funding requests are limited to the purchase cost of the instrument only. Support for technical personnel, service contracts, extended warranties, and supplies are not allowable. Also, the program does not provide facilities and administrative (F&A) costs or support for construction or alterations or renovations. However, the costs of these items can, upon approval by the Dean(s) providing the match, be covered as part of the University match. If so, these items should be included in the 5-year budget.
 - It is expected that the sum total of **the 5-year costs will be covered by a combination of the S10 award funds, revenue from usage in the core and the matching/support commitment made by the Primary Dean, VUMC and Secondary Colleges** (if there are major users on the proposal from these entities).
 - The PI is strongly encouraged to work with the Core Director and the appropriate person in the office of their Primary Dean to prepare this budget. Example budgets may be requested from the OVPR or Dr. Tharp of the Dean of VBS office.
- What is the financial and operational plan for this instrument?
 - Describe the plan for the following:
 - Integrating the instrument into the core
 - Instrument Management
 - Operational Support
 - User Access
 - *Cost Recovery which should include a Business Plan
 - *Note: A PI can choose to submit a pre-proposal without including a complete Cost Recovery/Business Plan (which could be the case for PIs who are not Center or Core directors). However, this information is required for the final proposal. In such cases, the PI will be given extra time to work with the relevant Core Director to assemble the needed information. After initial review, the Dean's/Vice Provost's offices may request this information before a decision is made to allow the pre-proposal to proceed through the selection process.
- Combined Statement of Support
 - A Combined Statement of Support is a requirement if the PI is seeking institutional matching funds. This Statement is different from the Institutional Matching Support Letter from the Primary Dean (below section

below). A template Combined Statement of Support can be found in the [REDCap survey](#) or on the VBS 2018 S10 webpage which can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

- The Statement of Support must be signed by the departmental Chair or Center Director of the core where the instrument will be housed and the Core Director.
 - The Statement provides assurance that the PI, Chair/Center Director and Core Director have vetted the value of adding the instrument to the core versus the financial risk.
 - The Statement is also a declaration confirming that both parties agree to house the instrument and oversee the maintenance and operation for its projected lifetime (~ 5 years).
 - For your convenience, please download the template Statement provided within REDCap survey, obtain the appropriate signatures and upload it before submitting the pre-proposal.
- What will the matching/support commitment be? This commitment will be the fraction of the total 5 year project budget (renovations, purchases, personnel, maintenance costs, etc.) that is not covered by the actual NIH S10 grant and projected income from use in the core. It is emphasized that the S10 grant itself can only be used to pay for equipment purchases. The PI should communicate with the office of their Dean to determine what match can be tentatively committed, pending additional approvals by any secondary Deans who will also be asked to contribute (see below).

Note that for the final proposal, the Institutional Matching Support Letter will be a single letter provided by the Primary Dean of the PI. This letter is normally prepared after submission and approval of the pre-proposal. The commitment made in that letter may reflect the sum of commitments made to the primary Dean by secondary Deans for major users from different colleges (or VUMC) than the PI. For example, if the PI is from Arts and Sciences and there is a major (15% or higher total use) user from VBS, then it is expected that the Dean of VBS will cover a fraction of the match/support that corresponds to the total project % use by the VBS major user (or users). **Commitments from all relevant Deans (including VUMC, if relevant) must be secured prior to submitting the pre-proposal.** PIs are advised that it is usually unwise for them to directly approach secondary deans to ask for their support. Instead, the PI should (1) work with their own Dean's office, who can make the appropriate (high level) communications with the office of the secondary dean (or VUMC) to help secure the needed matching/support commitment and also (2) ask major users from other colleges to approach their respective Deans to advocate for their commitment based on the % of total instrument time devoted to faculty from that college. (It will therefore be helpful for the major user to know what number of matching dollars they are asking for). It would be usual and proper for there to be communication between the offices of the primary Dean and the secondary Dean at this point. A template for the Dean's commitment letter can be found within the [REDCap survey](#) or on the VBS 2018 S10 webpage which can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Approval Process for Pre-proposals

- All VU pre-proposals will be reviewed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) as they are submitted in REDCap. The OVPR can consult with the Dean of the PI's college. If additional information is needed, it will be requested from the PI or the Office of the relevant Primary Dean. Once all requirements are fulfilled, they will confirm with the PI and Core Director via email. **Proposals that do not include key components of the pre-proposal such as a complete set of matching fund commitments from the relevant Dean(s) will not be certified as complete and will be returned to the PI.**
- The OVPR will ensure that for each pre-proposal there is no redundancy with existing equipment/facilities or competition with another submission from VU or VUMC. In such cases, there will be communication between the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, the Deans of the relevant colleges/schools, the PI, and (if relevant) the VUMC OOR to work out a final plan.
- Once it is determined that there are no overlaps between proposals or between proposed instrumentation and existing equipment, the OVPR will certify the list of approved pre-proposals and inform the PI and the primary Dean. In some cases, additional instructions may be provided at this point regarding needed changes to the budget, etc. The date for this action should be at least 6 weeks before the proposal deadline.

- If the S10 programs include any opportunities that limit the number of applications Vanderbilt may submit, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research will conduct a down-select competition if necessary to determine who will be allowed to submit as the institutional candidate. (This has traditionally NOT been the case).
- It should be anticipated that all pre-proposals will move forward to the final OVPR approval and submission process if no overlap occurs and no down-selects are necessary.
- At this point the final commitment letters to NIH are prepared for inclusion with the final proposal. One will be the Combined Statement of Support letter that was drafted at the preproposal stage and signed by the Core Director and either the relevant Center Director or Departmental Chair. The other will be the Institutional Matching Support letter provided by the primary Dean, which will reflect the summed commitments being made not only by that Dean, but by other (secondary) Deans and/or VUMC. Suggested templates for this letter may be obtained from the OVPR or from Dr. Anthony Tharp in the Dean's office of VBS.
- The OVPR will work to assemble the large amount of data required by NIH for the final proposal regarding previous VU S10-funded instrumentation and associated publications.
- The PI will complete their proposal and submit through their home Department or Administrative Pod.
- After proposals have been scored by NIH, PIs should forward the review information from the NIH to the OVPR, who will share this information with the relevant Dean so that budgeting information for the awards (i.e., matching funds) can be updated

S10 Oversight Committee

- The S10 Oversight Committees are required per NIH guidelines.
- Anthony Tharp will serve as the Dean of Basic Sciences' institutional member on all S10 Oversight Committees. Please include him in any meetings you are scheduling and on any communications to your committee.
- Dr. Tharp will report information gathered at meetings to the Dean and the Associate Dean of Research.

VU Dean and Provost Office Contacts

- Dean's office, School of Medicine Basic Sciences: Anthony Tharp
- Dean's office, School of Nursing: Mariann Piano
- Dean's office, College of Arts and Sciences: David Wright and Keivan Stassun
- Dean's office, School of Engineering: Peter Cummings
- Office of the Vice Provost for Research: Liane Moneta-Koehler