# Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Oversight of Laboratory Safety for VA-Funded Research Conducted at the University of Pittsburgh

**Policy #S-004**

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System   
Pittsburgh, PA 15240

**Signatory Authority:**Dr. Steven Graham, ACOS

**Responsible Owner:**Associate Chief of Staff/R&D

**Service Line(s):**Research and Development (R&D) Department

**Effective Date:**May 19, 2020

**Recertification Date:**December 2021

## PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

* 1. The purpose of this policy is to describe the role of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) with respect to oversight of laboratory safety for Principal Investigators that conduct VA-funded research at the University of Pittsburgh.
  2. This SOP sets forth mandatory procedures and processes to ensure compliance with VHA Directive 1200.08, Safety of Personnel and Security of Laboratories Involved in VA Research, April 24, 2019.
  3. This policy applies to all research that is conducted at the University of Pittsburgh by VAPHS researchers while on VA time.

1. PROCEDURES
   1. Introduction.

There are circumstances in which VA-funded research is performed at the University of Pittsburgh. As a result, it is imperative that the VAPHS IBC have procedures in place that address the following issues:

* Review and approval of research
* Laboratory Safety Review
* Training
  1. Policy.
     1. Review and Approval of Research

The VAPHS and the University of Pittsburgh each have their own established IBC. The following outlines when review by the VAPHS IBC is necessary for work that is conducted at the University of Pittsburgh.

Research conducted at the University of Pittsburgh with funding administered through the VAPHS:

* In accordance with VHA Directive 1200.08, all research that is funded through the VAPHS must be reviewed by the VAPHS IBC, even if that research is being conducted at the University of Pittsburgh. In such instances, investigators will be expected to submit an application to the VAPHS IBC.
* Investigators may make submissions to both the University of Pittsburgh IBC and the VAPHS IBC in parallel, however, each submission must be made using the appropriate forms and following the procedures outlined by each institution. The VAPHS IBC will conduct its review of the project ensuring that all requirements related to VA research have been satisfied.
* If the Principal Investigator’s initial submission, amendment, or the annual renewal includes work with recombinant DNA, the VAPHS IBC will request confirmation of the University of Pittsburgh IBC approval.  A copy of the IBC protocol approval letter can be provided by the Principal Investigator or the University’s Recombinant DNA Office.
* For all protocols that are submitted to the VAPHS, a review of proper procedures is performed during the annual laboratory inspections with the University of Pittsburgh Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Department. Please refer to section (2) below.
  + 1. Laboratory Safety Review

In order to ensure that there is oversight of laboratory safety for Principal Investigators that have VA funding but work at the University of Pittsburgh, the following two items are performed:

* Investigators conducting VA-funded research and who work with chemicals in a University of Pittsburgh laboratory must submit their VAPHS chemical inventory to the VAPHS Biosafety Officer. The inventory is requested twice a year. Each inventory is reviewed upon receipt.
* The VAPHS Biosafety Officer attends the laboratory inspections for VA- funded Principal Investigators that have their laboratories located at the University of Pittsburgh. In collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh EH&S Department, the inspections are performed on an annual basis. Personnel from the University of Pittsburgh EH&S Department write the laboratory inspection reports and then send them to the Principal Investigator and copy the VAPHS Biosafety Officer. Every year, the list of VA-funded Principal Investigators is updated with University of Pittsburgh EH&S Department to ensure that the VAPHS Biosafety Officer is included in these inspections.
  + 1. Training

The VAPHS requires that individuals conducting research subject to this policy complete specific training related to working with hazardous agents in the laboratory including biological, chemical and radiological agents. A Principal Investigator and his staff that conduct VA-funded research are required to take the VAPHS specific trainings and these trainings must be completed before the VAPHS IBC will approve the project.

1. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES
   1. The VAPHS IBC must review all research studies that are funded through the VAPHS; this includes VA research studies that occur on the VAPHS campus as well as VA research studies that occur on the campus for the University of Pittsburgh on VA time.
   2. Principal Investigators must submit research proposals through the VAPHS IBC. In addition, they must submit a chemical inventory to the Biosafety Officer semi-annually.
2. DEFINITIONS

N/A

1. REFERENCES

VHA Directive 1200.08, Safety of Personnel and Security of Laboratories Involved in VA Research, April 24, 2019, <https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/handbooks.cfm>

1. REVIEW

This policy is reviewed at recertification, when there are changes to the governing document (for example, national policy or an accreditation body mandate), and any regulatory requirement for more frequent review.

1. RECERTIFICATION

This Policy is scheduled for recertification fifteen (15) months from the Effective Date. In the event of contradiction with national policy, the national policy supersedes and controls.

1. **SIGNATORY AUTHORITY**

*//signed copy on file //*

Gretchen Haas, MD

Chair, Research and Development Committee

Date Approved: May 19, 2020

*//signed copy on file //*

Steven Graham, MD, PhD

Associate Chief of Staff Research and Development Department

Date Approved: May 19, 2020

***NOTE:*** *The signature remains valid until rescinded by an appropriate administrative action.*

**DISTRIBUTION:** Policy is available at: <https://www.va.gov/pittsburgh-health-care/research/safety-security/>