Processing a Notice of Award or Agreement
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

1.   *Purpose*

Successful grant applications result in a Notice of Award (NOA) or Award Agreement provided by a grant sponsor. A NOA is an official, legally binding document providing formal confirmation of a grant application's selection for funding. NOAs are made directly to Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM), which is charged with award management on behalf of a grant's Principal Investigator (PI). A NOA commits funding to WCM and outlines the terms and conditions the College must accept and abide by in order to successfully manage an award.

The Office of Sponsored Research Administration (OSRA) is responsible for processing all sponsored research NOAs received by WCM. This includes the review and possible negotiation of award terms, compliance checks, and liaising with PIs and Departments to obtain all final documents required for account creation, including a final detailed budget. Timely processing of NOAs according to the standards of this SOP is an institutional priority. Delays in award processing can lead to delayed project start dates, account deficits, a need for prior approval requests, and in some cases can jeopardize award funds. OSRA, PIs and their Departments must work in tandem to ensure successful NOA processing.

2.   *Scope*

This standard operating procedure (SOP) outlines how OSRA staff process a Notice of Award and release documents for account creation, including the responsibilities and deliverables of PIs and their Departments.

3.   *Prerequisites*

A grant application must be successful and yield a formal NOA, which must be sent to OSRA for processing.

The project proposal and appropriate internal forms (e.g., Routed WRG-PD Record, budget, other ancillary forms as required), are on file with OSRA.

All applicable regulatory compliance approvals (i.e. IRB, IACUC) are in place.

4.   *Definitions*

OSRA – Office of Sponsored Research Administration

NOA – Notice of Award

AOR – Authorized Organization Representative

WRG SP-PD – Weill Research Gateway Proposal Development record

WRG SP-PT – Weill Research Gateway Proposal Tracking record

SAP – Weill Cornell Medicine's financial system in which accounts for grant awards are generated and managed

IRB – Institutional Review Board

IACUC – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

5.   Policy

Once an application has been selected for funding, a formal Notice of Award must be forwarded to OSRA for review. All incoming awards that are considered Sponsored Research will be managed through OSRA and must be reviewed and approved by OSRA's AOR. Any incoming awards sent directly to the PI must be forwarded to the OSRA Grants Specialist immediately. The PI should not execute an agreement until it has been vetted through OSRA.

The project proposal and appropriate internal forms (e.g., Routed WRG-PD Record, budget, other ancillary forms as required) must be on file with OSRA before an NOA can be processed.

Any agreements that may require negotiation of the terms and conditions will be forwarded to the OSRA Contracts Team for additional review. Once negotiated and executed, the OSRA Contracts Team will forward the agreement to OSRA Operations for processing.

The PI and Department must prepare a final budget and ensure all regulatory compliance approvals are in place before work can commence.

6.   Procedure

A NOA or award agreement must be sent to the OSRA Grants Specialist for review. Upon receipt of an award an OSRA Grants Specialist will review to determine if negotiations are required. Most federal awards do not require negotiation and will be claimed by OSRA Operations for award processing.

Award agreements that require negotiations will be forwarded to OSRA Contracts for review. The assigned Contracts Specialist will review and redline the agreement and liaise with other central offices to discuss terms as needed (i.e. CTL, OGC, Risk Management, etc). Once the terms have been finalized with the sponsor, OSRA Contracts will coordinate signature with all required signatories. PIs should not execute an agreement until OSRA confirms the agreement is ready for signature.

Once an award agreement is fully executed, it will be forwarded to OSRA Operations for award processing.

OSRA Operations will review all documentation on file, prepare a NOA checklist, and send an award in process notification to the PI and Department.

The Department/PI must prepare all requested items within the checklist and send it back to OSRA for review/processing.

OSRA Operations will review to ensure all prerequisites have been met and all required documents have been provided. If prerequisites are not met and/or any requested documentation is missing, an email will be sent to the Department/PI with comments.

Once all required documentation has been received, OSRA will confirm acceptance. All documentation will be uploaded to the WRG SP-PT record and processed for Account Creation via WRG to SAP.

Once the WRG SP-PT record is successfully processed via WRG to SAP for account creation, an email notification will be sent to all members within the fund center provided, along with a PDF attachment with all relevant information (SAP Grant Number, SAP WBS Element Number, Award Title, Award Number, Budget Period Dates, Project Period Dates, Single/Multi Use, Sponsor).

There are three opportunities within the day for an account to get created (11am, 2pm, and 5pm).

7. Process Metrics

OSRA will claim and screen all NOAs within one (1) business day from award receipt in OSRA.

OSRA will review all documentation on file, prepare a NOA checklist, and send an award notification message to a PI and Department within two (2) business days from award receipt in OSRA.

Departments will acknowledge award notification message and prepare all required documents by requested return date.

OSRA will review all documents provided by PI and Department and will update WRG SP-PT within (2) two business days from receipt of all necessary documents to initiate account creation.

OSRA will conduct a final check and push to Account Creation in Process via WRG to SAP within two (2) business days.

8. Special Considerations

Budget Checks – OSRA Operations will review the budget against the award notice to ensure it aligns. They will review to ensure correct base salaries, fringe benefit rates, and indirect costs rates are applied.

IRB Approval – WCM IRB approval must be acquired for human subjects research funded through WCM regardless of where the research is performed. The PI/Department must submit a new protocol application or add the funding source to an existing protocol as soon as they know a proposal is likely to be funded to ensure the IRB office is able to review and approve the proposed work prior to award issuance. If WCM is prime and all human subjects work is occurring at a US subsite, acknowledgement from WCM's IRB must still be obtained. If WCM is the prime and all human subjects work is occurring at a non-US site, the WCM IRB must still review and approve the work. If using a Non-WCM/external IRB, an acknowledgement letter from WCM IRB is needed before the study may be initiated at WCM. Determinations for who will be the Reviewing IRB should be made by the Reliance Team and discussed during grant submission. Once approved by the Reviewing IRB a submission must be made within 2 weeks for WCM acknowledgement. Please review IRB's Single IRB Reliance [website](#) for additional guidance on this process.

IACUC Approval – WCM IACUC approval must be acquired for animal research funded through WCM regardless of where the research is performed. The PI/Department must submit a new protocol or protocol amendment as soon as they know a proposal is likely to be funded to ensure the IACUC office is able to review and approve the proposed work prior to award receipt. If the animal work proposed will all occur at a collaborating subsite, the PI/Department must complete

the IACUC Collaboration Form and submit to the IACUC office. WCM IACUC concurrence is required on all proposed animal subjects work at a collaborating site.

NOA Restrictions - Sponsors may place restrictions on how funds may be used and/or when they may be used. They may also place restrictions related to specific activities within the project. It is imperative to review the terms closely and note any specific restrictions and deliverables that need to be met before a restriction can be lifted. Certain restrictions may delay account creation and/or result in the need for an Advanced Account.

Effort Compliance – OSRA Operations will run an effort report for all WCM project personnel to ensure compliance with WCM's effort caps. Departments will need to make adjustments to any personnel that exceed the effort cap before an account can be created. Any adjustments that require prior approval must be forwarded to the OSRA Grants Team for review and submission of the formal effort reduction request to the applicable sponsor.

OSRA Internal Workflow for Processing Non-Federal Award Agreements

Award Agreement Received
(if received by PI, it must be sent to Grants Specialist)

Grants Specialist:
1. checks WRG record
2. confirms documents required by sponsor

If no WRG record, Department must create & route.

Grants Specialist sends award agreement to Grants Manager & Associate Director
for initial review

Negotiation needed:
Grants Specialist
sends award agreement to
Contracts Team
for further review and negotiation

Negotiation not needed:
award agreement is reviewed &
executed by OSRA Authorized Official

Contracts Team
negotiates with sponsor and executes
award agrement

Grants Specialist
collects all required signatures and
returns award agreement to sponsor
for execution

Contracts Team
sends fully executed agreement
to Operations Team
for account set up

Grants Specialist
sends fully executed agreement
to Operations Team
for account set up