

Onboarding Roadmap for Research Service WOC and IPA Employees

Version Date: 09/21/2025

We are looking forward to your becoming a *Without Compensation (WOC)* employee or an *Interagency Personnel/Act (IPA)* *employee with VA Research Service in the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (headquartered at Malcom Randall VA Medical Center). WOC and IPA employees hold official VA appointments which are held to high standards due to access to the VA computer network and sensitive research space. The expectation is that you will adhere to all VA policies while fulfilling an important mission to improve the health of Veterans through research discoveries!

There is a lot to the application and onboarding process. We are available to provide guidance throughout, however, your attention to reading instructions, communicating with your onboarding specialists, and completing each step promptly is necessary for timely onboarding. Clearance is multifaceted and ALL requirements (Human Resources and Research Service) must be completed before the Gainesville Onboarding Specialist will send you and your supervisor the final clearance email. The table below is the “roadmap” for onboarding. Items are listed in approximate chronological order, but the timing of some items will overlap, or may occur in a different order.

There is a VA campus map at the end of the document with relevant locations marked.

Understanding Your Contacts

Human Resources Management and Consulting (HRMACS)

After your application packet has been submitted by local Research Service to HRMACS, an HR Specialist and HR Onboarding Specialist will be assigned to you to complete HR requirements. The representatives are NOT local and are spread-out nationwide and in different time zones. They serve approximately 100 VA research departments across the country. Check your documents to make sure they’ve assigned you to the correct VA!

Gainesville Onboarding Specialist (GOS)

Your application packet will also be assigned to a Gainesville Onboarding Specialist (GOS) located in Research Service at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. The GOS will communicate with you regarding completing requirements for Research Service and will monitor your progress through out the onboarding process.

Acronyms

Employee Occupational Health	EOH
Final Job Officer	FJO
Gainesville Onboarding Specialist	GOS
Human Resources Management and Consulting	HRMACS
Malcom Randall VA Medical Center	MRVAMC
North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System	NF/SGVHS
Personnel Identification Verification	PIV
Principal Investigator	PI
Tentative Job Offer	TJO

****IPAs require both Human Resources clearance and a separate financial agreement. Contact the Research Office with any questions about the financial aspect, which is not addressed in this document.***

Please keep this VA Onboarding Roadmap handy and use it as a reference.

Onboarding Step	Applicant's Responsibility	Onboarding Contact
Initial application	Work with your Principal Investigator (or designated supervisor) to complete the application that is located on the Research Service webpage.	Research Administrative Officers: Michael.Merritt@va.gov and Margaret.McCallum@va.gov
Your application will be assigned to a "Gainesville Onboarding Specialist": Helen.Vaillancourt@va.gov or Shamira.Alston@va.gov or Margaret.McCallum@va.gov		
Preparing HR submission packet	Be prepared to work with your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist to provide the following information: • Resume • 2 references (names and contact information) • Complete legal name if no middle name put "NMN" • US citizen? (If no, what visa type?). Non-citizen applicants are not always feasible. Ask your Gainesville onboarding specialist to consult with the ACOS/Research. • Do you have a SSN? (yes or no) • Is your SSN card physically available to you? • Have you ever held or applied for a VA appointment before? • Are you currently residing in the Gainesville area? If no, explain.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist
Tentative Job Offer (TJO)	Watch for the email of Tentative Job Offer, which will be sent by "USA Staffing Office". You may need to wait a few weeks for the email to arrive. Accept the offer promptly (3 day deadline) by clicking the link in the email, and follow all instructions. Notify your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist when completed.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the TJO email)
Onboarding Email	Watch for this email about the onboarding process, which will be sent by "USA Staffing Office". It should come within a few days of accepting your TJO. Promptly follow all instructions in the email, which will get you started on form completion, background investigation, fingerprinting, and employee occupational health assessment. Notify your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist when received.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
You may be asked to meet online with an HRMACS Onboarding Specialist during this process, and may be asked to show your IDs on webcam for verification purposes (click for options). Usually your SSN card and driver's license.		
Fingerprints	Fingerprinting will be conducted at Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, in the Personnel Identification Verification (PIV) office, Trailer 11 (T-11). Sometimes another VA facility can be used if the applicant is out of town.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)

	You will be contacted via email by VA Security through email on how and when to make an appointment. At the time of fingerprinting, you must provide two IDs. One of the IDs must be your SSN card, even if just a photo of the card. If a photo of the SSN card is used, then two additional hard copy IDs are necessary (i.e., driver's license, passport, birth certificate). Student ID badge is NOT a valid option. Do not email your IDs or other confidential info. Inform the PIV staff that you are a research applicant reporting for courtesy fingerprinting. An OF-306 form will <u>not</u> be necessary for fingerprinting (if the staff person asks, let them know it's not needed for "courtesy" fingerprinting). When filling out the Fingerprint Request form: Under "Applicant Category" check the box that says "Other" and write in "Research" Check the box for "<i>Courtesy Prints for another Facility</i>" Facility: VHACO - Veterans Health Administration Central Office SOI#: VA03 SON#: 3269 Fingerprint instructions and form templates are saved on the Research Service webpage.	
Background Investigation	VA Security will send you a form through email to complete for an extensive background investigation. To prevent delays, it is essential that all information is complete and accurate. Check your work thoroughly before returning it. VA Security will review the form for accuracy, then will send it to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to conduct the investigation.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
Employee Occupational Health Assessment	The EOH Assessment will typically take place at Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, in the Employee Health Department. You will be provided with the information needed to schedule this appointment. Written record of your vaccination status will be required, including flu, COVID, and other routine vaccinations. The form provides a section to indicate if you are exempt for religious or medical reasons. Employee Occupational Health can be reached at 352-548-6000 ext. 103010, and is located in the main MRVAMC building on 2nd floor Room D232-1 & Room D207.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
Credentialing	The credentialing step applies only to occupations in which the qualification standards require maintenance of licensure,	Credentialing Office North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

	registration, and/or certification. Most research occupations do not require credentialing, so if you are asked to go through this process please notify your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist promptly, so we can verify whether or not it is actually required. When required, credentialing may add about two months to the onboarding process.	
Final Job Offer	Watch for the Final Job Offer email and accept the offer promptly. HRMACS will assign a start date for your VA appointment, but you still have additional required onboarding activities as described below. Work with your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist to determine your actual start date based on achieving clearance through local Research Service.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
Oath of Office	The Oath of Office is conducted virtually, and you may be required to be on camera on a Microsoft Teams call. During the call, the HRMACS specialist will direct you to additional forms to complete on the USA Staffing website.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
At this stage you have completed the onboarding steps required by Human Resources. However, the steps below must be completed before Research Service clearance is achieved.		
Personnel Identification Verification (PIV) badge	You will be provided with information needed to make an appointment with the PIV Office for PIV badge issuance. This is the identification badge that you must wear when at the VA, and is used for space access and computer access. The PIV badge will be obtained in the PIV Office, Trailer 7 (T-7) at Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. Bring the same ID documents that you presented for fingerprinting. Notify your Gainesville Onboarding Specialist of the date and time of your appointment in advance.	HRMACS Onboarding Specialist (see contact info in the onboarding email)
Required trainings online	TMS training - instructions will be provided. CITI training - instructions will be provided.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist
Research Mandatory Safety Training	The Gainesville Onboarding Specialist will contact you regarding the next available Research Mandatory Safety Training, which is an in-person training session for new employees.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist
VA Computer Access (if applicable)	After you have obtained your PIV badge and completed your required trainings, the Gainesville Onboarding Specialist will work on obtaining your VA computer access, if applicable.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist
VA Space Access (if applicable)	After you have obtained your PIV badge and completed your required trainings, the Gainesville Onboarding Specialist will initiate VA space access by providing your PI with the appropriate space access forms in the Final Clearance email. This needs to be completed, signed and returned.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist

Research Staff Survey	Complete the following survey from a <u>non-VA</u> device, which is used for our “People Tracker” database: NF/SG VA Research Staff Survey	
Research Service Clearance and VA Space Access	When ALL HR and Research requirements are met, the GOS will send a FINAL clearance email.	Gainesville Onboarding Specialist
At this stage you have completed all onboarding steps, but you are not yet approved to work on a research study until you have been added as study staff.		
IRBNet registration	You should register in our study tracking system (IRBNet) and link your TMS and CITI training accounts to IRBNet. See “IRBNet/VAIRRS Tutorials” section of Research Service webpage .	Research Service Office VHANFLResearchStudy@va.gov
Addition to Research Study	You must not engage in VA research unless you are listed as study staff in IRBNet for the appropriate study.	Principal Investigator
Check with your Principal Investigator about any lab specific orientation and training documents. Review the Research Service webpage to become familiar with the information and resources available. For example, Research Coordinator Guidebook on the webpage is a useful resource for all employees. The webpage also has instructions for accessing the mapping the network “R” drive. For those who will be accessing the Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU), there are standard operating procedure documents located in IRBNet Forms and Templates, in the library called “NF/SGVHS IACUC, Gainesville, FL – Documents for Researchers”.		
You are now cleared to engage in VA research. Congratulations!		

