

# OSP-MED Training Session: IPAs

How effort of BUMC employees employed  
on Federal agency research is contracted

**BOSTON  
UNIVERSITY**

# Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreements (IPAs)

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- 'Mobility assignments' allow the temporary assignment of skilled personnel between federal and non-federal entities
- Traditional purpose: allows federal entity to purchase research services (employee time)
- By means of IPA, expertise of persons in permanent, career positions at university can be shared
- Cost: university salary and fringe benefits

# What You Need to Know

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- Transition to OSP-MED
  - Research vs general accounting function
  - -7 vs -8 account
  - IPA treated as an award, associated with a BUMC department
- Forms (there are two) and how to complete them
- Term limits (usually two years) extendable to 48 months
- Salary coverage: at 46 consecutive months on IPA, a 2-mo break required to re-start IPA for another 48 consecutive months. At 48 consecutive months, 12-mo break is required. During break, a non-IPA source, usually department funds or VA contract, must cover salary and FB.
- Access to employee turnaround
- Dates of previous IPA assignments
- No annual/cyclical deadline but government fiscal year begins October 1
- Start 60 days in advance

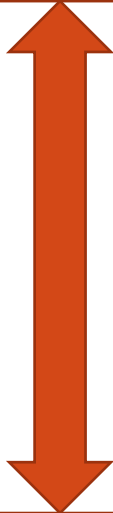
# IPA Process Flow

*Initiator:*  
Federal Host  
Institution (agency)

*Steward:*  
BUMC Office of Sponsored  
Programs-MED

*Employee Home:*  
BUMC department

*Payor:*  
BU Office of Research  
Accounting



# IPA template

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- Use BU ID, not SSN
- BU supervisor and VA supervisor not the same person
- BU supervisor field (box 12)
  - If employee is faculty, list self as BU supervisor;
  - If non-faculty, list BU PI as supervisor (these data are reported in BU research database as PI and co-PI respectively)

# OSP-MED transmittal

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- IPAs to be accompanied by a transmittal “IPA Request Form” (coming soon)
- Purpose:
  - Clarify multiple sources of funds that pay BU employees
  - Summarizes salient data about IPA award
- Accompanies all IPAs: new and extensions
- Not required for IPA modifications unless change of effort and/or change of period

# Eligibility of BU employee on IPA

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- IPA researcher:
  - Date of BU hire greater than 90 days from start of IPA
  - Employed in full-time, permanent 'career position' at BU
  - **Not a student, trainee, or teaching assistant!**
- Research service to be performed under IPA:
  - Research service furthers mutual objectives of BU and VA to strengthen management capacity, assist transfer of technology, learn new problem-solving approaches, or provide important experience for performance of researcher's regular job
  - Not administrative or support (would circumvent VA staff ceilings)
  - Not clinical (would circumvent normal VA procurements)

# Common Errors

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- IPA template
  - Use BU ID—for privacy
  - Start early! Signature path lengthy, inter-institutional, takes time!
  - Watch eligibility: No post-docs
  - Manage number of consecutive months on IPA
  - Modifications: budget is the incremental increase of the value of the IPA not the total obligation (avoids double counting)
- Lack of close collaboration between BU department and VA unit
- VA will not retro-pay an IPA so individuals should not be working at VA without IPA agreement in place

# IPAs: Considerations for BU

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## Employee

- Employee performs short-term project while maintaining university status
- Employee at risk as IPA term draws near (VA may terminate early for lack of funds)
- Risk for non-US employees greater
- Not restricted to US citizens

## University

- BU remains the employer
- Simplified, easy, extendable
- Must monitor time/eligibility requirements
- Administration requires close collaboration among institutions
- Does not reimburse total employment cost
- Long-term IPA use risks muddying University's effort monitoring
- University at risk as IPA term draws near

# Guidance

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[www.bumc.bu.edu/ora/ipas-and-contracts/ipas/](http://www.bumc.bu.edu/ora/ipas-and-contracts/ipas/)

[www.opm.gov/PROGRAMS/IPA/](http://www.opm.gov/PROGRAMS/IPA/)