This definition of “Scope and Standards” represents a statement of the extent of an NCURA Sponsored Peer Review. While recognizing that institutions are organized differently with various kinds of pre- and post-award services, this definition of “Scope” reflects the core operations of Research Administration. The “Standards” outlined below come primarily from the Council of Governmental Relations, “Managing Externally Funded Research Programs: A Guide to Effective Management Practices” (June 2005).

I. **CORE OPERATIONS**
A. Proposal Services

   i. **Collection and Dissemination of Funding Information**
   The institution has procedures in place to identify various opportunities (Federal, State, local, private foundations, etc.) to which faculty can apply for funding. A system is in place to disseminate to faculty information on current funding opportunities in an efficient, timely and easily accessible manner.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution has access to information on prospective sponsors and their requirements.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution provides faculty with information on sources of support for research and other scholarly activities.

   ii. **Proposal Development and Assistance**
   The institution has a process in place to assist faculty with responding to funding opportunities, including proposal writing, understanding and complying with rules, regulations and administrative requirements and help with electronic application processes.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution has trained personnel who are knowledgeable about sponsor regulations, requirements and procedures.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution has trained staff who advises investigators in preparation of compliant proposals.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution has appropriate procedures in place to allow it to access and utilize the electronic proposal, award, administrative, and financial management systems of the federal government or other sponsors.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution stays current with respect to the electronic research initiatives of sponsored projects sponsors.
   
   **STANDARD:** The institution provides assistance for proposal writing and for proposal preparation.

   iii. **Proposal Review and Submission**
   The institution follows standard processes and procedures for review of the business, administrative, and financial aspects of proposals developed by their faculty and submits the proposal to the sponsor on behalf of the institution. Where necessary, the
administrative official who submits the proposal on behalf of the proposing organization also makes certifications and assurances to the sponsor. They commit the organization to the conduct of the project that the sponsor is being asked to support as well as ensure the institution will adhere to the sponsor’s various policies and grant requirements.

**STANDARD:** The institution advises investigators in preparation of compliant proposals.

**STANDARD:** The institution has a comprehensive system in place that is designed to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws.

**STANDARD:** The institution processes proposals in compliance with institutional and sponsor policies and procedures

**STANDARD:** The institution has procedures in place to coordinate internal competitions that limit the number of submissions per institution.

iv. **Collaborative Project Development**
The institution assists its faculty who wish to collaborate, either with other colleagues at their own institution or at other organizations, on a unified project.

**STANDARD:** The institution reviews the collaborative arrangements and determines if the proposed activity is appropriately and administratively manageable.

v. **Agency Liaison**
Institution staff are involved with proposal development, review and submission and have established methods of keeping up-to-date on changes to sponsor’s policies, procedures and processes. Such methods may include, for example, subscription to electronic mailing lists, newsletters or attendance at outreach events, conferences and/or webcasts.

**STANDARD:** Staff have knowledge of the organizational structure of the sponsor and are able to contact the appropriate individual or office when they have questions.

**STANDARD:** The institution has trained personnel who are knowledgeable about sponsor regulations, requirements and procedures.

B. **Award Acceptance and Initiation**
i. **Review and Negotiation of Terms and Conditions**
Grants and agreements that provide sponsored funding require review by the institution of the terms and conditions that are part of the award. While many grants come with standard terms and conditions, many agreements have language that necessitates scrutiny prior to acceptance. All awards require an institutional evaluation for sponsor restrictions on such items as the use of funds, appropriate project personnel, publication rights, intellectual property, etc. to assure compliance with institutional policies that govern the research activities of the campus.

**STANDARD:** The institution has staff trained to review and negotiate agreement terms and conditions.

**STANDARD:** The Institutional staff is cognizant of institutional policies and practices with respect to ownership of intellectual property rights, publication, and acceptance of classified material, etc.
STANDARD: The staff is authorized to negotiate changes in award terms and conditions and has access to legal assistance, either institutional or external counsel, when required during complex negotiations.

STANDARD: Investigators and other concerned individuals are consulted/informed during the negotiation.

STANDARD: The institution has policies and procedures to assure compliance with national policy requirements, e.g. Export Controls, Nondiscrimination, etc.

ii. Ancillary Agreements Associated with Research Grants and Contracts
Prior to acceptance, the institution evaluates any sponsor restrictions in light of campus policies and other existing projects. The review includes all agreements commonly associated with research, including material transfer agreements, clinical trial agreements, confidentiality, agreements, and others.

STANDARD: The institution has procedures for the review and negotiation of research and other agreements that meet all institutional policies and practices.

STANDARD: The institution takes advantage, when appropriate, of standard agreements, e.g., the Uniform Biological Material Transfer Agreement or the National Institutes of Health Simple Letter Agreement.

iii. Subawards
Incoming subawards are agreements that provide flow-through funding for a sponsored project. With incoming subawards the terms and conditions of the agreement require review as well as any restrictions that pass through from the original funding agency. An outgoing subaward is one in which the institution provides sponsored funding to a third party through the issuance of an agreement. Outgoing subawards are typically issued by a central office with the approval of the PI, and they may require negotiation with the recipient individual or organization.

STANDARD: The institution has policies and procedures for issuing subrecipient agreements and for monitoring the performance of subrecipients.

STANDARD: Policies and procedures are in place to determine whether subrecipients have established adequate management and financial systems prior to issuing subrecipient agreements.

STANDARD: Adequate documentation for the selection and approval if necessary, of the subrecipient when not named in the proposal, is prepared and maintained.

iv. Award Acceptance Process
The institution has a process in place that allows the formal acceptance of a sponsored award by designated individuals or offices. In some cases that may be the negotiation and signing of a bilateral agreement. In others, acceptance occurs when the institution begins to spend the funds provided.

STANDARD: The institution has a system to review proposed award terms and conditions and to negotiate those terms in accordance with institutional standards prior to award acceptance.

STANDARD: The institution has written procedures for review of award documents prior to acceptance.
STANDARD: Award budgets are compared to proposal budgets and amended budgets or scopes of work are submitted when awards have been significantly reduced from requested amounts.

STANDARD: The institution does not make funds available until compliance requirements are satisfied (e.g., human subjects committee approvals, conflicts of interest disclosures, etc.).

v. Award Activation and Notification

Activation is the process by which a sponsored award is placed in the accounting system and made available to the principal investigator for expenditures. The notification process delineates the steps followed to make all appropriate parties, such as PI and departmental staff, aware that the award has been accepted and activated by the institution.

STANDARD: The institution has developed procedures to establish awards in its accounting system in a timely manner, including receipt of electronic awards.

STANDARD: Terms and conditions of awards are distributed to principal investigators and made available to other institutional personnel, as required.

C. Award Management

i. Fiscal Management

The institution has established policies for F&A rates, cost sharing, re-budgeting, time and effort, fiscal controls, cost accounting standards, cost transfers, cash management, program income, recharge centers, procurement, and closeout.

STANDARD: The institution has policies and procedures for:

- proposal costing and budget administration
- the review and submission of budget changes
- assessing F&A costs on external projects
- the review and approval of exceptions and waivers of F&A cost collection
- financial management systems
- depositing all monies on a timely basis and invest them in accordance with institutional and Federal policies and to record the receipt of revenue, to disburse cash, and to bill agencies in a timely manner
- establishing service and recharge centers and for reviewing rates charged by centers
- notifying of upcoming termination dates to appropriate offices and to ensure timely closeout of programs including submission of all sponsor required financial reports, invoices, and deliverables
- defining allowability of costs that are consistent with federal cost principles and other applicable standards of other sponsors
- justifying adequately cost transfers in a reasonable period of time
- applying consistently compensation costs in proposing, accumulating, and reporting those costs
- assuring that sponsor-imposed salary caps are in place.
- governing fringe benefits and the method used to account for these costs
- reporting payroll and effort certification

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• purchase of goods and services
• procurement systems
• the identification, recording, managing, and reporting program income in accordance with regulations
• expedited purchases

**STANDARD:** Staff are knowledgeable and responsible for initiation of direct charges and staff are knowledgeable and responsible for approval and payment of those charges.

**STANDARD:** Systems exist for:
• distinguishing between acquisition of goods and services and subrecipient agreements
• providing timely close out of purchases
• identifying mandatory and voluntary cost sharing
• proposing, accumulating, and reporting of cost sharing
• incorporating cost sharing if required in subawards

ii. **Administrative Management**

The institution has established management systems for administering awards and that encompasses prior approval, reporting, record retention, data retention, subrecipient monitoring, intellectual property, and property control.

**STANDARD:** There is clear communication of Intellectual Property policies and procedures for ownership and management of research data.

**STANDARD:** The accounting system identifies all external funded projects and the system provides appropriate review and internal controls.

**STANDARD:** The institution has procedures for seeking required sponsor prior approvals and for implementing federal expanded authorities.

**STANDARD:** The institution has policies and procedures that ensure compliance with mandated cost accounting standards, demonstrate on-going compliance with the CAS standards whether a DS-2 disclosure statement is filed or not, and ensure revisions to DS-2 are filed as required.

**STANDARD:** Property control policies and procedures exist for acquisition, use, and disposition of equipment, for equipment inventory, and for reporting equipment to external sponsors.

**STANDARD:** The institution has policies regarding responsibilities for report preparation and has procedures for submission of required reports and other deliverables.

**STANDARD:** Record retention policies and procedures exist for the retention and access of financial and administrative data and for responding to requests for data under relevant open records requests.

**STANDARD:** The institution has data retention policies regarding the retention of research records and data and has policies for responding to requests for data under Federal Freedom of Information Act.

**STANDARD:** Subrecipient monitoring policies and procedures for monitoring performance of subrecipients include reviewing annual A-133 audit reports from subrecipients as required.
D. Research Ethics

i. Project Integrity

The institution has policies and procedures that govern responsible conduct of research, conflict of interests, and research integrity (misconduct) and appropriate assurances of compliance.

*STANDARD:* The institution has a written policy that:

- addresses treatment of allegations of research misconduct and that meets sponsor requirements
- assists faculty, staff, and students in determining whether and to what extent outside financial relationships and interests may conflict with their primary research and academic activities or other institutional responsibilities

*STANDARD:* The institution has written procedures to:

- manage individual financial conflicts of interest
- recognize the concern regarding conflict of interest in research involving human subjects identify potential financial conflicts of interest of the institution and has mechanisms in place for managing them

ii. Human and Animal Use

The institution has systems that comply with federal and state regulations and that provide ethical protection of human subjects and for the humane care and use of animals.

*STANDARD:* The institution’s compliance systems accommodate multiple and integrated compliance obligations and are coordinated so that oversight and approval responsibilities are linked in an effective and timely manner.

*STANDARD:* The institution has a written Federal-Wide Assurance with the DHHS and received approval in accordance with federal regulations.

*STANDARD:* The institution has access to at least one Institutional Review Board in accordance with federal regulations to review, approve, require modifications in, or disapprove, suspend or terminate research activities involving human as research subjects.

*STANDARD:* The institution has a system of coordination between its IRB and sponsored projects administration.

*STANDARD:* The institution has filed a written assurance with the DHHS and received approval thereof, and has also secured USDA registration.

*STANDARD:* The institution has established at least one Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee in accordance with federal regulations to review, approve, require modifications to, or disapprove, suspend or terminate activities involving animals used in research.

*STANDARD:* The institution has a system of coordination between its IACUC and sponsored projects administration.

*STANDARD:* Adequate systems are in place to track, report, and maintain compliance with the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and applicable occupational health regulations.

iii. Biohazards, Radiation Safety, Bioterrorism

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The institution has appropriate biohazards and radiation safety, and public health security and bioterrorism systems in place.

**STANDARD:** The institution has adopted an environmental, health, and safety policy that meets environmental, health and safety regulatory standards in sponsored projects activities.

**STANDARD:** The institution has devoted adequate staffing, funding, and other resources to implement, manage and oversee its EHS system and performance.

**STANDARD:** The institution has created a functional organization with clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for regulatory compliance and oversight.

**STANDARD:** The institution has established an EHS management system and written policies and procedures for the scope and complexity of activities at the institution.

II. INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Organizational Structure

i. Operational Structure

The institution has identified offices and structures that support the sponsored programs function at both the central and departmental levels.

**STANDARD:** The relationships of institutional offices at both the central and departmental levels are compatible and supportive of one another.

**STANDARD:** Alignment is strong both between central offices and schools and departments as well as sponsors.

**STANDARD:** Operational relationships among other related functions is positive, such as development, human resources, travel, purchasing and procurements, information technology, and compliance functions.

**STANDARD:** Lines of authority and coordination of functions are clearly delineated. Roles and responsibilities are specified, particularly for key sponsor requirements, including final authority, decision-making.

ii. Staffing and Resources

The staff and financial resources necessary to support the core functions of the sponsored programs function are sufficient and consistent with its research volume and the complexity of the organization.

**STANDARD:** Staffing and resources are sufficient to meet the service requirements of constituents and compliance requirements of sponsors, including financial and administrative requirements.

**STANDARD:** Resources are sufficient to identify funding opportunities for faculty, and to provide education and training for faculty and staff, IT support, etc.

**STANDARD:** Sufficient formal and informal opportunities exist for the professional development of staff, in terms of continuing education, professional meetings, etc. in order to be current with sponsor requirements, effective practices, and appropriate oversight procedures.

B. Communication, Outreach, and Education
i. Communication and Outreach
The institution has established mechanisms for regular communication between faculty, central offices, and departmental staff about sponsored programs policies and procedures, expectations, roles and responsibilities, changes in policies, and risk areas.

STANDARD: There are routine and predictable means utilized to communicate institutional policies and procedures to faculty and appropriate staff. For example, sponsored programs policies may be incorporated within a body of formal organizational policy, the policies may be distributed in writing, updated on a web site, and special notices distributed by email, etc.

STANDARD: There are periodic communications to senior management and academic deans and department heads, regarding significant issues, implementation of new requirements, risk areas, assessment of staff resources, etc.

ii. Education
The institution has established programs of education for faculty including teaching and research faculty, postdocs, and graduate and undergraduate students, as appropriate, about institutional and sponsor expectations in the conduct of sponsored programs.

STANDARD: There are programs of education as appropriate for faculty, students, and staff on institutional policies and procedures, compliance issues, special risk areas, resources, points of contact, etc.

STANDARD: There are programs of education, as mandated for specific compliance requirements, such as the protection of humans and animals, biosafety and other substantive policy requirements.

C. Compliance and Risk Assessment
i. Compliance and Risk Assessment
The institution periodically assesses sponsored programs policies and practices, and assessment of emerging risk areas.

STANDARD: There is a thorough, periodic review of the effectiveness of sponsored programs policies and procedures and the communication of the results of the reviews to institutional senior management. These programs may be conducted as internal controls, quality improvement, compliance programs, etc.

STANDARD: There is a system for monitoring new sponsor requirements, external trends in audit and compliance, and risk areas at the national level. New requirements or risk areas are addressed within institutional policies, education and outreach programs, and compliance reviews, as appropriate.

D. Electronic Research Administration
i. Systems
The institution has in place appropriate electronic information systems, and the integration of systems for proposals, financial management, human resources, education programs, and compliance reviews.
STANDARD: Electronic systems are well integrated to process transactions, review and track activities, and provide required reports.
STANDARD: Systems are sufficient to integrate with Federal-wide or agency specific processes for proposal and report submission.
STANDARD: There is a sufficient level of understanding among central and departmental staff and a level of proficiency, support, and training to ensure the effective operations of the systems.