

ARMS 2024 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Theme: Effective Collaboration with Stakeholders

Title: Contracting for Joint Appointments in Health and Medicine: Challenges and Rewards

Author: Cara Linley - Research Contracts Office, Australian National University

Abstract:

Joint appointments, i.e. where a researcher is affiliated with more than one institution, are particularly prevalent in the fields of health and medicine. Researchers are often affiliated with universities as well as other medical institutions such as hospitals, state government health organisations, and medical research institutes. These affiliations are incredibly valuable as they provide researchers with the ability to maintain and develop their clinical skills, access equipment and even to apply for funding for which they would otherwise be ineligible. 2022 kicked off a particularly high rate of growth in this area within the ANU Research Contracts Office. At the end of 2023, we reviewed our experiences, initially analysing data with respect to turnaround times and completion timelines. This analysis showed that these contracts took far longer to complete than average. A deep-dive into some of our lengthiest contracts determined that this was likely because these projects involved multiple roadblocks, significant duplication of effort, and caused frustration for researchers as well as research management staff. In sum, it appeared that our traditional approaches to contracts and partnerships had been ill-equipped to handle the challenges of aligning and managing projects to the interests and processes of multiple institutions. At the same time, we noted that these projects had offered valuable opportunities to deepen our cross-institutional relationships and provide learning and development opportunities for contracts staff. This paper will explore these challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned to explore ways in which this nature of appointment can be more efficiently and effectively managed in the future.