

Principles and Policies for Researchers Seeking to Use Practices/Clinical Sites Associated with the UMass Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

UMMS/UMMHC Department of Family Medicine and Community Health practices and affiliated practices, with their providers, staff, and patients, are valuable and limited resources.

1. UMMS/UMMHC Department of Family Medicine and Community Health practices and affiliated practices balance numerous demands and commitments and can typically participate in only a limited number of additional activities such as research projects.
2. Research collaborations need to be bidirectional and responsive to community, clinic, and departmental priorities.
3. Sites are not merely a source of study participants but, typically, important partners in the research. Sites should not be viewed as a last-minute afterthought in developing research proposals.

The Department and its affiliated clinical practice sites have created a Research Evaluation Group (REG) to review requests for participation of sites in research projects and letters of endorsement for research proposals.

Researchers wishing to utilize Department-affiliated sites should submit requests to the REG (kate.sullivan@umassmed.edu) utilizing the accompanying project information form. Except in the case of a short turn-around proposal, such as an RFA issued a month before the due date, requests for site participation in research projects need to be submitted in a timely fashion – generally, at least 2 months prior to the date a proposal is to be submitted or a project is to start.

Factors considered in the evaluation will include:

- Importance of project to the mission of the clinical site(s) and the Department
- Involvement of site investigators or other departmental researchers in a meaningful and substantive collaboration; for funded projects, this will include whether there is adequate funding for departmental investigators
- Potential for inclusion of site/departmental researchers in professional/academic presentations/papers
- Burdens of participation – e.g., resource use including personnel and facilities, potential disruption of normal clinic processes, adequacy of funding to clinic, risk/burden to patients
- Potential benefits of participation – to patients, clinic, staff, society, etc.
- Priority relative to other potential opportunities and capacity of the practice site(s)/clinic(s) to take on projects
- Timeliness of request – as above, other than for short-turnaround RFAs or other exceptional circumstances, requests must be submitted at least 2 months in advance. This allows adequate time for careful consideration of the merits and demands of the request and to provide input into the developing proposal. It also provides an opportunity for the investigators to understand site needs and issues important to successful implementation, and develop specific plans to address these needs to maximize the strength of the research proposal.