

Report on Research Compliance Volume 19, Number 3. February 24, 2022

Institutional Processes Can Provide Smooth Transition When PIs Leave

By Jane Anderson

Research organizations need to prepare for the possibility of a principal investigator (PI) leaving, and have the documentation and procedures in place to notify study subjects, obtain necessary approvals and generally create a smooth transition.

This process is more complicated than many organizations expect, and it's an issue for the entire institution, not just for one division, said John Baumann, associate vice president for research compliance at Indiana University.

"It's not somebody else's problem. It's not the problem of a department. It's not the problem of a program. It's not the problem of one particular office. Rather, it's an institutional problem that all parties need to be involved in. We have to think of this as an institutional concern, and we have to have institutional processes to deal with this," he said.

The departments that should be kept in the loop include the academic division, the clinical division, grants and contracts, the human research protection program, human resources, and other offices as appropriate, Baumann said. Also, some of these same processes are useful for welcoming a new researcher, he added.

According to Baumann, institutions should consider whether they have in place an institution-wide process for notification and management of PI departures. "The research institutes that I worked at had better processes in place that were much more centralized, with much more communication-sharing about people's arrival and departure," he said. "Universities tend to be much more decentralized, if not a series of silos, and that type of information-sharing is much less prominent in terms of when somebody gets hired or when somebody is leaving the institution."

In fact, Baumann said, it's not possible to have a system in place that provides too much information.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please [log in](#) or [purchase access](#).

[Purchase Login](#)