
Commercial eRA Systems

Commercial eRA systems come with a wide range of functionality but usually contain the following modules or capabilities.

PRE-AWARD ADMINISTRATION MODULES

This module helps with:

- funding opportunity identification
- proposal development and form completion
- electronic approvals and routing
- proposal status updates
- revision routing and approval
- budget development.

Many of these platforms are integrated with data from other systems and allow for pre-population of key data including faculty profiles, current and pending grant support, personnel salaries, and mandatory training certification records such as Conflict of Interests or Human Participants and Animal Subjects training. eRA systems are frequently used as document repositories and are integrated with reporting software to provide metrics for faculty, departments, and central offices.

POST-AWARD MODULES

The post award module serves as a repository for submitted research proposals and supporting documents. Proposals can be tracked, and additional information requests related to the project can be uploaded and monitored. For example, the NIH issues Just-In-Time (JIT) requests for additional information after a grant application receives a favorable score. The post-award module includes functionality to update budgets and folder systems to store additional documents as projects change after submission. Another feature available in some systems is the ability to track contract negotiations including subcontracting, complete award setup activities through integration with financial management systems, and document and monitor key deliverables and contract milestones related to the project after an award has been made.

SYSTEM TO SYSTEM (S2S) FUNCTIONALITY

System to system functionality includes a portal that is integrated with sponsor platforms and websites including U.S. federal systems described earlier. It permits investigators and administrators to download funding opportunity information from the sponsor, electronic form completion, and the submission of proposal data directly to the sponsor. The most

common example of this functionality is displayed when submitting proposals through Grants.gov.

This module includes the ability to develop the proposal within the system without the need for multiple uploads. It also checks for errors, validates the application prior to submission and supports tracking of proposals after submission to the sponsor. Proposal submission software without the use of S2S functionality requires the applicant organization to download the grant application forms, complete them, and submit them to the sponsor outside of the submission software. In these cases, institutions usually require a copy of the completed form and submission confirmation emails to be part of the institutional record in the submission software.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE MODULES

Most vendors offer modules for developing, reviewing, approving, and monitoring regulatory protocols related to research including IRB, IACUC and IBC compliance. This software supports faculty in submitting protocols for review, managing committee schedules and notes, and allows electronic access to protocols under review by committee members and committee staff. Protocol approvals as well as related certificates, informed consent forms and advertising materials are maintained within the system, facilitating improved access and communication.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS (COI) MODULES

Research is regulated to ensure key individuals proposing or working on research projects do not have a financial or professional conflict conducting the research they propose. This module requires investigators and key personnel to state whether they have a potential conflict, present key information for consideration during COI committee reviews, and develop a conflict management plan, as needed.