

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

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Usefulness of Responsibility
Assignment Matrices in Decentralized
Research Administration



Today's Session

Learning Objectives

- Understand what a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) is
- What are the components of a RAM
- How to construct a RAM

Activities

- Construct (or Improve) a RAM
- Report Out

What is a Responsibility Matrix?

PMBOK Definition (8th Edition)

A responsibility assignment matrix is a grid that shows the project resources assigned to each work package. The matrix is used to illustrate the connections between work packages, or activities, and project team members.

On larger projects, a responsibility assignment matrix can be developed at various levels. For example, a high-level matrix can define the responsibilities of a project team, group, or unit within each component of the WBS.

A lower-level matrix can be used within the group to designate roles, responsibilities, and levels of authority for specific activities.

The matrix format shows all activities associated with one person and all people associated with one activity. This format also ensures that there is only one person accountable for any one task to avoid confusion about who is ultimately in charge or has authority for the work.

Pulled from IT/Civil ENGR World

RACI Matrix Example

Project Activity / Deliverable	Project Manager	Consultant	Architect	Contractor	Client
Define functional and aesthetic needs	I	I	C	I	R
Assess risk	A	R	I	C	I
Define performance requirements	A	R	I	I	I
Create design	A	C	R	I	C
Execute construction	A	C	C	R	I
Approve construction work	I	I	C	C	R

Con #1: Assumes everybody already knows what they are doing.

Pro #1: Only 1 Person with Authority/Accountability & they should be listed first.

What are Components of a RAM?

Part 1—Stakeholders of the Project

Internal to UTRGV

- Division of Research:
 - Office of Sponsored Projects (Research Services Coordinators)
 - Dept. of Research Enhancement
 - IRB / IACUC / IRC
- Division of Academic Affairs/Division of Health Affairs:
 - College Research Services Coordinators
 - College Associate Deans of Research (Assigned by the Provost & have routing approval authority)
 - College Deans (have routing approval authority)
- Office of the President
 - Corporate and Foundations Relations

External to UTRGV:

- Funder
- Subrecipients
- Clinical Sites (e.g., hospitals, schools)
- National, State & Local stakeholders (e.g., Association of Physician Assistants)

What are Components of a RAM?

Part 2—Work Breakdown Structure

WBS is a hierarchical decomposition of the total scope of work to be carried out by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables...the WBS, together with the project scope statement and the WBS dictionary, constitutes the scope baseline.

E.g., A researcher needs to submit a grant to NIH. What is the WBS?

Level 1: OSP/university is submission-ready (e.g., Staff can handle submission & correct errors in ASSIST; there are no outstanding compliance issues at the university)

Level 2: Research proposal is submission-ready (e.g., complies with funder and university requirements, reviewed by legal, etc.)

Level 3: PI is submission- & compliant-ready (PI has been trained on all systems and compliance for submission (e.g., eRA, IRB, IRC, internal approval processes) & content creation)

Level 4: PI has active eRA account (e.g., Send PI link to register for account, verify PI can log in & see account); PI is “Research-Ready”

Key Points:

Focus on deliverables and not actions or processes—focus on deliverable allows flexible in achieving project goals

Assigned deliverables are mutually exclusive—each deliverable has only 1 “Accountable” person.

What are Components of a RAM?

Part 3—RAM Model

Several variations, but each version has 1 person who has the authority to execute and oversee the project, and additional roles based on the PMI's definition of a project team.

- RACI (Responsible • Accountable • Consulted • Informed)
- RASCI (Responsible • Accountable • Support • Consulted • Informed)
- DACI (Driver • Approver • Consulted • Informed)
- RAPID (Recommend • Agree • Perform • Input • Decision)
- PACSI (Perform • Accountable • Control • Suggest • Informed)
- ARPA (Authority • Responsibility • Process • Accountability)
- PARIS: (Participant, Accountable, Review required, Input required, Sign-off require)
- RACIO/CAIRO (includes Omitted or Out-of-the-loop)
- RACI-VSL (includes Verifier and Signatory)

What are Components of a RAM? Lord of the Rings Version

The screen displays a game interface with the following elements:

- Character icons: FRODO, SAM, GANDALF, ARAGORN, ELROND.
- Handwritten text on a blackboard background:
 - Row 1: I AR C
 - Row 2: R I A R C
 - Row 3: AR R C I
 - Row 4: I I C AR R
- Game actions on the right:
 - Decide on what to do with ring
 - Create Fellowship
 - Get the ring to Mount Doom
 - Distract and defeat enemies

Fundamental/Philosophical Question

As these are generally institution-to-institution sponsored projects, who is the ultimate authority/driver/decision-maker on a sponsored project??? ...or, to be more precise, who is the ultimate authority on the submission and compliance of a sponsored project???

PI

- Generally, initiates funding proposal as a result of pressure to get tenure/promotions
- Drives the content of the proposal (→ IRB, subrecipients, selection of team members)
- Is held accountable to the funder for the quality & competition of the project
- Receives “best efforts” from OSP

Office of Sponsored Projects

- Can reject PI’s submission (e.g., set rule that says IRB approval must be in place before they accept submission)
- Can set up routing for internal approvals of submission
- Submits proposal for sponsored project via password-protected platform from institution to agency/ organization

Example of a best practice in RAMs for Sponsored Projects

University of Michigan’s Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) Roles & Responsibilities document

Proposal Development
(Develop Proposal)



	PI	UNIT ADMIN	ORSP	FSP	OTHER
General					
Identify and communicate required training courses for PI to be eligible to receive funding	I	I	I		UMOR – A/R
Provide centralized funding opportunity resources to the campus community	I	I	S		UMOR – A/R
Maintain database of proposal submissions and awards	I	S	A/R	I	
Act as institutional authority as to acceptability of sponsor requirements	S/C	S/C	A/R		UMOR – S FR, Innov Part – C

Example of a best practice in RAMs for Sponsored Projects

University of Michigan's Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) Non-Financial Management vs Financial Management

Post-Award Project Management

<i>Effort Reporting</i>					
Allocate effort of PIs and other personnel to project (PAR, DBE,etc)	R	A/R			
Substantiate effort changes over 120 days (120 day memo)	R	R		A/R	
Process e-verification, if necessary	R	R	R		HR – A
Monitor effort commitments for sponsored projects	A	R			HR – C
Certify effort on project	A/R	R			

Effort Reporting

Notify individuals when effort reporting cycle is open.					FinOps – A
Provide information to facilitate compliance with effort reporting policy.					FinOps – A
Monitor certification status and send notices regarding uncertified effort.		A/R			
Maintain official records of effort reporting.					FinOps – A
Track current and pending effort commitments.	A/R	S			
Update and maintain effort commitments.	A	R			

Construct a RAM

Choose one step below for your organization and spend 3 minutes constructing (or improving) a RAM.

STEP 1: Who are the stakeholders? What parts of the Organization are involved?

STEP 2: At your institution, what is the WBS for a deliverable that requires coordination among the stakeholders?

STEP 3: What RAM is appropriate for the organizational structure and culture at your institution?

After 3 minutes, get into groups based on which STEP you'd like to talk about more.

Share/Report Out

What were the major concerns or “A-ha” moments from your group?

If you're interested in following up, we'll reconvene three times in the next three months to help get your project moving.

If you want a copy of the slides, contact the presenter, Jean McLaughlin, at 956-720-4465.