National Student Services Contract (NSSC)

Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Program Office (LCO) initiates the process by contacting the Contract-Level COR (Shaun House) and requesting assignment of a Task Order number and PWS number
2. Program Office creates draft PWS using sample/template on NSSC webpage and emails to Contract-Level COR for review/comment
3. Once Contract-Level COR review is complete, Program Office creates a Requisition in EAS including:
   1. Performance Work Statement (PWS)
      1. Outlines the duties of the position you’re advertising along with the desired qualifications for students.
      2. Since the contractor will interview and propose students based on govt requirements, it is critical that you be as specific as possible when outlining your desired qualifications in the PWS
   2. Task Order Contracting Officer’s Representative (TOCOR) and Alternate TOCOR Nomination Forms
      1. COR nomination form (EPA1900-65a) can be found in [here](https://intranet.epa.gov/oms/documents/forms/1900-65b.pdf).
      2. Only certified CORs may serve as TOCORs and Alt TOCORs
         1. Only Level I certification is required
      3. The desire is to have only one Task Order per Office and Center, and one per Division in the Labs. The single TOCOR would serve that function for not only for the initial student(s), but any other students the organization hires under this contract in the future
   3. Quality Assurance Review Form (QARF) (ORD-111) can be found on the [ORD QA Forms website](https://intranet.ord.epa.gov/quality-assurance/qa-forms) 
      1. This form must be signed by your organization’s QA manager. A list of QA managers can be found [here](https://intranet.ord.epa.gov/quality-assurance/qa-staff).
      2. Note that QA requirements are captured in the contract-level PWS and are not typically repeated in individual Task Order PWSs. This QA language can be found in the QA Information section of the NSSC website and also in the contract-level PWS that is posted on the NSSC website.
   4. Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) – if the student will be working under an existing QAPP, it should be attached to the PR in EAS. It is also a good idea to reference it in the PWS text.
4. The Requisition is then routed for review/approval through appropriate LCO management
   1. The Contract Level COR (Shaun House, OARS/EMD/CB) should be included as a reviewer on the routing
5. Once approved, the Requisition is released to Contracting, where the Contracting Officer (CO) issues a Request for Quote (RFQ) to the contractor
6. The contractor then recruits, interviews and selects a student(s)
7. Once a student has been selected, the contractor prepares a proposal and submits it to the govt for review
   1. Includes a summary of qualifications, resume and sometimes a writing sample (if requested in the PWS)
   2. Hourly rates are fixed by the contract and depend on location and education level
8. The CO then sends the contractor’s proposal to the TOCOR with a courtesy copy to the Contract COR and tasks the TOCOR to evaluate it
   1. The TOCOR either accepts the proposal or rejects it along with detailed rationale on why
   2. If rejected, the contractor begins recruitment activities again and proposes a different student
      1. Rejections cannot be arbitrary and must be based on deficiencies vs the requirements contained in the PWS
   3. Note that there is a strong desire not to “cycle” thru a number of contractor names in search of the perfect candidate. If the proposed student fully meets the qualifications of the RFQ, he/she should normally be accepted by the govt
9. Once a proposal is accepted, the CO will award a new Task Order (TO) or modify an existing TO
   1. Again, the desire is to have only one Task Order per Office and Center, and one per Division in the Labs.
   2. If a TO already exists for an Office, Center or Division (in the case of Labs), the hours for the new student will simply be added to the existing Task Order via a TO modification
10. Once the TO is issued, the contractor will submit the students information in iBOARD and the background check process will begin. This process can take 30-45 days.
11. The government conducts the background check and the contractor will be given instructions on how the student is to be fingerprinted and submit background information in eQIP
12. About two weeks before the student’s start date, ORAU will contact the TOCOR and mentor and arrange a welcome call to introduce the student and give all parties a chance to get to know each other.
    1. At this time, the mentor should begin taking action to facilitate the efficient onboarding of the student once they arrive. These actions include:
       1. Identifying and reserving appropriate office space
       2. Coordinating with your local dPROV representative to create requests for a computer, phone and network account
          1. In order to submit a dPROV request, you will need the student’s Employee ID #. That number can be found at: <http://asq.epa.gov/>
       3. Coordinating with the local badge office to ensure access to the facility on the first day
          1. Before they arrive, students will have passed a preliminary background check and be in the badging system
          2. Procedures vary from one badge office to the next, but typically the student will require a temporary badge for a week to ten days until their permanent EPASS badge arrives
          3. To avoid any issues, please coordinate with the badge office in advance of the student’s arrival
13. Once the student has passed a preliminary background check, the COR, TOCOR and contractor will be notified by the Personnel Security Branch (PSB).
    1. **It is extremely important to note that the student cannot begin work at EPA until PSB has granted preliminary clearance.**
14. The COR, TOCOR and contractor agree on an actual start date and the student reports for work on that date.
15. After reporting for work:
    1. On the first day the mentor will meet the student at the front desk and take them to the badging office to secure a temporary badge.
    2. The student’s mentor will determine if the student will require medical monitoring. If so, the mentor will take steps to enroll the student in the EPA’s medical monitoring program. The monitoring will be conducted at govt expense.
    3. The student will participate in any site specific training that may be required (IT, lab safety and procedures, etc).
    4. Students engaged in scientific research must meet with their organization’s

Quality Assurance (QA) Manager for a QA orientation.