

Design and Analysis Unit

Frequently Asked Questions

July 1, 2009

Q: What is the Design and Analysis Unit?

A: The Design and Analysis Unit (DAU) is a new component of the Research Support Core (RSC) in the Office of Research (OR). It is designed to provide collaborative advice and services in the areas of study design, data analysis, data entry, and data management. It is a collaboration between OR and the Department of Biostatistical Sciences, Division of Public Health Sciences. The DAU is directed by Walter Ambrosius, Ph.D., and Gregory Russell, M.S., and includes other faculty and staff from the Department of Biostatistical Sciences.

DAU services include both pre- and post-award statistical work, and will be tailored to the investigators' needs. Pre-award work may include assistance with hypothesis development, choice of statistical methods, sample size estimation, and writing the statistical sections of applications. Post-award work may include data entry and management, data analysis, interpretation, and preparation of results for publication and presentation. These tasks would be done to support small projects, or those for which a sustained collaborative relationship is not required.

Q: How do I get help?

A: Fill out a request form at <https://rsc.phs.wfubmc.edu>. Note that you need to be within the WFUBMC firewall to access this site. For grant development, select "Grant Development" and for data analysis select "Design & Analysis Unit (DAU/Biostatistics)."

Q: When do I need to request help?

A: It depends on the type of assistance requested. For anything with a deadline (grants, abstracts, etc.), we need to receive requests at least 60 days prior to the submission date. This allows us to manage staffing levels and ensure that there is time to provide input on the study design. For requests without a deadline (papers, analysis, etc.), please get in touch with us as early as possible.

Q: What can I get for free?

A: Statistical assistance with grant development is provided for free for WFUHS faculty provided that the DAU is included in the grant budget. Note: development of industry contracts will be billed on an hourly basis upon successful receipt of contract. These funds should be built into the industry contracts.

Q: What do I have to pay for?

A: All post-award work will be billed at an hourly rate. This includes data entry, data management, meetings, data analysis, programming, writing, editing, paper revisions, etc.

Q: What are the rates for post award work?

A: Internal and external hourly rates for the 2008-2009 fiscal year are shown in the following table. These rates cover salary, fringe, and computing expenses. The internal rates do *not* include indirect costs but the external rates do include indirect costs. Rates will be adjusted annually, and projects will be charged the current rates in effect when work is performed.

2008-2009 DAU Rates	Internal	External
Faculty	\$185	\$350
Biostatistician	\$110	\$210
Programmer	\$85	\$165
Data Entry	\$55	\$100

Q: Will I be charged the internal or external rates?

A: If we will bill an internal WFUHS or NCBH account, then we will charge the internal rates; all others will be charged the external rates.

Q: The rates seem high. Why?

A: These rates reflect current salary, fringe, and the PHS computing fees. They are higher than the rates charged by the consulting operation run in the former Section on Biostatistics. These previous rates had not been updated for a decade and were insufficient to cover costs.

Q: What if I have a simple power calculation?

A: We have developed a set of web-based power calculators available at <http://power.phs.wfubmc.edu/>. SAS is used behind the scenes as the computational engine. Existing designs include correlation, one-sample *t*-tests, two-sample *t*-tests, paired *t*-tests, one-sample frequencies, two-sample frequencies, and paired frequencies. Also available is a series of questions to aid investigators in the selection of calculator. We plan to add additional calculators in the future. As always, we encourage investigators to consult with a statistician when there are questions about these calculations.

Q: What are the charges for website hosting?

A: If you are funding a programmer to develop and maintain the website *and* the website is hosted on a PHS webserver without a study-specific URL (example: <http://www.phsapps.wfubmc.edu/STUDYNAME>), then there is no charge. If we need to develop a stand-alone website (example: <http://www.STUDYNAME.org>), then there will be charges to cover our costs. These include the costs for a domain name, security certificate, and hosting. The costs for the domain name and security certificate are approximately \$105 and \$200 for a 3-year period. These fees will be invoiced at the beginning of a project and, depending on the project length, may need to be renewed. A hosting fee of \$20/month is charged for internal projects and \$50/month for external projects. These fees will be invoiced on an annual basis. We will assume we should use the same chartfield as for hourly rates unless you tell us otherwise.

Q: Who is involved?

Faculty and staff from the Department of Biostatistical Sciences, Division of Public Health Sciences are involved in all phases of the Design and Analysis Unit.

Q: What do DAU personnel need to help me?

A: If we are assisting with a grant, we will need a description of all available pilot data, proposed study design, an idea of the feasible sample size, and any other relevant information. If we are assisting with data analysis, we will need the data (preferably electronically, in a format such as an Excel spreadsheet; we will be happy to discuss how best to do this) and the questions of interest.

Q: How are budgets determined?

A: They are created in a collaborative manner. We will work with the investigator to establish a scope of work and will budget accordingly. If there is only a fixed amount of money available, we will discuss what can be accomplished for that amount.

Q: What do I need to submit a grant with the DAU?

A: Once we've agreed on a budget, the investigator will receive a letter of support from Walter Ambrosius which will include the budget estimate. You *must* submit this letter to the Office of Research with your routing sheet. The letter will be written so that it can also serve as a letter of support, you are welcome to submit it with your grant.

Q: What do I include in a grant submission?

A: We will provide a brief budget for DAU services for the budget as well as a complete description for the resources section. Please note that we do not provide NIH biosketches for DAU effort; instead the description contains biographical information and qualifications of DAU personnel. The description is available at http://www.phs.wfubmc.edu/docs/dbs/dau_resources.doc.

Q: Can I “rebudget” after a grant is funded to remove funding for the DAU?

A: Perhaps although this would certainly not be collegial. Like most researchers, we much prefer conducting studies to writing the grants which pay for the studies. If we help to design a study which gets funded, then we have held up our end of the bargain. Cutting us out of the budget after a grant is funded deprives us of the most interesting part of our job, hurts us academically (no publications), and is not within the spirit of the collaborative operations we oversee. Cutting us out of a funded project would jeopardize future collaboration.

Q: What about if the grant budget is cut by the funding agency?

A: We are well aware of and understand that entire grant budgets get cut. If a grant gets cut by 20% then it would be reasonable for the DAU to be cut by 20% but not reasonable for us to receive a disproportionately larger cut. Of course, we will have to discuss how budget cuts affect the work we can perform.

Q: How does this fee-for-service model differ from FTE-based collaboration?

The DAU is not a replacement for the collaborative research done in the Department of Biostatistical Sciences (DBS) but an alternative arrangement for projects with more limited involvement of DBS faculty and staff. We generally spend much less time on a project that comes through the DAU than if we were receiving FTE-based support. Whether an individual project should be handled through the DAU or through DBS as an FTE-based collaboration will be discussed. Factors to consider would be project size and duration and whether a DBS faculty member is available for an FTE-based collaboration.

Q: What should I do once I learn that a grant will be funded or not funded?

A: We would like to know! Please email Walter Ambrosius (wambrosi@wfubmc.edu) and Crystal Reid (cryreid@wfubmc.edu). If your grant has been funded, please allocate the DAU services as Lab Services, expense account code 423013, in the award budget established by the Controller’s Office.

Q: How often will rates be changed? What does this mean for an existing grant?

A: We will evaluate rates on an annual basis and will change them if necessary at the start of each fiscal year (July 1). We will bill at the current rates.

Q: How are bills generated?

A: We record hours on a weekly basis with each week starting on a Monday. Bills are generated on a monthly basis and will include an integer number of weeks. The number of weeks per bill will vary slightly but will usually be either 4 or 5. For weeks that cross fiscal years, we will use the Monday to determine the fiscal year in which a given week will be billed. Bills for internal clients will be submitted through the Controller’s Office. External clients will be billed by mail or email.

Q: What about authorship?

A: Authorship is completely independent of funding. If we make a contribution that warrants authorship, then we expect to be listed as an author(s). The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) (1) states

Authorship credit should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.

There is no discussion of payment as exclusion for authorship. The Journal of the American Medical Association has a very similar policy (2). The DAU operates under the ICMJE policy.

Q: What if this is for a protocol to be submitted to the Comprehensive Cancer Center, the GCRC, or the Older Americans Independence (Pepper) Center?

A: Please contact those groups directly. For the Cancer Center, please contact Ralph D'Agostino, Ph.D. (336-716-9011, rdagosti@wfubmc.edu). For the GCRC, please contact Haiying Chen, Ph.D. (336-716-4431, hchen@wfubmc.edu) or Wei Lang, Ph.D. (336-713-3816, wlang@wfubmc.edu). For the Pepper Center, please contact Iris Leng, Ph.D. (336-716-4564, ileng@wfubmc.edu).

Q: Who can I call if I have questions?

A: Please contact the DAU Director (Walter Ambrosius, Ph.D., 336-716-6281, wambrosi@wfubmc.edu) or the Associate Director (Greg Russell, M.S., 336-716-5449, grussell@wfubmc.edu).

References:

1. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication, <http://www.icmje.org/>, updated February 2006 (accessed December 13, 2006).
2. JAMA Instructions for Authors, The Journal of the American Medical Association, <http://jama.ama-assn.org/misc/ifora.dtl>, (accessed December 13, 2006).