**Guidance Document for Requesting a Lab Variance from the Board of Regents**

**Purpose**

This document provides detailed instructions for the Planning, Design, and Construction (PDC) Department on how to request a lab variance from the Board of Regents. The request must be filtered through the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department and routed correctly to ensure compliance and proper review. Additionally, Campus Engineering will be incorporated into the review process to ensure thorough evaluation of potential alternatives before a variance request proceeds.

**Scope**

This procedure applies to a single lab variance request that the PDC Department submits to the Board of Regents. It includes steps for involving design professional engineering firms, Campus Engineering, addressing documentation, and obtaining necessary reviews and approvals.

**Procedure**

1. **Initial Planning and Design**
   1. **Engage Design Professionals:**
      1. The PDC Department must hire a qualified design professional engineering firm experienced in lab design.
      2. Ensure that the design professionals are familiar with the system rules and regulations specific to laboratory environments.
      3. Provide them with the scope of work and specific requirements for the lab variance request.
   2. **Develop Plans:**
      1. The design professionals must draw up the lab plans according to system rules.
      2. Ensure that all plans are comprehensive and address all necessary aspects of the lab variance request, including safety protocols and compliance standards.
   3. **Prepare Lab Variance Request Document:**
      1. The design professionals must draft the lab variance request document.
      2. Address the document to the Vice Chancellor for Facilities.
      3. Include detailed descriptions, justifications for the variance, and all necessary technical information related to the lab environment.
      4. If the request involves routing, include sketches to indicate why a USG-approved route is not available.
      5. If the request involves substitution of materials or another change, provide justification beyond cost savings.
2. **GT Project Manager (GT PM) Review**
   1. The design team submits the request to the GT PM for review.
   2. The GT PM assesses whether the request is necessary and forwards it to Campus Engineering for further evaluation.
3. **Campus Engineering Review**
   1. Campus Engineering reviews the request and may request further information or work with the design team to explore alternative solutions.
   2. If Campus Engineering identifies a viable alternative that eliminates the need for a variance, the request does not proceed further.
   3. If no USG-approved solution is found, Campus Engineering agrees that the change is necessary and submits the request to EHS for review.
4. **Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Review**
   1. Once Campus Engineering determines that the variance request must proceed, it is routed to the EHS Department.
   2. The request should be submitted to the Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health and Safety (AVP-EHS) or their designee.
   3. The AVP-EHS or their designee reviews the lab variance request document to ensure all environmental health and safety concerns, particularly those unique to lab environments, are addressed.
   4. EHS makes any necessary revisions and provides feedback to Campus Engineering and the design professionals.
   5. The lab variance should be submitted to [labvariance@ehs.gatech.edu](mailto:labvariance@ehs.gatech.edu).
5. **Final Approval and Submission**
   1. **Obtain Final Approvals:**
      1. After the EHS review, the document must be reviewed again by the AVP-PDC or their designee.
      2. Both the AVP-PDC or their designee and AVP-EHS or their designee must provide final approvals.
   2. **Review by Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability:**
      1. Once approvals from AVP-PDC and AVP-EHS are obtained, the document must be reviewed by the Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability.
      2. The VP provides final approval.
   3. **Submission to the Vice Chancellor for Facilities:**
      1. After obtaining all necessary approvals, the AVP-PDC must formally address and submit the document to the Vice Chancellor for Facilities.
      2. Ensure that the submission includes all supporting documents and that it follows the prescribed format and guidelines.
      3. The submission email should CC the AVP-EHS and the Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability.
6. **Follow-Up**
   1. **Track Progress:**
      1. The PDC Department must track the progress of the lab variance request.
      2. Follow up with the Vice Chancellor for Facilities to ensure the request is being processed.
      3. Address any additional queries or requirements promptly.

**Responsibilities**

* **Design Professionals:** Develop comprehensive lab plans and draft the lab variance request document.
* **GT PM:** Review the request and determine whether to proceed with Campus Engineering review.
* **Campus Engineering:** Evaluate alternative solutions, work with the design team, and determine whether the variance request must proceed.
* **PDC Department:** Review and revise the lab variance request document, ensure compliance with system rules, and route the document appropriately.
* **AVP-PDC or their Designee:** Conduct initial and final reviews of the lab variance request document and provide final approval.
* **EHS Department:** Review the document for environmental health and safety compliance specific to lab environments.
* **AVP-EHS or their Designee:** Conduct the EHS review and provide necessary feedback and final approval.
* **Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability:** Review the document for final approval, ensuring all considerations are addressed.
* **Vice Chancellor for Facilities:** Final recipient of the lab variance request for submission to the Board of Regents.

**Conclusion**

Following this guidance will ensure that the lab variance request is processed efficiently and effectively, complying with all system rules and addressing all relevant environmental health and safety concerns specific to lab environments. Incorporating Campus Engineering into the review process will enhance the evaluation of alternatives and reduce the number of variance requests that proceed to the Board of Regents. Adherence to these procedures will facilitate timely and successful variance approvals.

**Lab Variance Request Cheat Sheet**

**Step 1: Initial Planning and Design**

* **Design Team:** Prepare variance request, including sketches (if applicable) and justifications.
* **Submit to GT PM.**

**Step 2: GT PM Review**

* **Assess necessity.**
* **If needed, submit to Campus Engineering.**

**Step 3: Campus Engineering Review**

* **Evaluate alternatives.**
* **Request additional info if necessary.**
* **If no USG-approved solution, submit to EHS.**

**Step 4: EHS Review**

* **Check environmental and safety concerns.**
* **Make necessary revisions.**
* **Submit request to** [**labvariance@ehs.gatech.edu**](mailto:labvariance@ehs.gatech.edu)**.**

**Step 5: Final Approvals**

* **AVP-PDC & AVP-EHS provide approvals.**
* **VP for Infrastructure & Sustainability reviews.**
* **Submit to Vice Chancellor for Facilities.**

**Step 6: Follow-Up**

* **PDC Department tracks progress.**
* **Follow up with Vice Chancellor for Facilities.**
* **Address additional queries.**

**Key Responsibilities**

* **Design Team:** Draft request.
* **GT PM:** Initial assessment.
* **Campus Engineering:** Evaluate alternatives.
* **PDC Dept.:** Review and route document.
* **AVP-PDC & AVP-EHS:** Final approvals.
* **VP Infrastructure & Sustainability:** Final review.
* **Vice Chancellor for Facilities:** Submit to Board of Regents.

**Objective:** Ensure efficient variance requests while considering all compliance and safety aspects.