



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
L A F A Y E T T E

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Policy # RE.002.1

Responsible Executive: Vice President for
Research,
Innovation, and
Economic
Development.

Responsible Office: Research, Innovation,
and Economic
Development

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- I. [Policy Statement](#)
- II. [Purpose of Policy](#)
- III. [Applicability](#)
- IV. [Definitions](#)
- V. [Policy Procedure](#)
- VI. [Enforcement](#)
- VII. [Policy Management](#)
- VIII. [Exclusions](#)
- IX. [Effective Date](#)
- X. [Adoption](#)
- XI. [Appendices, References and Related Materials](#)
- XII. [Revision History](#)

I. Policy Statement

This Policy outlines who is eligible to be a Principal Investigator (“PI”) on University of Louisiana at Lafayette (“University”) Sponsored Programs.

II. Purpose of Policy

This Policy is intended to set forth the eligibility requirements and the duties and responsibilities of a PI at the University. This Policy also describes the processes for requesting and approving exceptions to the PI eligibility requirements referenced herein. This Policy applies to all Sponsored Programs proposed and/or conducted at the University.

The responsibility for setting the course of research at the University is vested with its Employees. A PI bears the responsibility for the intellectual leadership of their Sponsored Program. The PI accepts overall responsibility for directing the research to meet the project goals and deliverables, the financial oversight and fiscal accountability of the Sponsored Program funding, establishing a safe and inclusive environment for the conduct of the Sponsored Program, adherence to reporting requirements and administrative obligations, compliance with relevant University policies, applicable federal and/or state regulations, and the Sponsor’s terms and conditions. The PI is also ultimately responsible for assembling the team to perform the research pursuant to the Sponsored Program.

Pursuant to the requirements of a Sponsor, a Sponsored Program may have multiple Co-PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the Sponsored Program, intellectually and

logistically. Under those situations, each PI is responsible and accountable for the proper conduct of the Sponsored Program. The presence of more than one identified PI on a Sponsored Program diminishes neither the responsibility nor the accountability of any individual PI.

In the instance where a Sponsor will only recognize one PI, but several names are listed in the proposal, the Sponsor assumes that the first name listed is *primus inter pares* (first between equals). Whenever the Sponsor recognizes only one PI, the University will follow suit and direct all administrative correspondence to the first person listed, and that individual shall be identified as PI. Additionally, when subcontracts or sub-grants are anticipated under a proposed Sponsored Program, the PI for the sub-recipient institution may be named a Co-PI on the University proposal.

Sponsors generally will require approval of the substitution of a PI or Co-PI. Such need for substitution shall be directed to Sponsored Programs Finance Administration and Compliance (“SPFAC”) at spfacs@louisiana.edu.

III. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to and enforceable against all Employees and students seeking PI or Co-PI status on any Sponsored Program.

IV. Definitions

1. **Co-Investigator**: is a key personnel for a Sponsored Program but is not responsible for the oversight of the Sponsored Program, the PI, or Co-PIs. Co-Investigators are not required to meet the qualifications of a PI under this Policy but should be considered key to the performance of the Sponsored Program.
2. **Co-PI**: are the individuals who share the responsibility for the Sponsored Program with the PI and therefore require the same qualifications referenced within this Policy.
3. **Employee**: is any classified or unclassified faculty or staff member of the University.
4. **Principal Investigator (“PI”)**: is the individual responsible for the conduct of the Sponsored Program.
5. **Sponsor**: is the government agency, foundation, business, corporation, or private individual that takes on legal responsibility for the initiation, management, and/or financing of research pursuant to a Sponsored Program.
6. **Sponsored Program**: is a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other external funding that comes from a government agency, foundation, business, corporation, or private individual that typically requires the following:
 - A Statement of Work and delivery of a product or service;
 - The delivery of a program report that includes, but is not limited to results, data, findings, surveys, and financial information, which often provides a tangible benefit to the funder;

- Specific commitments regarding the levels of personnel efforts or University assets;
- Stipulations regarding data, publications or intellectual property such as inventions, patents, certain copyrights or licenses;
- A defined period of performance with effective start and end dates;
- Facilities and administrative costs or indirect cost funds; and
- Routing and approval of a proposal through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

V. Policy Procedure

A. PI or Co-PI Eligibility

1. **Eligible Employees.** Employees with the following titles are eligible to serve as a PI and/or a Co-PI on a Sponsored Program (see also Appendix A, Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility for Externally Sponsored Awards):
 - a. Tenure-track or tenured assistant/associate/full professor;
 - b. Center/museum director;
 - c. Research center/institute directors;
 - d. Library faculty;
 - e. Research assistant/associate/full professor; and
 - f. Research staff (e.g., non-faculty, such as scientist/senior research scientist/research fellow).
2. **Limited Eligible Employees.** The following Employees are also eligible to serve as a PI or Co-PI within certain limitations, as stipulated below (each of the following individuals must submit a PI Exception Form which will remain valid until the change of employment status, rank, or title):
 - a. Term Employees. Instructor, adjunct faculty and visiting faculty (collectively, “Term Employees”) may serve as PIs or Co-PIs on Sponsored Programs at the discretion of their supervisor and/or the department head/center director and the dean/institute director as indicated by signatures on the Internal Proposal Approval Form (“IPAF”). Term Employees who submit proposals as PIs shall submit a PI Exception Form and also include an individual in an aforementioned PI eligible role listed in Section V.A.1. above as a Co-PI in the proposal. If the Sponsor does not allow a Co-PI in the proposal, the Term Employee serving as a PI will submit a letter to orsp@louisiana.edu from their supervisor and/or department head/center director with a commitment that the Term Employee’s employment will be secured till the end of the Sponsored Program period.
 - b. Emeritus or Retired Faculty. Emeritus or retired faculty may serve as PIs upon submission of a PI Exception Form which shall indicate the approval from the emeritus or retired faculty

member's former department head and dean. Emeritus or retired faculty seeking to serve as a PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator can be re-employed in a "Research Appointment" by the University and placed on the payroll for the percentage of time they will serve as a PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator at the time of the Sponsored Program. Please be aware that getting re-employed by the University may have retirement benefit implication (see Appendix B, Retirement Benefit Implications). Emeritus or retired faculty members who choose not to be re-employed by the University may be hired in a volunteer position which would be a gratis position that does not have any financial or retirement implications.

- c. Affiliated Faculty. Affiliated faculty who will not be on the University payroll during the time of the Sponsored Program may only serve as Co-Investigators (rather than PI or Co-PI) on Sponsored Programs at the discretion of PI or Co-PIs, and the appropriate department head. However, the term of the proposed Sponsored Program cannot exceed the duration of the affiliated faculty member's anticipated appointment.
 - d. Post-Doctoral Fellow. A post-doctoral-fellow may serve as a PI on Sponsored Programs if an individual in a PI eligible role listed in Section V.A.1. above serves as Co-PI and the post-doctoral fellow submits a PI Exception Form.
 - e. Incoming Employees. Incoming employees may serve as a PI or Co-PI on a proposal for a Sponsored Program if they can produce documentation that an appointment to one of the eligible titles listed in Section V.A.1. above has been offered to and has been accepted by the individual.
3. **Eligibility Exception**. Other Employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria listed above may serve as a PI or Co-PI if requested by relevant department head/center director and approved by the appropriate dean/institute director and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs ("Provost"). Such approval shall be indicated by their signing of the IPAF. Final determination shall be made by the Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development ("VPR") after consideration of the following:
- i. Whether the Employee has the requisite training, skill, commitment, and expertise to serve as PI or Co-PI;
 - ii. The Employee's ability to comply with the terms and conditions of the Sponsored Program, including reporting requirements; and
 - iii. The University's ability to comply with the terms and conditions of the Sponsored Program, including reporting requirements, should the Employee leave the University.
4. **Extramurally Supported Projects**. Eligibility to serve as a PI or a Co-PI for extramurally supported projects (including receipt of research materials, data, software, etc.) is contingent upon the continuation of An Employee's employment or other status under which eligibility was initially determined, and compliance with all applicable policies of the University and the Sponsor. In the event of an apparent conflict between the policies of the University and the Sponsor, the more restrictive policy shall be followed.

B. Student/Trainee Initiated Projects

Graduate students, and in rare cases undergraduate students, may be approved by exception to serve as PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator only for a Sponsored Program where the stated purpose is solely to support a student's education or the student's individual research. This is typically through a thesis or fellowship award. For these Sponsored Programs, the following conditions apply:

1. The proposal to the Sponsor may name a graduate or undergraduate student as a PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator if the student's faculty advisor is named as a Co-PI.
2. The student shall be responsible for the intellectual conduct of the Sponsored Program within the oversight of the faculty advisor.

C. Eligibility Revocation

Under extraordinary circumstances, administrative supervisors, Co-PIs, Sponsor representatives, or other relevant stakeholders may request the restriction, removal, or suspension of PI or Co-PI status of an individual.

Reasons for such restriction, removal, or suspension may include, but are not limited to:

1. Findings of research misconduct, pursuant to the processes outlined in the University Research Integrity Policy or other University research policies;
2. Failure to meet deliverables or reports on a current or past Sponsored Program in a timely and orderly fashion as required by the Sponsor;
3. Long-term absence (e.g., due to medical leave, etc.);
4. Fiduciary improprieties; and/or
5. Guidance from the Sponsor, etc.

Requests for removal of PI or Co-PI status of an individual must outline the reasons for such restriction, in writing, to the VPR. The VPR will meet with the responsible parties (e.g., PI, department head/director, dean, Provost, and/or other stakeholders including Sponsor representatives) to review the merits of the request. As appropriate, the VPR may engage University's research misconduct process and/or create an ad-hoc committee of faculty peers, which will review the matter and provide their input. The final decision and all applicable restrictions will be communicated to the individual in writing and will be signed by the VPR, unless otherwise stated in any other University policy.

VI. Enforcement

The University's Office of Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development is responsible for enforcement of this Policy.

A. Employee Sanctions

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in sanctions which may include, but not be limited to, disciplinary action up to termination of employment, as may be determined by the Vice President that an individual reports to upon the recommendation of the VPR in consultation with the Office of Human Resources.

B. Student Sanctions

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in sanctions which may include, but not be limited to, disciplinary action up to expulsion, as may be determined by Student Rights and Responsibilities upon the recommendation of the VPR.

VII. Policy Management

Upon adoption, the Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development shall be the Responsible Executive for this Policy. The Assistant Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development shall be the Responsible Officer for the policy. The Office of Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development is the Responsible Office for this Policy.

VIII. Exclusions

This Policy does not apply to Employees working on or pursuant to consultant agreements, institutionally funded agreements, and on unfunded research.

IX. Effective Date

This Policy shall apply effective upon adoption.

X. Adoption

This Policy is hereby adopted on this 12/6/2022.

DocuSigned by:

Joseph Savoie

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Dr. E. Joseph Savoie
President

XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials

- ✦ Appendix A: Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility for Externally Sponsored Awards
- ✦ Appendix B: Retirement Benefit Implications
- ✦ PI Exception Request Form
- ✦ [Internal Proposal Approval Form](#)
- ✦ [University Research Integrity Policy](#)

XII. Revision History

✦ Adoption of Principal Investigator Eligibility Policy: 12/6/2022 (RE.002.1).