

Rule R7-200B: Principal Investigator Eligibility and Responsibilities in Sponsored Projects

Revision 0. Effective date: March 3, 2025

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I. **Purpose and Scope**

A. Purpose.

This rule establishes select roles and responsibilities of Principal and Co-Principal Investigators (PI/Co-PI) related to sponsored projects. This rule does not include a comprehensive list of all PI/Co-PI roles and responsibilities related to the performance of sponsored projects or research in general. Where applicable, federal and state law, other university regulations and requirements,

Vice President of Research (VPR) conditions established in the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) Handbook for Research & Sponsored Activity, and project-specific agreements will require the performance of additional PI/Co-PI obligations.

B. Scope.

This rule applies to all university academic units and all individuals who serve as Principal or Co-Principal Investigators for sponsored projects.

II. Definitions

The definitions provided in Policy 7-200 apply for this rule. In addition, the terms below apply for the limited purpose of this rule.

- A. “Faculty” means an individual with membership in one of the categories established under Policy 6-300: The University Faculty – Categories and Ranks.
- B. “Principal Investigator” or “PI” means an individual who is responsible for leading and directing a sponsored project.
 - 1. A PI may delegate certain project-specific activities. The designee must have the appropriate expertise, qualifications, training, and education/skills to perform the delegated task. In all instances the PI maintains the overall responsibility to ensure that all project activities are compliant with federal, state, and university requirements and best practices.
- C. “Co-Principal Investigator” or “Co-PI” means an individual who is responsible for co-leading and co-directing a sponsored project with an individual who is eligible to be a Principal Investigator.

III. Rule

- A. Eligibility to be Designated as a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator
 - 1. The following Faculty categories are eligible to serve as PIs and Co-PIs:
 - a. a tenured Faculty member;

- b. a tenure-line Faculty member;
 - c. a career-line Faculty member; or
 - d. an adjunct Faculty member with a tenure-line or career-line appointment in another department.
2. The following categories of Faculty are eligible to serve as a Co-PI if an individual defined in Section III.A.1 is designated as PI:
 - a. an adjunct Faculty member without a tenure-line or career-line appointment in another department;
 - b. an emeritus Faculty member; or
 - c. a visiting Faculty member.
3. The following categories of university employees require approval from the cognizant department chair and college dean to be eligible to serve as PI or Co-PI:
 - a. a university employee who is not a Faculty member and has the title of “director” or higher.
4. The following categories of university employees require approval from the cognizant department chair, college dean, and Vice President for Research, to be eligible to serve as PI or Co-PI:
 - a. a university employee who is not a Faculty member and has a title lower than “director.”
 - b. a current PI/Co-PI who voluntarily separates from the university may continue to act as PI/Co-PI, for a limited period not to exceed 12 months, in order to transition the sponsored project to a new PI or to complete the sponsored project closeout; or
 - c. other situation requiring exception from this regulation.

5. Research associates, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students can serve as PI applicants when applying for sponsored funding specifically designed for such individuals.
 - a. Appropriate Faculty supervision must be assured and a member of the Faculty, who is eligible to serve as PI, must act as a mentor.
6. Eligibility is not a guarantee of institutional endorsement. Department, college, and university leadership reserve the right to review each proposed project, evaluate any risks and committed resources, and support or decline a project on a case-by-case basis. Formal departmental approval is obtained in completing the proposal intake materials filed with OSP.

B. Principal Investigator Responsibilities

1. The PI assumes the primary leadership role on a project. During proposal or project development, the PI (or PI's mentor) is officially designated on the university proposal intake materials filed with the Office of Sponsored Projects. PIs are encouraged to discuss their proposal with cognizant department leadership and the OSP early in the development phase. The PI has responsibility for accurately completing the proposal intake materials filed with OSP. The PI is responsible for ensuring that the information provided is true and accurate and agrees to take responsibility for the proper conduct of the project as required by university regulations, OSP Handbook for Research & Sponsored Activity, and terms and conditions of the project-specific award.
2. Sponsored projects administration is a joint effort between the PI and the university. The PI is held accountable for proper conduct of the project, stewardship of research data and materials, fiscal management, and conduct of the project, in accordance with all federal regulations, state laws, and university regulations. The university is held legally and financially responsible and accountable to the sponsor for the performance of the activity funded and the proper use of funds, but without the full cooperation

and oversight of the PI and designee(s) (as applicable), the university would not be able to fulfill its role as the awardee.

3. The PI is responsible to the university and to the sponsor for assuring that the scope of work for which the award was made is completed, that university policies and procedures are adhered to, and that funds are expended in accordance with the awarded budget and sponsor terms and conditions.
4. While the PI may delegate some responsibility for day-to-day management of finances and other tasks, the PI remains accountable for compliance with university regulations, including but not limited to regulatory compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Radiation Safety policies and procedures, Food & Drug Administration (FDA) policies, and project sponsor requirements.
5. After the project has expired, the PI, in coordination with any Co-PIs, designee(s), and/or subrecipient PIs (as applicable), continues to be responsible for all close-out and intellectual property requirements of the university and the sponsor; including but not limited to all final technical reports, submission of invention disclosures, satisfaction of subcontract/consortium contractual requirement, data management and sharing, and other reports as required.

C. Changes in Principal Investigator Status

1. A PI must notify OSP and their department or unit leadership immediately if any of the following occur:
 - a. the PI withdraws or intends to withdraw from the project entirely;
 - b. the PI is uninvolved in the project for any continuous period of 90 days or more, regardless of whether sabbatical leave occurs during this period;

- c. the PI intends to separate from the university and therefore will need to transfer an award (whether or not they remain as Co-PI);
 - d. the PI is criminally charged or convicted of sexual misconduct;
 - e. the PI is involved in the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) program;
 - f. the PI reduces the time devoted to the project by 25 percent or more from the level that was approved at the time of the award; or
 - g. the PI is or has been debarred or suspended by the Federal government.
 - i. Any PI who is or has been debarred or suspended is precluded from receiving federally funded grant or contract awards or from being paid with Federal funds.
 - h. the PI is or has been debarred or suspended by an external foundation or other entity associated with a sponsored project.
 - i. Any PI who is or has been debarred or suspended that seeks to obtain foundation or other sponsored funding shall first discuss with their department chair.
2. Department or unit leadership must notify OSP immediately if any of the following occur:
- a. the PI separates from the university;
 - b. the PI is placed on administrative leave;
 - c. the PI is criminally charged or convicted of sexual misconduct;
 - d. the PI is uninvolved in the project for any continuous period of 90 days or more, regardless of whether sabbatical leave occurs during this period;
3. A change in PI on a sponsored project can only occur with approval from the sponsor and the university, in coordination with the Office of Sponsored Projects.

Sections IV- VII are for user information and are not subject to the approval of the Academic Senate or the Board of Trustees. The Institutional Policy Committee, the Policy Owner, or the Policy Officer may update these sections at any time.

IV. Policies/ Rules, Procedures, Guidelines, Forms and other Related Resources

A. Policies

1. Policy 7-200: Research Administration Policy

B. Procedures, Guidelines, and Forms. [*reserved*]

C. Other Related Resources.

1. Office of Sponsored Projects Research Handbook

V. References

- A. Policy 6-300: The University Faculty – Categories and Ranks

VI. Contacts

The designated contact officials for this regulation are:

- A. Policy Owner(s) (primary contact person for questions and advice): Associate Vice President for Research Integrity & Compliance (AVPRIC) and Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP)
- B. Policy Officer(s): Vice President for Research

See Rule 1-001 for information about the roles and authority of policy owners and policy officers.

VII. History

Revision History.

- A. Current version. Revision 0.
 1. Approved by the Vice President for Research on November 1, 2024 and the Academic Senate on March 3, 2025 with effective date of March 2, 2025.

2. Legislative History

3. Editorial Revisions

B. Renumbering

1. Not applicable.