

UCI ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Research Protections

Section 480-5: Eligibility to Serve as Principal Investigator

Responsible Office: Office of Research Administration

Issued: June 23, 1986

Revised: December 1, 2004; December 1, 2008; January 12, 2008

References

- University of California Systemwide Contract and Grant Manual (Subchapter 1-530)
- UC Irvine Delegation of Authority IDA 128

Background and Purpose

This policy defines the role and responsibilities of a principal investigator (PI), the qualifications of those who are eligible to serve as a principal investigator and an exception procedure for those who are not eligible.

Applicability and Effective Date

This revision is effective on December 1, 2008, and rescinds and supplants the policy previously issued.

Definitions

Principal Investigator is a UCI employee with an academic appointment or other eligible appointment under University policy who is responsible for the design, scientific/technical conduct, administrative conduct, and reporting of a research, training, or public service project supported by extramural funding sources. A principal investigator must personally participate in the project to a significant degree. "Fronting" as principal investigator is contrary to University of California policy.

Project Administrator or Project Director is the head of a training or public service project and has the same responsibilities as a principal investigator. Project Administrators and Project Directors must meet the same eligibility requirements as Principal Investigators.

Program Administrator or Program Director is the head of a program involving more than one project and is administratively responsible for all aspects of the program. Program Administrators and Program Directors must meet the same eligibility requirements as Principal Investigators.

Co-Investigator is an employee of UCI, with an academic appointment, who is responsible for a portion of the design, scientific/technical conduct or reporting of a research, training, or public service project supported by extramural funding sources.

Member of the Academic Senate is an individual who falls within one of the following titles whether in regular or emeritus status:

- Chancellor
- Vice Chancellor
- Dean (Academic)
- Director (Academic Programs)
- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Professor of Clinical (e.g., Medicine)
- Associate Professor of Clinical (e.g., Medicine)
- Assistant Professor of Clinical (e.g., Medicine)
- Professor in Residence
- Associate Professor in Residence
- Assistant Professor in Residence
- Acting Professor
- Acting Associate Professor
- Senior Lecturer with Security of Employment (100% only)
- Lecturer with Security of Employment (100% only)
- Registrar
- University Librarian

Policy Statement

A Member of the Academic Senate may serve as a principal investigator for any extramurally funded research, training, or public service project.

Academic appointees in the title groups listed below are eligible to serve as principal investigators, with departmental/dean approval indicated by signature on the Administrative Approval form:

1. Appointees salaried at 50 percent or more of full time in the Adjunct Professor series.
2. Appointees salaried at 50 percent or more of full time in the Health Sciences Clinical Professor (APM 278) series.
3. Appointees salaried at 50 percent or more of full time in the Professional Research series.
4. Upon approval of the Vice Chancellor for Research, an appointee in the Supervisor of Physical Education series (for a training or training-related research project).
5. Upon approval of the Dean of University Extension, an appointee in the University Extension Specialist series (for a training or training-related research project).

Faculty with visiting appointments may not serve as a principal investigator unless a written request for exception to policy is approved by the Vice Chancellor for Research.

Faculty or staff holding other appointments may request exceptional approval from the Vice Chancellor for Research in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

Those who submit proposals are encouraged to plan projects that are educationally and financially helpful to students whenever possible. Projects which interfere with the regular instructional and research responsibilities of the University shall not be accepted. Most extramural funding agencies recognize only one principal investigator. Consequently, the University also recognizes one individual at a time as the principal investigator.

Requests for Exceptions to Policy

Authority to approve an exception to this policy has been delegated from the Chancellor to the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. Exceptions are considered upon submission of an electronic or written request from the department chair/director and dean/academic official to Sponsored Projects (SP). Attachment 1 is provided to ensure the request covers the following criteria for approval.

The following criteria will be applied to requests for approval of exceptional principal investigator status:

1. The proposed research or other activity must be shown to be meritorious, appropriate to the University and of significant import to the goals of the unit requesting the exception.
2. Generally, approval will not be given to proposals whose main purpose is the procurement of funds to support the perpetuation or initiation of a scholar's tenure. Since the proposed principal investigator must be affiliated with the department/unit during the duration of the project, the expected appointment status must be indicated in the exception request.
3. Generally, students, postdoctoral fellows, and postdoctoral trainees may not serve as principal investigators. Exceptions may be approved for postdoctoral trainees when the application for, and administration of, a small extramural grant is an approved activity of the training program; however, under no circumstances may the duration of the proposed grant exceed the traineeship period. In the case of certain graduate fellowships that are awarded as grants, the student's faculty advisor shall be designated principal investigator.
4. The department chair/director and dean/academic official must certify that departmental facilities are sufficient to support the proposed research, and that the commitment of such resources for the duration of the contract or grant will not impede the progress of other research or training.
5. An assessment of the proposed investigator's ability to carry out the administrative responsibilities incumbent upon principal investigators must be provided by the department chair/director.

An approved exception to serve as Principal Investigator entrusts in the individual the responsibilities as a principal investigator until the individual's exception to PI status is withdrawn by the department chair/director or dean/academic official in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Research.