



Section 200: General OSR Policies

OSR Policy 200.3 — Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility

Responsible Officer: Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

Responsible Unit: Office of Sponsored Research

Effective date: July 1, 2008

Last revised on: November 13, 2008

Policy Statement

On externally sponsored research projects, most often, fulltime, permanent EPA faculty may serve as principal investigators (PIs), in accordance with the University's [eligibility policy](#). Each principal investigator and each member of the research team is responsible for ensuring department heads, deans and directors that his/her University commitments will be sustained during the duration of the research project.

PIs, department heads, deans, and directors do not have the authority to enter into legal agreements on behalf of the University. All sponsored research agreements involving grants, contracts or cooperative agreements must be signed by a university representative with institutional signature authority.

Multiple Principal Investigators

When two or more PIs are designated by the University for the responsibility of scientific, technical, scholarly or artistic direction of sponsored projects, these PIs share equal, full authority and responsibility for the intellectual, administrative and fiscal aspects of the proposal and award, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, terms and conditions.

Appointing multiple PIs is appropriate only when the research project has the potential to maximize team science projects and multidisciplinary research. Instances of multiple PIs is often seen in such agencies as the National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)).

Regardless of the number of PIs, each is required to complete [certification in RAMSeS](#) for any proposal where s/he is named as a PI.

Limited Submissions

The University utilizes an internal selection process to identify and fairly judge among numerous investigators interested in submitting applications for sponsored programs that limit the number of proposals originating from UNC-Chapel Hill.



The Office of Research Development ([ORD](#)) is responsible for the identification, alerts to the research community, and the selection process regarding limited submissions.

Reason for Policy

Because sponsored research is at the core of the University's mission, it is essential that highly qualified individuals are designated to serve in the role of principal investigator in a manner consistent with the [Board of Governor's policy regarding the appropriateness of University Research](#), and aligned with the University's policy on [ethics in research](#).

Exclusions/Exceptions

While the majority of PIs are full-time, permanent EPA faculty members, some research projects are conducted by PIs with different employee designations:

1. Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral fellows cannot be designated as lead PIs in RAMSeS and are not recognized in that capacity by the University. Instead, postdocs are designated other project team roles under the oversight of an eligible full-time, permanent EPA faculty member, who is named as the PI in RAMSeS and assumes the role of "mentor" to the postdoc. Although this may contradict cases where agencies allow a postdoc to serve as a lead PI, the University's designation prevails for administrative purposes.

2. Non-Faculty EPA Employees, SPA Employees and Part-time Faculty

Non-faculty EPA employees and part-time faculty members may serve as lead PIs with written approval from their departmental chair, dean or director.

3. PIs Transferring to UNC Chapel Hill

Department chairs, deans, or directors may submit proposals in RAMSeS on behalf of a PI transferring from one institution to UNC Chapel Hill. The proposal must be submitted directly from the department chair, dean or director and requires attaching a memo or email in RAMSeS explaining the circumstances of the submission. Once the PI has transferred to the University, additional information about the PI may be added to RAMSeS.

Procedures and Related Policies

For any employee who is not a full-time, permanent EPA faculty member, a request to waive UNC Chapel Hill's PI eligibility policy must be presented to OSR. The following procedure describes the necessary elements to include in the request.

- [OSR Policy 200.3-Pro. 1](#) [Preparing a Waiver Request for Principal Investigator \(PI\) Eligibility](#)



Related Policies

- [OSR Policy 200.2](#) [Signatory Authority](#)

Research Tool Kits

None.

Contacts

Questions and concerns can be submitted online at [Ask OSR](#) or by using the [OSR staff directory](#). Within [RAMSeS](#), the “*Speak to Someone*” option assists in locating the staff member best suited to address project-specific issues.

References

 [Research Administration Glossary at Carolina](#)

[1.](#) The UNC Policy Manual, 500.1, *University Research Relations with Government Agencies and Private Entities*.

[2.](#) *Guidelines for Sponsored Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, June 1, 1988, amended 2002, p. 2.

[3.](#) Memorandum from the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development regarding Multiple Principal Investigators and Sharing of F&A Cost Reimbursements in Collaborations, April 10, 2007.

Revision History

Prior Revisions: The policies in the *Office of Sponsored Research Policies & Procedures Manual* supersede any OSR policies, procedures and appendices previously included in the *University Business Manual*, a publication of UNC Chapel Hill’s [Division of Finance](#).

