Principal Investigator Policy

1. Principal Investigator Eligibility

Minimum Qualifications for Principal Investigator (PI). The right to serve as the PI on sponsored grants and contracts at Cal State East Bay is automatically granted to:

1. Probationary (tenure-track) and tenured faculty.
2. Individuals who have been offered a probationary (tenure track) or tenured faculty position, signed an acceptance letter and have a volunteer appointment in a college or department. PI status in these cases is granted for the purposes of proposal preparation and submission or to process a transfer of an existing grant or contract from another institution.
3. Individuals with a Management Personnel Plan (MPP) appointment.
4. The eligibility of a faculty member or MPP to serve as a PI may be revoked for research misconduct, fraud, fiscal mismanagement, debarment by a sponsor, and similar improprieties.

Normally, the PI must be an employee of the University. Other individuals that do not meet the criteria described above may apply for provisional PI status to serve as a PI on a grant or contract. Provisional PI status is granted for a limited period for a specific proposal, grant or contract. Provisional PI status is an internal designation and individuals will be identified as the PI (or Co-PI) to the sponsor. Lecturers may request provisional PI status but must maintain a continuous appointment during the terms of the proposal submission and award period. Faculty with emeritus status may request provisional PI status and are required to have a volunteer appointment in a college or department and should confirm that employment on a grant-funded project does not violate the terms of their retirement. Faculty participating in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) should confirm that employment on a grant-funded project does not violate the terms of their retirement and should contact the AVP of ORSP about eligibility.

The individual requesting provisional PI status must have the support and recommendation of the relevant department Chair and college Dean. The Associate Vice President (AVP) for Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) shall review all applications and make recommendations to the Provost. The Provost shall accept or reject the application or request further consultation with the Dean and AVP for ORSP.

If the individual intends to submit a proposal, provisional PI status must be approved before the grant application is submitted to the sponsor. Granting of provisional PI status does not imply that a proposal will be submitted by ORSP if it is not approved through the normal proposal routing process. The individual seeking provisional PI status must complete the Request for Provisional PI Status and prepare a letter of application (maximum 2 pages) that includes the following:
1. Summary of current research or scholarly work
2. Description of how the proposed work relates to the strategic mission of Cal State East Bay and how it serves faculty and students.
3. Previous funding and experience with grant applications.
4. Description of professional training and qualifications, experience in managing compliance and financial issues related to sponsored programs, and experience in supervising staff.
5. Description of required resources including space, computing facilities, etc.

The applicant shall provide the Request for Provisional PI Status, letter of application, and current CV to the department Chair.

2. Normal Responsibilities for PI
The PI is the individual responsible for the overall fiscal, administrative, and scientific/programmatic conduct of a project. PIs are responsible for day-to-day project management and accept responsibility for carrying out commitments as outlined in the proposal within the time limits and budgetary resources provided, and for complying with University and sponsor policies and procedures related to the administration of funds and submission of narrative and/or technical reports. Normally, only one PI is identified. However, some sponsors permit the assignment of multiple PIs.

A Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) is typically recognized by a funding agency as an individual who shares the responsibility for the conduct of a project with the PI, including meeting the reporting requirements. A Co-PI may also be delegated spending authority and other fiscal and management related authority on an award by the Principal Investigator. A Co-PI must meet the same eligibility requirements as the PI.

3. Reassignment of PI
In cases where the incumbent Principal Investigator’s resignation, incapacitation, or failure or refusal to perform the duties adequately, the Dean and AVP of ORSP shall make a recommendation to the Provost regarding the reassignment of responsibilities to another eligible individual. The Provost shall accept or reject the recommendation or request further consultation with the Dean and AVP for ORSP. The reassignment of responsibilities shall be done through a grant or contract amendment. In cases where the sponsor has specific requirements regarding the reassignment of a PI, the sponsor must be consulted and the reassignment must adhere to the sponsor’s requirements.

4. PI Responsibilities for Multi-Institutional Grants
For multi-institutional Sponsored Programs, the distribution of responsibilities shall be clearly delineated in the project proposal.