

Research Administration	Effective Date: 02/26/2025
OVPR Policies and Procedures	Revised: n/a

OVPR-12: Policy for Principal Investigator Eligibility for Externally Funded Activities

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PURPOSE

Baylor University’s Principal Investigators (PIs) are central to continuing and advancing research and other sponsored programs. The responsibilities of Principal Investigators are described in PI Responsibilities below. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) establishes PI eligibility requirements due to the significant responsibility placed on PIs to determine program direction and manage project development. Baylor University has established faculty appointment and employee eligibility criteria that govern the varying levels of participation in sponsored programs. The purpose of this policy is to determine how faculty and employee roles impact PI eligibility and further define the Baylor PI role.

Additionally, this policy outlines when exceptions may be made to the standard PI eligibility requirements, including the types of funding that allow other University members to be designated as PIs. Exceptions require additional documentation and/or other support mechanisms as detailed in this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

To be designated as a Principal Investigator (PI) for externally funded activities, the individual must meet the necessary requirements regarding qualification, employment, and appointment. Eligibility must be met at the time of proposal development, and the PI must have effort available to assign to the project during the period of performance. The term “PI” used within this policy extends to Principal Investigator, Project Director, or Co-Principal Investigator.

PI eligibility requires that individuals have a contracted appointment within a Baylor school, department, center, or institute with one of the following Baylor titles:

1. *Tenure-track/Tenured Faculty*: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Distinguished Professor, University Professor
2. *Center or Institute Staff*: Director or above
3. *Specialized Research Personnel*: Assistant, Associate, and Senior Research Scientists, Scholars, or Engineers
4. *Lecturers*: Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Teaching Professor
5. *Clinical Faculty*: Clinical Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Professor

Note: Affiliate Faculty and Visiting Scientists/Scholars are not allowed to be a PI or Co-PI.

Research and other sponsored project activities support our broad educational mission and are conducted under the responsible control of Principal Investigators (PIs). The PIs are required to meet the eligibility requirements above. The chair and dean of the relevant academic unit must approve each proposal for an externally sponsored program by electronically certifying the proposal in the CARA system, and, by doing so, are indicating their approval for the PI to undertake the project.

EXCEPTIONS

In certain instances, it may be appropriate for individuals who do not meet the eligibility requirements above to serve as PIs (i.e., the funding solicitation states eligibility). If the PI of a proposed project is not a member of one of the eligibility groups, the electronic signatures of the chair and dean certifying the proposal in the CARA system also indicates their approval of the person serving in that capacity for that project.

Examples of potential exceptions are described below:

Postdoctoral Scholars are not normally allowed as a PI, but in some cases, an externally funded program may require that one of these individuals be listed as a PI/PD or Co-PI/PD, or there may be other good cause to consider a waiver of this restriction. In such cases, the faculty mentor, Chair, and Dean must approve the Postdoctoral Scholar as a PI/Co-PI in the CARA system.

Graduate students are eligible to serve as PIs only on individual fellowships and must have a faculty member as a mentor and as the PI of record in CARA. Faculty support should be clearly identified at the time of the proposal to demonstrate necessary supervision and oversight of the program.

Administrative Staff. Some externally funded programs are clearly of an administrative nature, as contrasted with an academic or scholarly activities, and should be headed by the director or the associate/assistant director of an administrative office. In this case, the immediate supervisor and the appropriate Vice President also indicate, by electronically certifying the proposal in the CARA proposal system, that they approve of the individual serving as PI.

PI RESPONSIBILITIES

- Direct and oversee all research activities and foster a culture of research integrity and compliance.
- Obtain and maintain regulatory review board approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC, and IBC)
- Ensure all research staff obtain and maintain required trainings (e.g., RCR, COI, IRB, IACUC, etc.)
- Manage fiscal and administrative management of research. The PI will monitor expenditures regularly to ensure that funds are managed in compliance with Baylor policies, applicable regulations, and sponsor terms and conditions.
- Conduct research in an objective and unbiased manner in compliance with policies and regulations. While the PI may delegate responsibility for some project activity to others, the PI is ultimately responsible for compliance with all applicable regulations and policies and for ensuring a safe research environment, meaning one that is free from any form of discrimination or harassment.
- Communicate significant changes in effort for any labor charge to the project in a timely manner.
- Respond timely to OVPR requests for input on compliance reporting, including fiscal compliance, financial audits, and effort reporting.
- Review and confirm notice of award and award setup.
- Review and approve any revisions to project scope, budget or changes in effort or other activities that may require prior approval from sponsor.
- Prepare and submit all required technical reports throughout the life of the award in a timely manner.
- Direct all technical and administrative activities.
- Monitor subrecipient and consultant activity, including review of invoices.
- Oversee confirmation and monitoring of program income, if applicable.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Baylor University personnel submitting proposals to participate in programs funded by a) federal, state, and/or local government agencies, b) commercial sponsors, and c) other organization funding research or other scholarly activities at or on behalf of Baylor University. PI eligibility applies to proposals that indicate an individual will serve as a Prime or a subaward PI.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Vice Provost for Research is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy. Day-to-day responsibility for such implementation is delegated to OVPR leadership.

REGULATIONS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

[University Policies and Documents](#)

OVPR-19: Policy for Proposal Submission and Internal 10-5-2 Deadlines

DEFINITIONS

Principal Investigator is the individual with overall responsibility for the conduct of research or other activity described in a proposal, protocol or an award, and/or the individual with fiduciary responsibility for award management. The term "PI" used within this policy extends to Principal Investigator, Project Director, or Co-Principal Investigator. [PI Eligibility | Office of the Vice Provost for Research | Baylor University](#)

Proposal is an application for funding that contains all information necessary to describe project plans, research team capabilities, and funds requested. Formal proposals are officially approved and submitted by an organization on behalf of a principal investigator.

Fellowship or career development grant is funding designated for an individual currently in graduate school or holding a doctoral degree to continue to engage in mentored research or training.

GOVERNANCE

This policy will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, on a regular basis by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research. If a federal agency issues rules governing cost principles in sponsored research, those rules will govern where applicable. Any changes in federal requirements will supersede the relevant provisions of this policy.

REVISIONS FROM PREVIOUS VERSION

N/A