

Principal Investigator Eligibility Policy

Approved December 6, 2007 by UNLV Research Council

The title of Principal Investigator (PI) identifies the individual responsible for the conduct of a sponsored project or project requiring registration with a UNLV compliance committee. This responsibility includes the intellectual conduct of the project, fiscal accountability, administrative aspects, and the project's adherence to relevant policies and regulations. For that reason, Principal Investigators must have a reasonable prospect of long-term employment at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Which personnel titles confer automatic PI status?

The policy of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is that only full-time academic faculty members (as defined in the Board of Regents Handbook and UNLV Bylaws) may routinely serve as Principal Investigators on sponsored projects. Certain other titles are allowed to serve as Principal Investigators within certain limitations described below. Exceptions to this policy may only be made with the prior approval of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College. The University will not submit proposals for external funding or approve requests requiring compliance committee oversight if they do not comply with this policy.

Full-time members of the academic faculty, for purposes of this policy, include the following personnel titles:

Professor	Research Professor
Associate Professor	Research Associate Professor
Assistant Professor	Research Assistant Professor
Library Faculty	Center Directors

Whenever there is a question as to eligibility for automatic PI status, the applicable definitions in the Board of Regents Handbook (Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 2.1.a for academic faculty) and the UNLV Bylaws (Chapter 3, Section 18.4.4 for research faculty) shall apply.

Exceptions

Deemed Exceptions: The Vice President for Research and Graduate Dean may deem that certain positions, other than those listed above, are granted PI status for the term of the position at UNLV.

Requested Exceptions: Non-tenure track faculty and professional staff involved in projects or programs that contribute to the University's mission may also request PI status from the Vice President for Research and Graduate Dean.

Requested Exceptions may be granted when the following conditions apply:

1. An application to serve as PI is to be submitted on the basis of a specific proposal idea or concept. Approval to be PI is granted for a specific proposal idea only, and should not be construed to permit the applicant to submit other proposals for unrelated ideas or concepts.
2. The individual must have the necessary experience and independence to compete for his or her own sponsored program and to administer the project should it be funded.
3. The individual must obtain written commitments of sponsorship from the department chairperson/unit director and dean, and any other individual required to guarantee necessary lab space or other resources or support.

4. The department chairperson/unit director and dean must agree to assume responsibility for the awarded sponsored program should the individual leave UNLV.

Procedure for requesting an exception

Requests for PI eligibility should be directed to the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) prior to the submission of a proposal to permit adequate time for review of the request. The request should include written (or emailed) approval by the proposed PI's chair or unit director and dean. The request should also include the curriculum vitae of the proposed PI. OSP will forward the request to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Dean (or designee) for approval and will inform the proposed PI of the decision.

Can individuals not currently employed by UNLV act as UNLV PIs?

An individual who is not currently employed by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas can serve as a PI or a Co-PI on a proposal if the department chair and dean through which the award will be administered provide documentation that an appointment to one of the eligible titles listed above has been offered to and has been accepted by the individual.

Are graduate students who apply for external funding eligible for PI status?

Generally, the answer is no. In order to process sponsored project proposals for which a graduate student intends to act as key personnel or has the main responsibility for conducting the project, the following criteria must be met:

1. A full-time faculty member must serve as Faculty Advisor for the project.
2. The Faculty Advisor shall serve as Principal Investigator.
3. The graduate student shall be responsible for the intellectual conduct of the project within the oversight of the Faculty Advisor and may be named as the Co-PI.
4. The proposal to the sponsor may name the graduate student as Key Personnel, as long as the Faculty Advisor is named as the responsible individual (i.e., Principal Investigator, Project Director or Faculty Advisor), unless that is specifically prohibited by sponsor guidelines. In such cases, the graduate student, with the concurrence of the Faculty Advisor, may request an exception to this policy per the procedures described in this policy.
5. The proposal should acknowledge the student's authorship of the proposal, as appropriate.

Are adjunct faculty or post doctoral fellows eligible for PI status?

PI status will not be granted to adjunct faculty or staff. Exceptions to this policy may only be made with the prior approval of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College per the exceptions criteria described in this policy.

Individuals who obtain post doctoral fellowships from external agencies, but who do not meet the personnel category requirements noted above, may obtain appointment as a PI by submitting an exception request to OSP as outlined above. A UNLV Faculty Advisor or mentor must be listed as the Co-PI on fellowship awards, at least internally if such appointment is not permitted on the award by sponsor guidelines. The Faculty Advisor's name, department and other pertinent information should be provided as part of the exception request.