
OSP Policy MEMORANDUM-05

Principal Investigator Eligibility

Purpose

To establish the role and responsibilities of a Principal Investigator; the categories of appointments for those individuals who are eligible to serve as a Principal Investigator; and an approval procedure to allow those individuals who are not included in the default categories to serve as Principal Investigators.

Definition

The Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) is the person responsible for the design, conduct, and reporting – both scientific or technical and fiscal – of the research. In addition, they are responsible for any additional regulatory and review requirements. Externally funded sponsored projects at Missouri S&T are under the scholarly and administrative control of the Project Director or Principal Investigator (PD/PI or Co-PDs/Pis), who is responsible for the overall design, conduct, and reporting of the research or other activity.

Policy

It is the policy of Missouri University of Science & Technology that the Project Director or Principal Investigator on a research proposal should be an employee of the University and hold the title of Regular Faculty, or NTT Faculty, or Research Engineer. Members of the Faculty who are retired may serve as PD/PI provided they are in an active pay status/appointment and there is at least one College/Center/Department willing to provide the necessary administrative commitment to permit the program to be carried out.

When a sponsor recognizes more than one Principal Investigator, one will be designated as the “Corresponding Principal Investigator” who shall be the individual who assumes institutional responsibility for the overall project and with whom the Office of Sponsored Programs will communicate for administrative matters.

It is possible for persons who are not Missouri University of Science & Technology employees to serve as PD/Pis if they receive the approval of the Vice Chancellor of Research (VCR), the Chancellor, and the UM System Vice President for Research.

At the recommendation of the VCR a Postdoctoral Fellow may be designated as a Co-PD/PI. However, when required by the sponsor and per program guidelines, (e.g. NIH, HRSA, etc.) a Postdoctoral Fellow will be recognized as a Principal Investigator in the sponsor’s proprietary system, like NIH Commons. To route proposals through internal systems and obtain required internal approvals Postdoctoral Fellows must seek a sponsoring PI who will assume budgetary and reporting responsibilities at the University level.

The process for establishing a Postdoctoral Fellow as a co-PD/PI is as follows: a Department Chair, a Center Director, or a Dean shall submit to the VCR a request for approval, which should include the following information:

- The category of appointment of the proposed Co-Principal Investigator identifying his/her current appointment, planned appointment or changes in appointment, and the duration of the appointment.
- A brief description of the proposed project, including the title, scope of work, and sponsor, and how the project aligns with the individual's responsibilities.
- A brief description of the qualifications of the proposed Co-Principal Investigator.

The VCR shall review all requests for approval taking into consideration the qualifications of the Postdoctoral Fellow, and the scope of work. Depending upon the circumstances, the VCR may limit the approval to a specific sponsored project or subject to specific conditions.

There are other requirements for the title of Principal Investigator on protocols reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, and the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

The Vice Chancellor of Research may approve exceptions to this policy.

Costas Tsatsoulis
Vice Chancellor of Research