



Research and Sponsored Programs Procedure

Who Can Apply as Principal Investigator (PI)

1. Overview

Under the general oversight and authority of Rutgers University, the Principal Investigator (PI) is the individual responsible for technical compliance, completion of programmatic work, fiscal stewardship of sponsor funds, and compliance with the project's administrative requirements. Thus, the University must ensure that individuals serving as Principal Investigators have the technical competence and administrative capabilities to carry out all projects.

2. Purpose

Outline expectations and requirements for who may serve as Principal Investigator of a sponsored award.

3. Who Must Comply

All members of Rutgers University community who intend to seek external support for their research, programs, or projects

- Deans, Directors, Chairs, and Department Heads Department Personnel
- Business Managers
- Research and Sponsored Programs Office for Research

4. Definitions

Adjunct Faculty:	A non-tenured individual who has a part-time faculty appointment for a specific length of time.
Co-PI /Multiple PI:	One or more Principal Investigators who share responsibility for the project. Each individual listed is considered a Co-Principal Investigator.
Emeritus Faculty:	Emeritus is an honorary title granted to retired faculty or academic administrators with a distinguished record of service to Rutgers University and higher education. Individuals holding a non-paid Emeritus Faculty title are not considered Rutgers employees.
Faculty:	An individual who has a full-time tenure or tenure-track faculty appointment or who has a full-time, limited-term faculty appointment.
PI/ Project Director:	The individual who leads the project or program described in a sponsored project proposal. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the programmatic, financial, and administrative management of the award and for ensuring compliance with all terms and conditions of the formal agreement (grant, contract, cooperative agreement, MOU, or OTA).
Sponsored Projects:	Externally funded activities governed by a formal written agreement—such as a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, MOU, or OTA—between Rutgers and the sponsor.

5. Procedure

The individuals identified herein may apply for external funding as Principal Investigator, with the endorsement of their Department Chair and/or Center Director and their Dean (or Dean’s designee), or the appropriate senior leadership of other University units:

Individuals employed by Rutgers who hold one of the following positions may serve as Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI).

Faculty:	Full-time or part-time tenure or tenure-track faculty (Full, Associate and Assistant Professors)
Research Faculty:	Full-time or part-time faculty or faculty equivalent appointments who are not on tenure-track (Research Associate Professors, Research Assistant Professors)
Co-terminus or Adjunct Faculty:	Co-terminus, or Adjunct Faculty, with a paid appointment at the University, with sufficient time and effort for the work proposed
Other:	Others hired by individual faculty members using grant funds (such as Research Associates, Research Assistants, Post-Doctoral Fellows, and Associates)
Staff:	Staff members with responsibility for managing a unit with its own budget may be designated as the Principal Investigator
Student:	Fellowships

Emeritus or retired faculty may also apply for external funding as Co-Principal Investigator only, with the endorsement of their Department Chair and/or Center Director, and their Dean (or Dean’s designee).

6. Exceptions

Exceptions and things to consider:

- A letter or email from the Chair/Dean is required to acknowledge that, should the grant be awarded, the personnel status of the individual will change to a paid appointment at a minimum, at the effort required for the work funded, as well as acknowledgement that space will be made available and project and budgetary oversight provided.
- For a new hire, a copy of the fully executed offer appointment letter indicating the start date is required. The proposed start date for the award cannot be identified before the start date in the offer letter.
- Members of the Staff with appropriate skills, education, experience and authority for the work proposed but who do not manage a unit or have budgetary authority who wish to submit proposals must, in addition to all endorsement requirements at time of submission, provide a letter of justification from the Chair and Dean or equivalent of the School and/or unit under which they fall.
- Retired faculty should consult with the Human Resources office to ensure serving as a Co-PI will not alter their retirement status. For a retired faculty member to serve as a PI, he or she must, in addition to all endorsement requirements at the time of submission, obtain permission via submission of a letter of justification
- from the Chair and Dean or equivalent of the school and/or unit under which they fall. Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows may submit a proposal only if they meet the eligibility requirements set by the



external sponsor. Research and Sponsored Programs reserves the right to obtain additional justification in any case where eligibility is in question. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Research and Sponsored Programs as soon as a submission that may require additional approvals is identified.

7. Resources

- Research and Sponsored Programs website: <https://research.rutgers.edu/faculty-staff/pre-award>
- [PI Eligibility Guide](#)