



REGULATION TITLE:

Eligibility to Serve as Principal Investigator on Sponsored Projects

APPLIES TO:

All individuals seeking to lead externally funded projects on behalf of KSU

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:

Office of Research & Innovation (ORI)

Sponsored Programs

Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs

APPROVED BY:

Kentucky State University Board of Regents

EFFECTIVE DATE:

August 8, 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

August 8, 2028

REGULATION STATEMENT:

This regulation defines the eligibility criteria for individuals to serve as a principal investigator (PI) or co-principal investigator (Co-PI) on externally sponsored projects. To ensure proper fiscal management, academic oversight, and compliance with sponsor requirements, KSU requires that sponsored projects be led by individuals with the appropriate qualifications, authority, and a continuing commitment to the institution.

DEFINITIONS:**Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)**

An individual who shares the scientific and administrative leadership of a sponsored project with the PI. A Co-PI shares the same responsibilities and eligibility requirements as a PI.

Principal Investigator (PI)

The individual with the primary responsibility for the overall scientific, technical, and administrative leadership of a sponsored project. The PI is accountable to KSU and the sponsor for the project's proper execution.

Sponsored Project

A research, training, public service, or other activity that receives funding from an external source through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

PROCESS:

A. Standard Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to serve as a PI or Co-PI on a sponsored project, an individual must meet the following criteria at the time of proposal submission:

- Be a full-time, salaried employee of Kentucky State University.
- Hold an eligible faculty or administrative title, such as:
 - Tenured or Tenure-Track Faculty (e.g., Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor).
 - Research Faculty with a continuing appointment.
 - Staff in certain extension agent roles, for projects directly aligned with the University's land-grant mission.
- Have the ability to commit the necessary effort to the project and access to the required institutional resources (e.g., lab space, administrative support).

B. PI Eligibility for Compliance Protocols (IRB/IACUC)

Individuals who meet the standard eligibility criteria above are also eligible to serve as the PI on protocols submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects research or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Individuals who do not meet standard PI eligibility criteria (e.g., students, postdoctoral fellows) may serve as the "student PI" or lead researcher on an IRB or IACUC protocol; however, an individual who meets standard PI eligibility criteria must be listed as the "Faculty Sponsor" or "PI of Record" and holds ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study.

C. Exception Process

Individuals in positions not listed above (e.g., adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, postdoctoral researchers, emeritus faculty, staff without faculty appointments) are generally not eligible to serve as PIs but may request an exception. An exception may be granted by the Provost and Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs or a designee if it is determined to be in the best interest of KSU.

A request for an exception must be submitted to the Office of Research & Innovation (ORI) and include:

- A written justification outlining the individual's unique qualifications and the compelling programmatic need for them to serve as PI.

- A letter of support from the relevant Department Chair and Dean, confirming that the individual will be provided with the necessary resources and oversight.
- A mentoring plan, if the individual is in a trainee position (e.g., postdoctoral researcher).

Responsibilities

- **Principal Investigator (PI):** Responsible for the overall leadership and management of the sponsored project, including scientific direction, fiscal stewardship of funds, compliance with all applicable policies, and the timely submission of all required technical and administrative reports.
- **Department Chair and Dean:** Responsible for confirming a proposed PI's eligibility, ensuring the PI has the necessary time (effort), space, and resources to conduct the project, and providing administrative oversight for sponsored projects within their unit.
- **Office of Research & Innovation (ORI):** Responsible for verifying PI eligibility prior to proposal submission, managing the exception request process, and providing guidance to the KSU community on this regulation.

REFERENCES AND RELATED MATERIALS:

- KSU Proposal Submission Procedure
- KSU Change of Principal Investigator for Sponsored Awards Procedure

CONTACTS:

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HISTORY:

Revision Type	Date of Issuance/Revision	Drafter(s)/Editor(s)
Issued (New Regulation)	June 2025	Dorothy Daley and Zach Atwell