Guidelines to Determine the Eligibility of a Principal Investigator

Essential to a university's success as a research institution is the collective, creative ability of its Principal Investigators to define new problems and avenues of research, with the goal of creating and sharing new knowledge. The ability of Principal Investigators to secure external funding to support their research is essential to achieve this success.

At the University of South Florida, the management of research projects is a collective responsibility. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the appropriate scientific conduct and overall management of a sponsored project. The University is responsible for providing an environment that fosters creativity and innovation within an infrastructure for the administrative and financial oversight required to manage externally funded programs.

Submission of a grant or contract to an agency or organization by the University is a commitment for the term of a funded award for the space and facilities with which to complete the research. For this reason, a principal investigator must be an individual whom the University is willing to commit these resources as a member of the USF Community. It is essential, therefore, that USF identify which ranks and appointments are entitled to the privilege of serving as a Principal Investigator.

To assist in the identification of the specific ranks and appointments which are entitled to this privilege, the following guidelines have been established to determine who can serve as a Principal Investigator:

All tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty, researchers and scholars (see comprehensive list of classifications below) may serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) on a proposal for external funding.

Post-doctoral Scholars and adjunct faculty may serve as Co-principal Investigators (Co-PI) on sponsored projects, but may not serve in the role of PI unless pre-approved by Sponsored Research in collaboration with the appropriate responsible officer (College and/or Campus Dean, Director, or Vice President). Pre-approval is required for each proposal.

A request for exception to the guidelines must be submitted in writing to the Director of Sponsored Research by the appropriate Department Chair, signed by the College and/Campus Dean (or designee), and accompanied by the appropriate biosketch (NIH or NSF format) no later than two weeks before the proposal deadline.

USF currently has no eligibility requirements for Co-PI's, provided a PI-eligible PI in place, and the Co-PI meets eligibility requirements imposed by the sponsor.

Principal Investigator Eligibility Quick Guide

The following positions are authorized to be PI, without seeking additional pre-approval.

Faculty in Tenure Accruing Tracks

- Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor
- Assistant Curator, Associate Curator, Curator
- Assistant Librarian, Associate Librarian, Instructor Librarian

Faculty in Non-Tenure Accruing Tracks

- Assistant Scientist, Associate Scientist, Scientist
- Assistant Scholar, Associate Scholar, Scholar
- Assistant Engineer, Associate Engineer, Engineer
- Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, Research Professor
- Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Professor
- Assistant , Associate, Scholar/Scientist/Engineer
- Instructor
- Research Scientist Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Clinician Educator Assistant, Associate or Professor
- Scientific Educator Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Collaborative Research Scientist Assistant, Associate, or Professor

The following positions require Sponsored Research approval before PI authorization, which is conditional on the support of the Dean or delegate.

- Assistant In, Associate In, Senior Associate In
- Research Associate
- Post-doctoral Scholars
- Graduate Students
- Emeritus Professor
- Retired Faculty
- Adjunct Assistant , Associate, or Professor
- Clinical Affiliate Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Staff/Administration/Executive Services