

## Principal Investigator Eligibility

Issuing Officer: Executive Vice President and Provost  
Responsible Dept: Office Research and Sponsored Projects  
Effective Date: 2/1/2012  
Last Reviewed: February 2024

### I. PURPOSE

This Policy is intended to set forth the eligibility requirements and the duties and responsibilities of a Principal Investigator (PI) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU). This Policy also describes the processes for requesting and approving exceptions to the PI eligibility requirements.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Principal Investigator (PI)** is an employee of LMU (normally with an academic appointment) who is or becomes eligible under this policy to submit a proposal for extramural support for a research, training, or public service project, who personally participates in the project to a significant degree, and who has primary responsibility for the scientific, technical, and administrative conduct and reporting of the project, including financial matters. A Principal Investigator who is the head of a training or public service project may be known as a Project Director or Project Administrator. For the purposes of this policy, the terms shall be considered equivalent.

**Co-Principal Investigator (CO PI)** is an investigator who will share responsibility for the scientific, technical, and administrative conduct and reporting of a project with the Principal Investigator. Each individual named as a Co-Principal Investigator at LMU must meet the same eligibility requirements as a Principal Investigator. There may be more than one Co-Principal Investigator.

**Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI)** is one of several Principal Investigators who is expected to equally share responsibility for leadership of multidisciplinary and other types of “team science” projects that are not optimally served by the single Principal Investigator model.

### III. STATEMENT

#### A. Eligibility and Administrative Duties

Eligibility to serve as a Principal Investigator (PI), a Co-Principal Investigator (CO PI) or one of several Multiple Principal Investigators (MPI) is contingent upon continuation of the employment or other status under which eligibility was initially determined; and compliance with all applicable policies of the University and the funding agency. In the event of an apparent conflict between policies of the University and the funding agency, the more restrictive policy shall be followed. Most funding agencies recognize only one Principal Investigator. In those instances where several names are listed in the proposal, the agency assumes that the first name listed is *primus inter pares* (first between equals).

Whenever the funding agency recognizes only one Principal Investigator, the University will follow suit and direct all administrative correspondence to the first person listed, and that individual shall be identified as Principal Investigator. Additionally, when subcontracts or subgrants are anticipated under a proposed project, the Principal Investigator for the subrecipient institution may be named a Co-Principal Investigator on the LMU proposal.

On certain kinds of collaborative research some funding agencies will recognize Multiple PIs. When this is the case, and in those instances when Multiple PIs are named in a proposal for research support, sponsors require incorporation of a project leadership plan into the proposal. Additionally, one of the Multiple PIs must be designated the Contact Principal Investigator (PI). The Contact PI is the person responsible for relaying communications between the investigators and the funding agency, and for receiving and coordinating all communications with LMU administrative offices and sponsors. The Contact PI is also responsible for ensuring that all internal approvals between administrative offices and the sponsors are procured. The Contact PI will be responsible for: identifying those other investigators who should disclose financial interests; all internal financial and personnel matters; and initiating and signing any correspondence with the funding agency.

### **B. Eligible LMU Employees**

The following categories of LMU employees are eligible to serve as a Principal Investigator, Co-PI, or Multiple PI as specified:

1. A Full Time Faculty member as defined in the Faculty Handbook. This category includes: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Clinical Faculty, Research Faculty, and Instructor/Senior Instructor.
2. Incumbents holding the position of Director or above at LMU may be on extramurally funded projects conducted under the purview of their respective organizational units.
3. Other academic appointees, and also non-academic personnel, may serve on grants with an exception basis and the approval of the appropriate campus official, as noted in III.C.1, below.
4. Postdoctoral trainees and “fellows” may not normally serve on grants, although, exceptions may be made for postdoctoral trainees who are applying for support for research training and mentored training grants intended to enhance their professional skills and to prepare them for research independence. In no case should the duration of such a proposed grant exceed the period of the traineeship. Faculty advisors or mentors will typically be designated as Principal Investigators for graduate student fellowships awarded as grants. Postdoctoral trainees and “fellows” should not apply for research support intended for independent investigators.

### **C. Exceptions**

Exceptions to the Principal Investigator eligibility requirements for submitting a contract, proposal, or a grant application may be allowed by the appropriate campus officials.

#### **1. Authority to Approve Exceptions**

The following campus officials with administrative responsibility for the unit which will administer the award may approve, by exception, the submission of a contract or grant proposal by appointees in positions other than those noted above in section III.B:

- Senior Vice Presidents
- Vice Presidents
- Deans

#### **2. Requests for Exception**

Exceptions to the general eligibility requirements will be considered upon submission of a request to the appropriate campus official noted in C.1, above. The request must justify the exception in terms of the following criteria:

- That such action is clearly in the best interests of the University;
- That space and facilities can be arranged without detriment to the regular instructional research responsibilities of LMU; and
- That the applicant is an LMU employee, usually appointed at more than 50 percent time, who is able to carry out the responsibilities incumbent upon a Principal Investigator.

The appropriate Department Chair or Supervisor and official with the authority to approve the exception are required. Approval will be documented and accompany the application for funding when the proposal materials are routed for approval in the Office for Research and Sponsored Projects grant management system.