

**Sacramento State**  
**Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development**

<b>Guidelines</b>	Principal Investigator Guidelines (Source: FAQ on ORA website)
<b>Effective Date</b>	May 2015
<b>Updated</b>	December 2017

**Definitions:**

Generally, *Principal Investigators (PIs)* must be full-time, tenure-track faculty members or full-time university administrators. Emeritus and part-time/adjunct faculty are eligible to serve as PIs with approval of their department chair and college dean, typically with either the chair or dean serving as Co-PI on the project, and the concurrence of the Associate Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development. In rare circumstances, full-time University Enterprises, Inc. (UEI) employees may serve as PIs with the approval of UEI and the Associate Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development.

The Principal Investigator (PI) is the individual responsible for the overall fiscal, administrative, and scientific/programmatic conduct of a project. PIs are responsible for day-to-day project management and accept responsibility for carrying out commitments as outlined in the proposal within the time limits and budgetary resources provided, and for complying with University, UEI, and funder policies and procedures related to the administration of funds and submission of narrative and/or technical reports.

A *Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)* is typically recognized by a funding agency as an individual who shares the responsibility for the conduct of a project with the PI, including meeting the reporting requirements. A Co-PI may also be delegated spending authority and other fiscal and management related authority on an award by the Principal Investigator, in accordance with UEI policy.

A *Co-Investigator* is an individual recognized as making a significant contribution scientifically or programmatically to a project, but with limited or no fiscal or operational authority for the project.

Co-PIs or Co-Investigators affiliated with a subrecipient must meet their organizations' PI eligibility criteria and conduct all designated project related activities through their home institution. Consultants do not typically meet the definition of an investigator.

A *Project Director* is a University or UEI staff member active in the administration and/or fiscal management of a sponsored project. Project Directors serve under the direction of a Principal Investigator, and with the concurrence of the appropriate college dean. Except in very rare circumstances, individuals designated as consultants, or those working in a consultant capacity, may not serve as Project Directors or fulfill the role of a Project Director.

**Procedure:**

Any exceptions to the above require the concurrence of the appropriate department chair, college dean, and the Associate Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development. Exceptions for full-time University Enterprises, Inc. (UEI) employees require the approval of UEI and the Associate Vice President.