

Policy on Project Director/Principal Investigator Eligibility
June, 2009

Project Directors and/or Principal Investigators (PD/PIs) on sponsored programs (grants or contracts) have important financial, administrative, and supervisory responsibilities to the University. It is necessary that those who fill these roles have appropriate training, support, and oversight.

The policy of Northeastern University is that only full-time faculty members and designated administrative research positions may routinely serve as Principal Investigators on sponsored programs. Full-time faculty members and research scientists who are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators include only those with titles of:

- Professor
- Research Professor
- Associate Professor
- Associate Research Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Assistant Research Professor

In addition to the above, certain agencies may allow pre-doctoral students and/or post-doctoral research associates to serve as the Principal Investigator of fellowship awards (i.e. Individual National Research Service Awards from NIH). For these applications, graduate students and post-doctoral research associates should work with their graduate advisor and/or faculty mentor to obtain approval from the department chair and appropriate college dean.

Exceptions to this policy may be made with the prior approval of the Vice Provost for Research, who will designate an appropriate structure for administrative support and oversight for any non-faculty Principal Investigators. Requests for exceptions may only be referred to the Vice Provost for Research by the Dean of the College in which an award will be housed.

Further, Northeastern University has traditionally engaged in non-research sponsored projects, which provide benefits to the University and to the community (locally, regionally, nationally, and/or internationally). These projects are typically overseen by Project Directors (generally defined as non-faculty, full-time University employees). For those projects which have long been established at Northeastern University, the current Project Directors are considered to have senior administrative University approval to continue to serve as the Project Director. For new projects, or projects with newly named Project Directors, the Project Director will need approval from their department/unit, college/division, as well as approval from the Vice Provost for Research.