

UNM Eligibility for Principal Investigator Status (Main Campus & Branches)

All externally funded projects conducted at the University of New Mexico are expected to be consistent with the teaching, research, and service missions of the University. All projects are therefore, carried out within departments, centers or institutes, or other administrative units under the direction of a faculty member or comparable professional employee.

By limiting principal investigator/project director status to a limited set of designated individuals and/or job categories, and by procuring appropriate dean and department head approval, the University is assured that the proposed research is consistent with its missions and that the necessary space, equipment, facilities and qualified personnel are available to conduct the proposed project. In all cases, the individual designated as Principal Investigator or Project Director are judged to be qualified to conduct an independent research or other educational project. Per federal rules, PIs/PDs are required to attend Grants Management Program before being a PI or Co-PI on an award and must get recertified every three years thereafter. PIs and Co-PIs can register by going to learning central at <https://learningcentral.health.unm.edu/plateau/user/login.jsp>.

Faculty members automatically eligible to serve as Principal Investigators/Project Directors or Co-PI/Co-PD include:

- All full-time faculty regardless of academic rank
- Research Faculty
- Those possessing a Letter of Academic Title
- Visiting faculty/visiting scientists during the time they are on the University payroll
- Members of the emeritus faculty

Professional staff members normally eligible to serve as Principal Investigators/Project Directors or Co-PI/Co-PD include staff that holds titles typically associated with independent activity, whose appointment is subject to a rigorous review of credentials such as the following

- Full-time, academic non-administrative professionals in classified positions at or above Level 15
- Others (including Post Doctoral Fellows) as designated by the approval of the appropriate academic chair, category III center director or vice president using the PI Eligibility exception form.

Students as Principal Investigators or Co-PI

The Office of the Vice President for Research acknowledges the importance of permitting graduate students (and in rare instances undergraduate students) to lead sponsored projects where

appropriate. There are several sponsors who offer pre-doctoral grants whereby the work is conceived of and carried out entirely by a graduate student. In these cases, a faculty member is identified as a mentor and oversees the project nominally. (examples: NASA: Harriett G. Jenkins Predoctoral Fellowship Program (JFPF), NIH: Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards for Individual Predoctoral Fellowships (F31) to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research, NIH: Predoctoral Training at the Interface of the Behavioral and Biomedical Sciences, DOE: The National Methane Hydrates R&D Program - Graduate Fellowship Program).

To that end, the PI Eligibility exception form may be used at the time of proposal routing to permit the graduate student to have this role. Also, please have the department administrators ensure the graduate student's mentor is identified in the proposal summary area of Cayuse424. The required completed form must be sent to the Pre Award, Main office at least ten (10) working days **before the deadline for submittal of the proposal to the funding agency.**

There are still other sponsors for whom the need for submission and approval from an Authorized Representative of the University is not required. The student may submit these applications directly to the sponsor without coordination with the Pre Award Services, Main Office or a PI eligibility form (examples include: NSF Fellowship, Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships for Achieving Excellence in College and University Teaching). If you have questions related to this contact the Pre Award, Main Office at 277-4186.

Who Usually Cannot Serve as a PI?

Categories of employment normally considered ineligible to serve as Principal Investigator/Project Directors are research assistants and fellows; and visiting and other short-term appointees. In special cases, exceptions may be made. These special cases require completion of the PI Eligibility exception form signed by department chair, dean or category III center director that delineates why an exception should be made and specifies the qualifications of the individual to serve as Principal Investigator/Project Director. These forms need to be sent to the Associate Vice President for Research Administration for a determination. Appeals to negative decisions may be directed to the Vice President for Research.