

McCormick Research Administration – Principal Investigator Eligibility Process

Please refer to the [guidelines at the Office for Sponsored Research \(OSR\)](#) website for additional details.

Why is PI Eligibility Important?

The Principal Investigator (PI) is the lead on sponsored projects and therefore takes direct responsibility for the funded project, which includes the research and reporting. The role of PI is only granted to certain individuals at Northwestern University.

- Tenure-track faculty (full, associate, and assistant professors)
- Nontenure-track research faculty (full, associate, and assistant professors)
- Nontenure-track clinical faculty (full, associate, and assistant professors)
- Instructors
- Adjunct faculty
- Emeritus faculty
- Senior research investigators
- Librarians
- Curators

Some individuals, because of appointment type, who are not allowed to serve as a PI may request PI eligibility on a proposal-by-proposal basis.

Who Needs PI Eligibility Requested?

The following individuals will require permission to serve as a PI:

- Visiting faculty
- Visiting scholars
- Lecturers
- Research Associates (need approval from the Vice President for Research)

Postdoctoral fellows and research assistants (graduate students) may not serve as PIs.

What is the PI Eligibility Request Process?

Please contact your Research Administrator (RA) as soon as you determine that you wish to request PI eligibility.

Provide the following documents to your RA:

- Curriculum Vitae / Resume
- Sponsor guidelines / funding mechanism or program of the proposed project
- Abstract of the proposed project
- Estimated budget and the period of performance of the proposed project

In addition to this, your RA will collect and verify the following:

- Current NU appointment position, if the appointment is paid or not, the appointment period, and any other relevant appointment information
- Justification for why PI eligibility is being requested

When the RA has all necessary documents and information, the RA will first send this PI eligibility request package to the department Chair (or equivalent) for approval. If the Chair approves the request, the RA will then send the Chair's approval and the PI eligibility request package to the McCormick Dean's Office

for the next level of review and approval. If the Dean's Office approves the request, the RA will then send both approvals and the PI eligibility request package to the OSR Director for final review and approval.

The PI eligibility request must be properly documented on the proposal routing form in InfoEd. The final approval from the OSR Director must then be uploaded to InfoEd for record-keeping. The OSR Director's final approval of the PI eligibility request should be complete and uploaded to InfoEd before the record is routed for reviews and approvals.

Note

Please note that approval for principal investigator status is on **a proposal-by-proposal basis**. Additionally, it should be self-evident in a PI status request that an increase in base salary or a new appointment type **is not** contingent upon the success of any proposal.