

Chapter 2 Pre-proposal

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2.1 Statement on Principal Investigator Eligibility

Principal Investigator (PI) refers to an employee of Seton Hall University who is or becomes eligible under this policy to submit a proposal through OGRS for external support for a research, training, or public service project. A PI personally participates in the project to a significant degree and a PI has primary responsibility for the scientific, technical, and administrative conduct and reporting of the project, and assures the project's adherence to relevant policies and regulations. A PI who is the head of a training or public service project or another non-research sponsored program may be known as a Project Director (PD). For the purposes of this handbook, the terms are considered equivalent. The title of Principal Investigator or Project Director identifies the individual responsible for all aspects of the conduct of the project.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) refers to one or more investigators who share responsibility with the Principal Investigator for the scientific, technical, and administrative conduct and reporting of a project. PIs and Co-PIs are often referred to as senior personnel. Each person thus involved in the project shall be considered to be a Co-PI. Primary responsibility and oversight of the project remain with the Principal Investigator.

The PI or PD on a grant awarded to Seton Hall University must be a permanent full-time employee of the university and belong to one of the following categories:

- Full-time faculty, staff or administrator;
- Postdoctoral fellow
- Any other full-time employees of the University;
- Professors Emeriti can be PIs based on the availability of departmental resources and on the approval by the appropriate academic dean.

Eligibility to serve as a PI or Co-PI is contingent upon continuation of the employment or other status under which eligibility was initially determined, and upon compliance with all applicable policies of the University and the funding agency. In the event of a conflict between policies of the University and the funding agency, the more restrictive policy shall be followed.

2.2 Project Development

In the earliest stage of a project, the researcher must develop an idea into a clearly articulated goal that answers the question, "What do you, the researcher, hope to accomplish with the completion of this project?" This overarching goal forms the backdrop for presenting a proposal that can successfully describe a solid and realistic work plan and budget, and provide some assurance to the sponsor that the award will be used to its best potential advantage. In developing the ideas for a project, a PI should be able to provide quick, simple answers to the following questions.

- What will the research accomplish?
- How much will it cost?
- How much time will it take?
- What is the plan for completing the research?
- How will results be evaluated?
- Why should you, rather than someone else, do this project?
- What has been done already in the area of the project?
- What difference will the project make to the institution, the discipline, the students, or other identified categories?

Clearly articulated answers to these questions will greatly assist you and OGRS, OCFR or OGR in identifying appropriate sponsors and programs for your proposal submission.

2.2.1 RFAs and RFPs

Requests for Applications (RFAs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are initiated by sponsors and outline specific initiatives (RFAs) or requests for services (RFPs). RFAs are formal announcements that describe an initiative in a well-defined area and invite researchers in the field to submit a grant application. RFAs are often one-time competitions with a limited number of available awards and a specific dollar amount allocated to each award. RFPs are generally a sponsor's request for bids on a project. The sponsor solicits pricing and/or technical proposals to supply goods or services as specified in the requesting document. The proposal procedures for applying under RFAs and RFPs are often complex and must satisfy very specific requirements. Any resulting award(s) are generally funded by a contract.

2.3. Funding Sources and Databases

Once the basics of a research project have been developed, the next step is to begin identifying appropriate funding sources. Sponsored projects fall within several general categories of funding, such as research, training, curriculum or faculty development, public service, travel awards, fellowships, art exhibitions, and equipment. Sponsors include the federal government, state and local governments, private foundations, international organizations, research institutes, and corporations. The key to obtaining funding for a project is to match the scope of the project with a sponsor's mission and interests.

This process is greatly facilitated by initiating a conversation with OGRS, OCFR or OGA as early in the process and as far ahead of the sponsor's application deadline as possible. Development of an idea into a competitive proposal can require months of effort, with several drafts exchanging between the PI and OGRS/OCFR/OGR. Our ability to assist is greatly facilitated with greater lead-time. It is also important for PI's to be as cognizant of trends and opportunities in their own research area(s) as possible. The later the proposal development process is started, the lower the chance of getting funded.

There are several starting points for identifying potential funding sources. The OGRS website facilitates grant research efforts of the Seton Hall community by providing quick links to some of the most useful databases of funding sources. Your own internet searching using Google or other search engines with key phrases such as "grants for your topic" and the like are a good place to start.

(a) Sponsored Programs Information Network (SPIN)
<http://infoedglobal.com/solutions/spin-global-suite/>

Principal Investigator's Handbook

SPIN is a funding database designed to provide up-to-date information on current national and international government and private funding sources. SPIN currently contains information from more than 2,500 different sponsors, which together offer thousands of funding opportunities.

(b) Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/>

Grants.gov allows the searcher to find and electronically apply for competitive grant opportunities from federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for thousands of grant programs offered by 26 federal grant-making agencies and departments.

(d) Candid. <http://candid.org/>

Candid is a new website for The Foundation Center, which is an independent nonprofit information clearinghouse established in 1956. The center's mission is to foster public understanding of the foundation field by collecting, organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects. The audiences that call on the Center's resources include grant seekers, grant makers, researchers, policy makers, the media, and the general public.