Principal Investigator Eligibility Policy

I. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the eligibility requirements and qualifications of a Principal Investigator (PI) on a sponsored project at Brandeis University. The term Principal Investigator (PI) is intended to include by reference throughout this policy the role of Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI).

II. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all sponsored projects. It must be understood by all Principal Investigators, Department and Grant Administrators, Administrative Heads, Deans, and Office of Research Administration (ORA).

III. Key Definitions

Principal Investigator (PI) is an individual with a formal affiliation with Brandeis, normally an employee, who is or becomes eligible under this Policy to submit a proposal for extramural support for a research, training, or other sponsored project, who personally participates in the project to a significant degree, and who has primary responsibility for the scientific, technical, and administrative conduct and reporting of the project, including financial matters. A Principal Investigator who is the head of a training or other sponsored project may be known as a Project Director.

IV. Statement of Policy

It is the policy of Brandeis University that the Principal Investigator (PI) is the individual responsible for the conduct of the scientific/programmatic, administrative and financial aspects of a sponsored program, and that only eligible Brandeis faculty, staff, and trainees and appointees (when appropriate) may serve as the PI on externally funded research, training, or other sponsored projects.
PI eligibility is conferred automatically by certain faculty and staff titles. See Appendix I for the current list of titles that automatically confer PI eligibility. Eligibility criteria for emeritus faculty can be found at http://www.brandeis.edu/ora/policies/retiredfaculty.html.

PI eligibility may also be conferred on an individual basis to a person affiliated with Brandeis, normally an employee or trainee (in the case of funding opportunities in which the trainee is required to be named as PI), who is certified by their administrative head (dean or above) in writing as qualified to be an independent investigator, meaning they have the technical competence and substantive capabilities (scientific/programmatic and administrative) to carry out the project, an academic/professional background (e.g., terminal degree, specific experience/expertise, publication record) sufficient to undertake independent leadership of a sponsored project, and access to sufficient resources, including but not limited to space, equipment, and unit administrative support. PI eligibility under this procedure is conferred on a case-by-case basis, and sets no precedent for future projects, unless ongoing eligibility is specifically approved by the administrative head. Any such ongoing eligibility may be revoked by the administrative head at any time.

V. Procedures

A. General

PI eligibility is conferred in one of two ways. The first is that it is automatically conferred by the specific faculty and staff titles listed in Appendix I of this policy. In this circumstance, verification of PI eligibility is the responsibility of the Department/Unit Head, as evidenced by his/her signature on the Proposal Approval Form, which specifies the PI’s employment type and title.

If PI eligibility is not conferred automatically by title, it may be conferred by individual certification and approval of PI status by the applicable Division Head (Dean or Provost), as evidenced by his/her signature on Attachment A of the Project Approval Form.

It is the responsibility of the Office of Research Administration to review all Project Approval Forms for appropriate signatory verification of PI eligibility.

B. Fellowships and Training Opportunities

Trainees (graduate students and post-doctoral fellows) may be eligible to be PIs on fellowship and training programs when that designation is required by the Funding Agency in a Funding Opportunity Announcement and a PI-eligible faculty or staff person is identified as their sponsor/mentor. In this circumstance, a trainee’s PI eligibility is conferred and verified by the applicable Department/Unit Head’s signature on the Proposal Approval Form. It is not necessary to complete Attachment A and the Division
Head’s certification is not required. The trainee PI’s sponsor/mentor should be listed on Attachment B, Key Personnel, of the Project Approval Form.

C. Need for Additional Oversight

If a PI is not an employee of Brandeis or a trainee eligible to be a PI on a fellowship or training program, the PI’s Department/Unit Head shall establish an oversight plan for additional monitoring of the programmatic and administrative conduct of the project.