

# Simmons UNIVERSITY

**Policy name:** Simmons University Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility

**Administrator & Offices Responsible for Policy Monitoring and Update:** Sponsored Programs personnel within the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE)

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2025

## Policy Scope

This policy outlines eligibility criteria for individuals to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on externally funded sponsored projects at Simmons University. It applies to all faculty, staff, students, and affiliates who seek or are named as PIs or Co-PIs on proposals submitted through the University.

The intended users of this policy include the Provost's Office, Sponsored Programs personnel within the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE), the Office of Advancement, academic leadership, and all individuals participating in externally funded research, teaching, or service activities.

## Policy Purpose

This policy ensures consistent, transparent guidelines regarding who may serve as a PI or Co-PI, and under what conditions, for the preparation, submission, management, and reporting of externally funded sponsored programs. The policy is designed to uphold compliance with funder requirements and institutional standards while encouraging inclusive access to externally funded research and scholarship.

## Definitions

**Principal Investigator (PI):** The individual with overall responsibility and accountability for the preparation of a proposal, the conduct of the sponsored activity, fiscal management, and compliance with all applicable regulations, terms, and conditions of the award.

**Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI):** An individual who shares responsibility for the sponsored project and is named in the proposal and award.

## Responsibilities and Procedures

### A. PI Eligibility Criteria

PI (or Co-PI) status is automatically conferred to all full-time Simmons faculty and staff members.

Other individuals may be granted PI (or Co-PI) eligibility under the following conditions:

1. **Adjunct faculty** may be granted temporary PI status with approval from the External Funding Priorities Committee, based on a recommendation from the relevant academic dean and department chair. Approval is project-specific and must be documented at the time of proposal routing. The adjunct's department must demonstrate that sufficient institutional support is in place to ensure project continuity and compliance for the duration of the grant.
2. **Part-time staff** may be granted temporary PI status with approval from the External Funding Priorities Committee, based on a recommendation from the relevant supervisor. Approval is project-specific and must be documented at the time of proposal routing.
3. **Graduate students**, and in rare cases, **undergraduate students**, may be approved by exception to serve as a PI or Co-PI only if the project is explicitly structured to support the student's education or independent research (e.g., thesis or fellowship awards). A faculty sponsor must be named.
4. PI status is contingent upon eligibility under the funding agency's requirements.
5. All PIs and Co-PIs must be employees of Simmons University at the time of award activation.
6. Simmons University reserves the right to decline an award or designate an alternative PI as necessary.

### B. Required Conditions for PI Approval

Individuals approved to serve as PI (or Co-PI) under this policy must meet the following conditions:

- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training through CITI.
- Submit and maintain current disclosures in the University's Conflict of Interest and Commitment disclosure system through InfoReady.
- Confirm understanding and adherence to applicable University policies, including the Simmons Employee Handbook.

## **C. PI Responsibilities**

PIs (and Co-PIs) are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with applicable federal, state, sponsor, and University regulations.
- Securing required institutional approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC, IBC).
- Ensuring all project personnel, including subrecipients, are appropriately trained and compliant.
- Oversight of financial management in collaboration with CFE, Advancement, and the Finance Office.
- Timely submission of technical and financial reports.

**Related Policies:** Policy on Securing Internal Approvals for External Funding Proposals