Planning to be a principal investigator?  
Here’s what you need to know.

Your role as principal investigator (PI) starts when you notify the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (RESP) that you plan to submit a proposal and continues through submission of the final project report. Below is some important information that will help you be successful as you plan and prepare your proposal, accept an award, manage the project programmatically and financially, and bring the project to a successful conclusion.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION

• There may be several sets of instructions applicable to your proposal. Read and understand all of them, including the request for proposals (RFP).
• Work with RESP and/or unit administrative staff to develop proposals and budgets with enough lead time (10 working days minimum) for campus review and approval and to meet the funder’s submission deadline.
• Propose only those objectives that are reasonable and attainable.
• Determine that the level of effort required can be met relative to your other commitments.
• Seek and maintain approvals for human subjects (Institutional Review Board (IRB)), animal use (Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC)), bio-safety (Institutional Biohazards Committee (IBC)) and provide any required reports.
• Submit required financial disclosure forms and cooperate in the review and management of any potential or real conflict of interest.
• Verify that collaborations you propose are genuine and have been carefully reviewed and approved by the stated collaborators.
• Disclose to RESP international exchanges of information, items and/or activities.
• Recognize that your electronic approval and signature on the campus routing form demonstrate that you will accept responsibility for project performance and reports if an award is made.
• Be available in person at the time of submission to do a final review of all proposal documents.
• Meet RESP and sponsor deadlines.

AWARD ACCEPTANCE

• Carefully review and understand all award documents including additional terms and conditions.
• Confirm project deliverables and budget are consistent with proposal and are still feasible.
• Identify and calendar significant dates and activities such as report due dates, completion of milestones, and requirements for award renewal.
• Identify any restrictions on expenditures and/or project changes.
• Except where PI acknowledgment is required, do not sign an award or any legally-binding agreement including leases, facility rentals, independent contractor agreements or other agreements that invoke risk or liability to the Foundation. RESP will sign as authorized officials for the Foundation.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Oversee conduct of the project, including work of collaborators and sub-recipients.
- Ensure that project personnel have training and certification required by the Foundation, the University, federal or state regulations, or by the sponsor.
- Maintain program-related records.
- Submit all required program report with copies to RESP Analyst.
- Report inventions to RESP.
- Prepare and submit results for publication.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

- Determine that all expenditures charged to the award are reasonable, allowable and allocable to the project.
- Monitor efforts to make sure they match the effort committed to when the award was accepted.
- Notify your RESP analyst if key personnel effort changes by more than 25%.
- Certify your effort and return forms by deadline indicated on transmittal memo. When required, certify efforts of other project personnel.
- Review project expenditures regularly and immediately notify RESP of any errors or discrepancies.
- Secure documentation of cost share and transmit to RESP Analyst.
- Review and approve vendor invoices, confirming receipt of goods and services.
- Review and approve other project changes, some of which may require sponsor approval.
- Forward sponsor approvals to RESP Analyst.

AWARD CLOSEOUT

Three months prior to award expiration

- Review the project’s financial status.
- Assure that sub-recipients have submitted or will submit all required deliverables, reports and invoices.
- Plan for updates and changes to payroll, either renewal or award expiration; prepare Personnel Action Forms (PAFs) as appropriate.
- Request a no-cost time extension when allowable and appropriate.

At award expiration

- Submit final report(s) by sponsor due date with copy to RESP Analyst.
- Submit any required final invention report.
- Assist RESP analyst as needed to prepare final financial report.
- Close out IRB, IACUC and IBC protocols/requirements.
- Retain the project records for at least three years (or longer if required by sponsor) after the submission of the final report (if any) or award termination.

Congratulations on assuming this important role.
RESP is here to assist you and wishes you great success as a PI.

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