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Eligibility to Apply for and Hold Research Funding Policy

Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Research Services Office (RSO)
Office of Accountability:	Office of the Vice-President (Research)
Approving Authority:	Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Vice-President (Research)

Overview

The University acknowledges the importance of research funding to support many forms of research and scholarly activity and will ensure that the University's roles and responsibilities regarding research administration are followed.

The **principal applicant** is the individual who is eligible to apply for research funding at the University. When funding has been received, it is established in the financial system as a **project**. The **project holder** is the individual who is accountable for the appropriate expenditure of the funding placed in a project.

The principal applicant and the project holder are established in compliance with the terms and conditions of the sponsor(s), the Collective Agreement between the University and the AASUA and University policies and procedures.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define which categories of individuals are eligible to apply for research funding as principal applicant and serve as project holder at the University.

Definitions

A definitions table as attached establishes the terms used in this policy and any unique rules of interpretation that apply.

Scope

This policy applies to all academic, support and excluded staff, postdoctoral fellows, and academic colleagues as outlined and defined in the *Recruitment Policy (Appendix A and Appendix B: Definitions and Categories)*.

Policy Statement

1. Principal applicants and project holders must meet sponsor eligibility requirements.
2. It is a condition of eligibility that, at the time of application, an individual will have a term of appointment spanning the period of funding, or a signed commitment for a term of employment spanning the period of funding.
3. The following categories are eligible to serve as both principal applicants and project holders:
    a. Academic Faculty Members appointed under *Schedule A of the Collective Agreement*; and
    b. Academic Administrators (Excluded), who will be appointed or re-appointed as Academic Faculty Members on the conclusion of their term.
4. If research responsibilities are either: i.) included in the individual's position description; or ii) expressly approved in writing by the **Senior Appointing Officer**, the following categories may be eligible to serve as principal applicants and, potentially, as project holders:
    a. Faculty Service Officers appointed under Schedule B of the Collective Agreement;
    b. Librarians appointed under Schedule C of the Collective Agreement;
    c. Executive Members (Excluded);
    d. Academic Administrators (Excluded) who will be appointed or re-appointed as a Librarian or Faculty Service Officer upon the conclusion of their term;
    e. Special Continuing Academic Colleagues;
    f. Academic Teaching Staff Members appointed under Schedule D of the Collective Agreement;
    g. Trust Research Academic Staff Members (including Research Associates) appointed under Schedule E of the Collective Agreement;
    h. Postdoctoral Fellows;
    i. Academic Affiliates (Secondees to the University);

j. Adjunct Academic Colleagues; and

k. Clinical Academic Colleagues.

5. Professors Emeriti may be eligible to serve as principal applicants and, potentially, as project holders, if approved in writing by the Dean.

6. Faculties will advise the RSO of eligibility at the time of appointment and of any subsequent changes for individuals determined to be eligible pursuant to Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy (per the *Approval and Notice Template*).

7. **Graduate Students** are eligible to apply for **stipend awards**, but may not serve as project holders, unless required by the sponsor.

8. Regardless of eligibility:

    a. Conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment will be disclosed and managed in accordance with University policy and procedures;

    b. In no instance will an individual hold any portion of project funds from which they derive any personal benefit or any portion of their salary; and

    c. At the discretion of the Dean, non-employees eligible to serve as project holders will require that the Department Chair co-sign on formal reporting relationship matters concerning, but not limited to, terms of employment, performance reviews, compensation, benefits, workload issues and working conditions. Day-to-day supervision in an employment setting is the sole responsibility of the non-employee project holder in order to facilitate the completion of project-related tasks.

9. If an alternate project holder is designated for all, or part of a project for any reason (which may include but is not limited to: sponsor requirements, ineligibility, University requirements or conflict of interest) such designation will be approved by the alternate project holder's Department Chair and Dean.

10. Principal applicants and project holders must immediately report to the RSO any change in their eligibility, which could result in non-compliance with the sponsor's requirements or University policy and procedures. The Research Services Office will communicate with the sponsor, as required.

Definitions

Any definitions listed here apply to this policy document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. For clarity, defined terms listed here include grammatical variations thereof.	
Category	Category of appointment as defined in the *Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic Colleagues and Excluded Academic Staff*.

Graduate Student	A student registered in a thesis or course-based program in the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies.
Principal Applicant	A researcher who is primarily responsible for the intellectual contribution to the research proposal, application, agreement, contract or award, and is responsible for the overall direction of research activities of the research project. May also be referred to as the principal investigator.
Project	Funding with a finite life span. Research funding at the University is classified in the financial system as a project for reporting purposes in order to further identify related financial transactions.
Project Holder	The individual who is accountable, according to University policy, for the receipt of the project funding and appropriate expenditure of this funding ensuring that it is for University operations in compliance with the terms and conditions of the sponsor(s) and University policies and procedures.
Senior Appointing Officer	The Board Chair, for the President; The President, for Vice-Presidents; Vice-President, for Academic Administrators (Excluded); and The Dean or the Chief Librarian, for all other categories.
Sponsor	A company, agency or individual paying for or requesting the research.
Stipend Awards	Academic financial support//stipends, commonly referred to as scholarships and fellowships that are provided to, or on behalf of, degree candidates to pay for educational expenses.

Parent Policy Suite

- Eligibility to Apply for and Hold Research Funding Policy

Related Policy Documents

- Academic Colleagues Policy
- Adjunct Academic Colleagues Procedure
- Clinical Academic Colleagues Procedure
- Conflict of Interest and Commitment, and Institutional Conflict Policy ("Conflict Policy")
- Emeritus Policy
- Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic Colleagues and Excluded Academic Staff

Related Links

- Collective Agreements + Handbooks (University of Alberta)
- Eligibility to Apply For and Hold Research Funding Policy Approval and Notice Template

History

- April 5, 2006 Approved
- January 13, 2021 Approved
- September 14, 2025 Editorial amendment. Formatting, office name and links

For questions surrounding policy document interpretation or implementation, please contact the Office of Administrative Responsibility.

The official version of this document may be obtained from https://www.ualberta.ca/policies-procedures/index.html