Principal and Other Investigator Status Guidelines and Process

Vice President for Research
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MIT policy defines Investigators as those individuals who are ***independently responsible*** for the design, conduct and reporting of research. The Principal Investigator (PI) is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the project. Faculty, Senior Research Scientists/ Engineers/ Associates and Principal Research Scientists/Engineers/Associates are given PI status in accordance with MIT Policies and Procedures.

PI, Co-PI and Investigator status for research scientists/engineers/associates, instructors, postdoctoral scholars, visiting scientists/engineers or others not grant PI status by virtue of their appointment requires the approval of the Department Head/Lab Director and the Vice President for Research. Requests are considered by the Vice President for Research on a case-by-case basis in a limited set of circumstances. Requests are generally made to provide special career or professional development opportunities for junior researchers or because the researcher's unique qualifications make the individual essential to the project.

Guidelines

For requests for PI status, they must generally meet the following guidelines to be considered:

- The project must be small in scope and dollars (generally less than $200,000 per year for 2 years).

- The project provides minimal salary coverage for the PI (generally less than ¼ year). The only exceptions are awards designated for career development (i.e. NIH K-99), which might require a larger commitment of effort and/or salary coverage.

- The project cannot be led by anyone else at MIT.

- The project must fit in with the overall research program of the individual's faculty supervisor or must be deemed critical to the unit by the department head and/or laboratory director. The unit must agree to provide the space.

- The project must specify a senior faculty member who agrees to provide oversight to the research scientist/engineer/associate, postdoctoral scholar, instructor or visiting scientist/engineer. Supervision of postdoctoral scholars, graduate assistants and undergraduate student conducting research will be done in accordance with departmental policies.

For Co-PI and Investigator status (co-investigator), the individual must play an *essential role* in the project under the supervision of the PI. The PI must agree that the proposed investigator is key to the project and must be willing to provide the resources and the oversight and supervision for their work.

Special situations where the VPR would consider PI or Co-PI status (the above criteria still apply):

1. **Research Scientists/Engineers/Associates, Instructors/Lecturers and Postdoctoral Associates** may serve as PI on small proposals for observation time, facility use, short term exploratory research or as part of a larger umbrella proposal. They may also serve as a PI in cases where there are specialized programs designed for or of benefit to postdoctoral scholars or other early career researchers. In every case a senior faculty member is required to commit to provide the necessary space and resources for the project as well as to provide mentoring and supervision for the staff member service as a PI or Co-PI.

2. **Special Fellows, Clinical Investigators or Non-faculty Young Investigators** may receive PI status. This would usually be part of the arrangements at the time of offer.

3. **Non-scientist/engineer staff** involved in educational, service, information technology and other projects. Typically these individuals would not need PI status but exceptions could be considered for significant leadership or in cases where an umbrella grant requires the project leaders to act as PI. These projects are usually adjunct to the staff member's primary responsibility.

4. **Non MIT researchers,** typically medical school or hospital employees. These must be carefully limited to those who have an essential role in an MIT project. Usually investigator or Co-PI status with an MIT PI is preferable.

Process

Requests for PI/Co-PI or Investigator status for VPR units should be made to the Vice President for Research by the Department Head or Lab Center Director (or their representative) by e-mail to **vprrequests@mit.edu (mailto:vprrequests@mit.edu).** (**vprrequests@mit.edu (mailto:vprrequests@mit.edu)** is an e-mail list that goes to the VPR and her key staff to insure the request is received and responded to.)

Requests for PI/Co-PI or Investigator status should include the following information:

- Researcher's Name and position
- Dept./Division Head or Lab Director Endorsement
- Rationale for why PI status is needed/warranted and the why the work the individual will perform is critical to the project

- Description of the career trajectory or the benefit to the professional development of the researcher (if relevant)
- A statement that the conditions for space, resources and oversight have been met
- Proposal Information
  - Title
  - Sponsor
  - Budget (needed for PI status only)
  - Due Date
  - One Budget and Page Abstract (if available) (needed for PI status only)
- Researcher's CV, biosketch or resume

Requests should be made in as far in advance as possible to give adequate time for consideration and so that proposals are not late to RAS. The VPR staff will not approve proposals that include investigators that do not have the appropriate PI or investigator status.

▸ **Policies and Procedures for VPR Units (/research-policies-and-procedures/policies-and-procedures-vpr-units)**

▸ **Proposal Preparation and Review (/research-policies-and-procedures/proposal-preparation-and-review-0)**

● **Guidelines for Fellowship Proposals - Proposing fellowship Activities (/research-policies-and-procedures/proposal-preparation-and-review/guidelines-fellowship-proposals-0)**

● **Principal and Other Investigator Status Guidelines and Process (/research-policies-and-procedures/proposal-preparation-and-review/principal-and-other-investigator-0)**

● **Policy on Late Submission of Proposals (/research-policies-and-procedures/proposal-preparation-and-review/policy-late-submission-proposals-0)**

▸ **Federal Lobbying Regulations (/research-policies-and-procedures/federal-lobbying-regulations)**

▸ **Graduate and Post-Doctoral Fellowships (/research-policies-and-procedures/graduate-and-post-doctoral-fellowships)**

▸ **Service Center Policy (/research-policies-and-procedures/service-center-policy)**