

PI Article: Roles on Sponsored Research Proposals and Awards

It is important to understand the different roles of individuals who contribute towards sponsored research. These are not only the key personnel who provide measurable effort and can be charged directly to grants, but also individuals that provide administrative support during the pre and post award process.

Although it may differ by sponsor, a common definition for senior and key personnel is provided by the NIH as the “program director/principal investigator (PD/PI) and other individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they request salaries or compensation.”

Individuals in the following roles often have their time charged directly to sponsored awards:

- **Principal Investigator (PI):** the individual who is named as the recipient of the award on behalf of Georgia Tech and is the primary accountable party to the sponsor. The PI has scientific, operational, and fiscal responsibility for the award and must provide work deliverables and be in compliance with sponsor, institution, and state of Georgia requirements.
- **Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI):** this individual works alongside the PI as a co-leader for the award. They contribute to the technical direction and execution of the award and may be responsible for overseeing a specific component or aim of the award.
- **Co-Investigator (Co-I):** this individual provides substantive intellectual contributions to the award. They are a subject matter expert who may lead specific tasks or aims, and who has responsibility for certain deliverables. They do not hold the same level of fiscal or operational responsibility as a PI.
- **Other Individuals:**
 - Faculty associates and research scientists: academic staff members designated to work closely with the PI and research team on sponsored awards.
 - Graduate research assistants (GRAs): graduate students employed to work on sponsored research awards.
 - Postdoctoral researchers (Postdocs): individuals who have completed their doctoral degree and work on research awards prior to assuming full-time, professional positions.
 - Consultants: non-employees who provide professional services or advice for a fee.

Roles below support sponsored activity and may be partially funded through Indirect Cost Recoveries (F&A).

- **Department Chairs:** support researchers through mechanisms such as providing cost share, assigning space, and the provision of financial support and time available to conduct research.
- **Grant Managers:** support research activity at the local levels, assisting PIs and other key personnel with operational and fiscal responsibilities.
- **Central Pre-Award Research Administrator:** provides support in areas such as proposal preparation and submission coordination, budget development, interpretation of sponsor guidelines, and contract negotiation.
- **Central Post-Award Research Administrator:** provides support in areas such as award setup, invoicing, financial reporting, effort management, and financial close-out.

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