Guidance: PI Status for Non NIU Employees

Responsible Office(s): Office of the Vice President for Research, Sponsored Programs Administration

Responsible Officer (title only): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

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Purpose

To accommodate situations when an individual without regular NIU Principal Investigator (PI) status seeks to submit a sponsored award through Northern Illinois University and it is advantageous for the university for them to do so.

Reason for this Guidance

The university relies extensively on those serving as Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators to successfully manage sponsored awards. Because of this, it is essential that individuals serving in these capacities have both the necessary professional credentials to conduct the scope of work and grants experience to manage the administrative responsibilities inherent with receiving sponsored funding.

Guidance

Non NIU employees seeking to submit a sponsored award through Northern Illinois University must request PI Status for each proposal they plan to submit. An individual is considered a NIU employee if they have an active Employee ID (EMPID).

The Host Department, College, and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships evaluates and approves requests for PI Status via the PI Status Form. The Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships provides final approval of all requests.

Individuals receiving PI Status will be asked to identify another *NIU regular employe*e to serve as an internal Co-PI of record. The internal Co-PI provides a back up to approve expenses, ensure access to university systems and that all award reporting requirements are met. Generally, this is a department chair, but at minimum, must be another tenure or tenure track NIU faculty (or equivalent for nonacademic departments). In no way does this relieve the PI of their responsibility for the scope of work and all financial and compliance requirements as part of the award.

 The expectation is that PI Status is in place before the PI contacts Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) to initiate work on a proposal. Delays in proposal submission or award acceptance can occur when individuals do not follow this guidance.

Pre-Award

Individuals seeking PI status through NIU should initiate the PI Status Form as soon as possible to provide all parties ample time to review the request. In general, the SPA Pre-Award Team will not begin work on the proposal until all approvals are in place. Any exception will require approval by the Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs.

Award Acceptance

The SPA Award Acceptance Team will confirm that all NIU PI and Co-PIs named in the proposal and sponsor notice of award hold active NIU appointments before submitting the award for account set up in PeopleSoft. If an appointment does not exist, the Team will place the award in Award Hold status pending confirmation that the appropriate appointment or volunteer agreement is in place.

This process applies to the review and approval of advance accounts as well.

Award Management

The Host Department is responsible for ensuring the PI has necessary access to university systems, resources, and facilities to conduct the scope of work and manage the award.

Grant accounts may need to be set up under the name of the internal Co-PI in PeopleSoft FMS for PIs who do not have an active appointment with the University. When it is not possible to set the grant account up under the sponsor approved PI, the internal Co-PI will be identified as PI of record on the grant account in FMS. This is no way relieves the PI of their responsibility for the scope of work and meeting all financial and compliance requirements as part of the award.