Special PI Approval Process

USF has detailed guidelines regarding who can serve as a principal investigator for a proposal and award. Eligibility is generally limited to faculty positions (see comprehensive list here). However, some positions can serve as PI with advance approval.

The university has an established process to request this approval. CFS also has a detailed process that a special PI must follow in order to request an exception and be approved to serve as PI. The process is detailed below. This special PI approval must be submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposal deadline.

After funding, there are also steps that the special PI and their mentor must follow throughout the duration of the project

Guidelines to Determine the Eligibility of a Principal Investigator

Essential to a university's success as a research institution is the collective, creative ability of its Principal Investigators to define new problems and avenues of research, with the goal of creating and sharing new knowledge. The ability of Principal Investigators to secure external funding to support their research is essential to achieve this success.

At the University of South Florida, the management of research projects is a collective responsibility. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the appropriate scientific conduct and overall management of a sponsored project. The University is responsible for providing an environment that fosters creativity and innovation within an infrastructure for the administrative and financial oversight required to manage externally funded programs.

Submission of a grant or contract to an agency or organization by the University is a commitment for the term of a funded award for the space and facilities with which to complete the research. For this reason, a principal investigator must be an individual whom the University is willing to commit these resources as a member of the USF Community. It is essential, therefore, that USF identify which ranks and appointments are entitled to the privilege of serving as a Principal Investigator.

To assist in the identification of the specific ranks and appointments which are entitled to this privilege, the following guidelines have been established to determine who can serve as a Principal Investigator:

All tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty, researchers and scholars (see comprehensive list of classifications below) may serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) on a proposal for external funding.

Post-doctoral Scholars and adjunct faculty may serve as Co-principal Investigators (Co-PI) on sponsored projects, but may not serve in the role of PI unless pre-approved by Sponsored Research in collaboration with the appropriate responsible officer (College and/or Campus Dean, Director, or Vice President). Pre-approval is required for each proposal.

A request for exception to the guidelines must be submitted in writing to the Director of Sponsored Research by the appropriate Department Chair, signed by the College and/Campus Dean (or designee), and accompanied by the appropriate biosketch (NIH or NSF format) no later than two weeks before the proposal deadline.

USF currently has no eligibility requirements for Co-PI's, provided a PI-eligible PI in place, and the Co-PI meets eligibility requirements imposed by the sponsor.

Principal Investigator Eligibility Quick Guide

The following positions are authorized to be PI, without seeking additional pre-approval.

Faculty in Tenure Accruing Tracks

- Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor
- Assistant Curator, Associate Curator, Curator
- Assistant Librarian, Associate Librarian, Instructor Librarian

Faculty in Non-Tenure Accruing Tracks

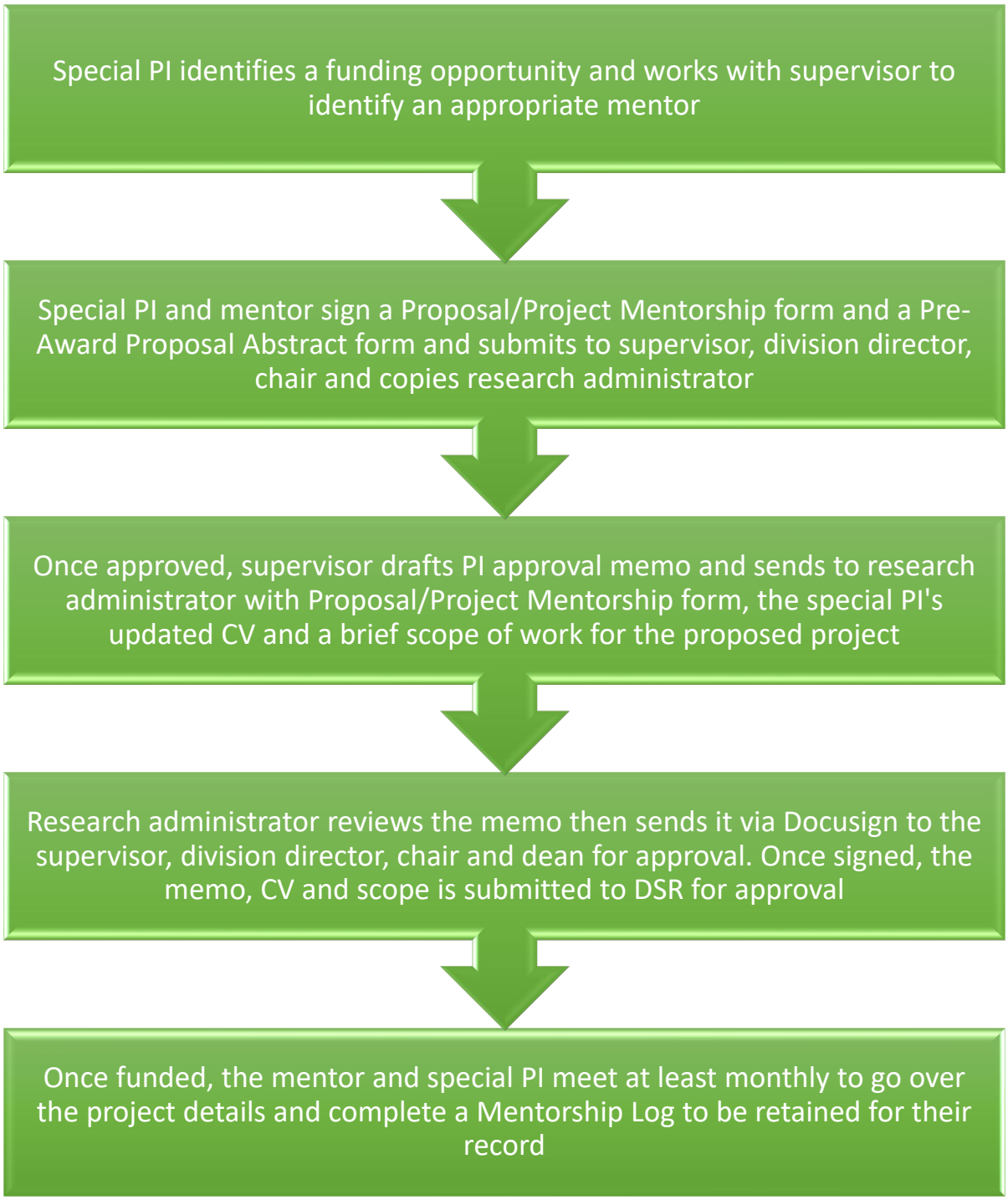
- Assistant Scientist, Associate Scientist, Scientist
- Assistant Scholar, Associate Scholar, Scholar
- Assistant Engineer, Associate Engineer, Engineer
- Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, Research Professor
- Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Professor
- Assistant , Associate, Scholar/Scientist/Engineer
- Instructor
- Research Scientist Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Clinician Educator Assistant, Associate or Professor
- Scientific Educator Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Collaborative Research Scientist Assistant, Associate, or Professor

The following positions require Sponsored Research approval before PI authorization, which is conditional on the support of the Dean or delegate.

- Assistant In, Associate In, Senior Associate In
- Research Associate
- Post-doctoral Scholars
- Graduate Students
- Emeritus Professor
- Retired Faculty
- Adjunct Assistant , Associate, or Professor
- Clinical Affiliate Assistant, Associate, or Professor
- Staff/Administration/Executive Services

Department of Child & Family Studies

CFS Special PI approval/Mentor Process Flowchart



Department of Child and Family Studies

Special PI Approval/Mentorship Process

Background: USF has a policy that requires pre-approval for anyone who would not normally qualify to be a principal investigator to serve as PI. That policy can be found here: https://www.usf.edu/research-innovation/documents/about-usfri/pi-eligibility.pdf

Process:

1. Special PI identifies a funding opportunity
2. Special PI works with supervisor to identify a mentor
3. Special PI and mentor sign a Proposal/Project Mentorship form
4. Special PI completes a Pre-Award Proposal Abstract form and submits to their supervisor, division director, chair and research administrator
5. Once the form is approved, supervisor drafts a PI approval memo (see research administrator for template)
6. The memo is submitted to the research administrator along with a copy of the special PI's updated CV and a brief scope of work for the project
7. The memo is initialed via Docusign by the supervisor, division director, chair and dean
8. Once approved, the memo, CV and scope is submitted to sponsored research for approval
9. If the project is funded, the mentor and special PI meet at a minimum monthly to go over the project details and complete a Mentorship Log to be retained for their records

UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
College of Behavioral & Community Sciences
Child & Family Studies

To: Eric Kern, Director, Sponsored Research

Via: Julie Serovich, Dean, College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

From: Mario Hernandez, Chair, Department of Child and Family Studies
SUPERVISOR NAME, SUPERVISOR TITLE, for Dr. Hernandez

Date: DATE

Re: Approval for PI NAME as PI for "PROJECT TITLE"

PI NAME has been a PI TITLE in the Department of Child and Family Studies since HIRE DATE. We request approval for PI NAME to assume the role of Principal Investigator for this project sponsored by SPONSOR NAME.

MENTOR NAME, an experienced researcher who has been PI of multiple successful projects, will serve as Mentor/co-PI for this project. As mentor, MENTOR NAME, agrees to have meetings at least monthly to review budget, effort, deliverables, data, and any products being produced. A log from each meeting must be maintained and a Mentoring Form (sample attached) signed by both PI and Mentor for each meeting as a record of mentorship.

PI NAME has attended the CFS professional Development Contracts and Grants course and completed IRB training. PI NAME has enrolled/completed the supervisors certificate training. Attached to this memo is the PI's up-to-date CV and a brief scope of work for the project.

In their current position, PI NAME has extensive and highly successful experience in serving as team leader with numerous projects. This experience lends to successfully completing the deliverables in a timely and professional manner ADJUST WITH RELEVELANT EXPERIENCE. It is for these reasons that we request approval to appoint PI NAME as PI for this project.

Thank you for considering this request.

CFS Proposal/Project Mentorship form

Special PI/Mentee Name

Mentor Name

Project/Proposal Title:

Sponsor

Project or Proposal Project (funded)

Special PI/Mentee agrees to:

1. **For proposals, have the mentor review the complete proposal prior to submission to DSR/the sponsor**
2. **For projects, meet at a minimum of monthly with mentor to review the status of the project and document the meetings using the Project Mentorship form located on the CFS Employee Resources page**
3. **Review and comply with PI roles and responsibilities as defined by Sponsored Research for PI found here: https://www.usf.edu/research-innovation/documents/about-usfri/roles-responsibilities.pdf**
4. **Follow the CFS mentorship guidelines found here: https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/cfs/documents/cfs-guidelines-mentoring.pdf**
5. **Update mentor with any issues, problems, findings, etc. as soon as they arise.**

Mentor agrees to:

1. **For proposals, review the proposal as it is developed and complete a final review of the entire proposal prior to submission to DSR/the sponsor**
2. **For projects, meet at a minimum of monthly with mentee to review the status of the project and address any issues that arise from the review**
3. **Review and comply with co-PI roles and responsibilities as defined by Sponsored Research for PI found here: https://www.usf.edu/research-innovation/documents/about-usfri/roles-responsibilities.pdf**
4. **Follow the CFS mentorship guidelines found here: https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/cfs/documents/cfs-guidelines-mentoring.pdf**
5. **Update division director with any issues, problems, findings, etc. as soon as they arise**
6. **Any financial consequences resulting from this project may be offset using the mentor's RIA and/or Auxiliary funds**

_____

Special PI/mentee signature/Date

Division director initials: _____

_____

Mentor signature/Date

Division director initials: _____

Complete and submit this form along with the draft of the PI Approval Memo to your research administrator for routing

CFS Project Mentorship Log

Special PI/Mentee Name
Mentor Name
Project Title:
Month/Year

Project progress

Budget/effort and reconciliation review

Deadlines/deliverables

Products/data usage/ dissemination

Timeline discussion