

Research and Sponsored Projects Manual (RSP)

RSP 107: Lead Unit Identification and Responsibilities

Effective: 9/8/2004

Revised: 11/01/2024

Purpose

To define how the lead unit assigned to a sponsored project is identified and outline the responsibilities of that lead unit

Sources

Office of the Provost of the University

Knowledge Enterprise (KE)

Office for Research and Sponsored Projects Administration (ORSPA)

Policy

Identification of lead unit

The “lead” unit is the academic unit to which the tenured or tenure-eligible principal investigator (PI) is assigned. This unit is designated on the faculty or academic professional’s Notice of Appointment or Joint Appointment. The lead unit for a nonacademic university employee serving as PI is the home department designated on his or her Hiring Process Report (HPR).

When it is determined that a sponsored project is better served by an alternate unit, including an [approved ASU center or institute](#), the designation of the alternative lead unit must be approved by the authorizing officials of the alternative lead unit, all units participate on the sponsored project, and all units are designated on the PI’s official appointment or hiring records.

Centers and institutes may be designated by the PI as an alternate lead unit when a sponsored project spans more than one disciplinary area and/or the researchers have an affiliation with the center. The designation as lead unit allows the centers and institutes to contribute toward multidisciplinary activity by providing infrastructure, administrative support, and specialized facilities unavailable in the academic units.

In all cases, approval of the lead unit for a sponsored project is confirmed by the approvals of all parties on the Enterprise Research Administration (ERA) Funding Proposal (FP).

Responsibilities of the lead unit

The lead unit, designated on the ERA FP, has oversight responsibility for the administrative and financial actions of the PI, including:

1. Approval of an academic employee as a PI by the department chair (or unit director) and the dean (or division head) or approval of a nonacademic employee as a PI by the unit director, division head, and vice president
2. Assistance with general administrative and financial project management issues through the lead unit’s business staff or responsible university administrative office, such as Human Resources or Purchasing and Business Services

3. The timely provision of funding sources for any deficit on a sponsored account, if the PI and/or grant manager fail to provide an alternative funding source for the deficit.

Procedures

Instructions are located at [researchadmin.asu.edu > ERA Proposal workflow](https://researchadmin.asu.edu/ERA-Proposal-workflow).

Additional Information

For definitions of underlined terms, see the [ORSPA Acronyms and glossary](#) webpage.

Cross-Reference

1. [RSP 101](#), “General Research Policy”
2. [RSP 102](#), “Principal Investigator Eligibility”
3. [RSP 103](#), “Principal Investigator Responsibilities”
4. [RSP 106](#), “Allocation of Recognition, Research Incentive Distribution and Investigator Incentive Awards.”