



Ver. # 1.0 Effective Date: Aug 24 2021 Last updated: Aug 24 2021	Eligibility of Principal Investigators (PIs)	Supersedes Previous Ver.: No
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I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Ball State University’s (BSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) that all research be conducted in accordance with the tenets of the Belmont Report. This includes maintaining the highest ethical standards and full respect for persons participating in human subjects research (HSR).

To accomplish this goal, principal investigators (PIs) of HSR must take ultimate responsibility for conducting ethical research and assuring compliance with BSU IRB policies and procedures. Thus, the University works to ensure that all PIs have the technical competence and administrative capabilities to carry out projects.

For this reason, BSU IRB has determined that all PIs of record on IRB protocols must be faculty or professional staff. All student projects, including theses, dissertations, and other student projects involving human subjects, must have a faculty advisor listed as PI on the IRB submission.

This policy applies to all new projects submitted to the IRB on or after July 1, 2021. This policy only applies to IRB protocols submitted at BSU and does not affect a designation of a PI of record on grants or grant applications, a determination of authorship, and/or an establishment of intellectual property rights.

II. Operational Definition(s)

Principal Investigator: The person primarily responsible for submitting protocol materials, conducting research, and overseeing the overall procedures and the actions of the research team.

Point of Contact: The person who assists in managing the IRB protocol record, conducting the research, and communicating with the IRB and/or the IRB administrator. A Point of Contact has the capacity to submit and edit the application to the IRB on behalf of the PI.

III. Eligibility of PIs

The following positions are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs).

- Tenure-track faculty
- Tenured faculty
- Non-tenure-track faculty who are paid BSU employees
- Senior administrative staff (appointment at the level of Chair/Director or more senior)
- Adjunct faculty
- Research faculty
- Professional staff
- Visiting faculty who are paid or funded by BSU to conduct research at BSU

The following positions are NOT eligible to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs).

- Undergraduate and graduate students
- Student assistants
- Research assistants
- Postdoctoral fellows
- Non-paid/funded Visiting Faculty (may be a co-investigator alongside BSU personnel as outlined above)
- Classified Staff
- Temporary employees

IV. Responsibility of PIs

1. PIs of record are responsible for ensuring the design and conduct of research involving human subjects comply with institutional policies, state laws, and federal regulations. In addition, they take responsibility for supervising the research team and reporting any adverse events or accidents.
2. PIs of record must self-certify that they fully understand the research to be undertaken and their obligations to ensure participant and researcher safety.
3. While PIs may delegate certain responsibilities to other research personnel, they should retain the ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the research and compliance with all BSU IRB policies and procedures and federal and state requirements.

V. Student-initiated Projects

1. Graduate and undergraduate students are not allowed to serve as a PI of record for their own research studies involving human research subjects. The Faculty Advisor will retain the responsibilities of PI, and students can serve as Co-PI and/or a point of contact.
2. BSU employees, who may otherwise be eligible under the above categories to be considered for PI status, cannot serve as a PI for a research protocol involving human subjects when conducting the research project as partial fulfillment of their academic requirements.
3. While students are not permitted to be considered PI of record for IRB protocols, this does not diminish their scientific contributions and/or their academic eligibility for receiving credit or degrees.

VI. Exceptions

Exceptions will be made only in rare circumstances and only on a case-by-case basis with the expressed written permission of the IRB Chairperson and the Vice Provost for Research. Persons requesting an exception must contact the Human Research Protection Program Manager in the Office of Research Integrity and the IRB Chairperson with the request and a strong justification for said request.