

**Principal Investigator Change in Employment Relationship
with Valparaiso University Policy
Approved October 2021
Revised October 2022**

Valparaiso University actively supports Principal Investigators (PIs) – both faculty and staff – in applying for grants from government, private, and corporate sources to support a range of activities, including research, instruction, scholarships, student support services, and strategic initiatives. Regardless of the type of funder, grants are awarded to the University, not the individual faculty or staff, and the University has the legal obligation to assure that the terms of the grant are met. Grants are also subject to the policies and requirements of the funder.

PIs typically apply for grants during the PI's period of employment, but changes in employment status may occur. If a PI leaves the University, generally, the University has three options: 1) find a new PI to lead the grant which is retained by the University, 2) transfer the grant to the PI's new institution, or 3) terminate the grant.

This document identifies a few employment-related scenarios that may arise and ways of addressing grant-related issues.

General Notes:

1. Final approval of any of the following arrangements requires the approval of the Dean or the Provost, depending on the level of risk to the University.
2. The Office of Sponsored and Student Research (OSSR) should be consulted throughout the decision-making process, can confer with the funder regarding their policies and preferences, and will be actively involved with implementing final decisions. If a plan is developed before the grant submission, the usual GPAF internal review process will be followed and the GPAF packet will explain the plan so that all reviewers are informed of and approve the plan.
3. For each of the following scenarios, several factors should be considered, including but not limited to:
 - A. The PI's relationship with the University – tenured (or not), length of service, the reason for the change in employment status, and track record receiving grants
 - B. Expectation of future changes in employment status
 - C. Human Resources concerns and considerations regarding employment status
 - D. The combination of knowledge and experience needed to submit a competitive grant proposal
 - E. The PI's specialized knowledge or the ease of finding another PI with the knowledge and expertise to lead the grant
 - F. The amount of time/funds remaining in the grant period
 - G. Impact on others whose work is supported by the grant, especially students
 - H. The strategic importance of the grant to the department, college, or University
4. The following are guidelines. Alternate arrangements may be negotiated and agreed upon. Due to the legal/contractual nature of grants and fellowships, any such alternate arrangements should be agreed to in a written, signed agreement. Copies should be provided to the PI, Department Chair, Dean, Provost, HR, Finance, and OSSR.

GRANTS

Faculty PIs Without Full-Time Employment

Scenario 1

A PI may apply for a grant while fully employed, but the grant is awarded after the PI's relationship with the University has changed. For example, the faculty's full-time position may be terminated due to budget constraints, and the faculty may become adjunct faculty or retain an affiliation with the University other than full-time employment. If the PI has an affiliation with another institution, the University can either transfer the grant to that institution or find a new PI and retain the grant.

The PI should consult with the Department Chair, Dean, and OSSR regarding options. The PI can then state their preference and the Department Chair and Dean can agree or disagree with that preference. The final decision will be subject to the approval of the Provost.

Scenario 2

Adjunct faculty may wish to apply for grants.

Given the sporadic nature of an Adjunct's relationship with the University, the Adjunct should collaborate with a full-time employee, either at Valpo or another institution. If at Valpo, the full-time employee can then serve as the PI, and the Adjunct can be a Co-PI/Senior Personnel/Consultant on the project. This way, the responsibility of managing the grant-funded project lies with a full-time employee of the University. Plans should be discussed with the Department Chair and Dean and approved by the Provost. If the full-time employee is at another institution, that person would serve as the PI, and the Adjunct would be a Co-PI/Senior Personnel/Consultant for the project. Adjuncts would be encouraged to include other Valpo personnel on the grant, as appropriate.

Visiting Professors and Others Who May Not Have Expectations of Long-Term Employment

Scenario 1

Visiting professors and those with short-term/terminal employment contracts may wish to apply for grants.

The PI should consult with the Department Chair, Dean, and OSSR regarding options and considering the factors listed above. The PI can then state their preference, and the Department Chair can agree or disagree with that preference. The final decision will be subject to the approval of the Dean.

Retiring Faculty

Faculty approaching retirement who wish to apply for grants should carefully consider the nature of the work to be supported by the grant, when the grant period ends, and the availability of appropriate partners. Retiring faculty are strongly encouraged to include a co-PI on the grant. The final decision should be discussed with the Department Chair and Dean and will be subject to the approval of the Dean.

Senior Research Professors

Senior Research Professors play an important role in furthering research, mentoring students, mentoring junior faculty, etc. Grants are awarded to the university and SRPs are not employees of the University, so their involvement in seeking grants and conducting grant-funded work requires special consideration. Any of these scenarios must be discussed in advance with – and be approved by – the Department Chair, Dean, and Provost. These arrangements are also subject to funder approval and funder expectations for competitive applications. Funder requirements might differ from the general guidelines provided below. If funder requirements are more restrictive, then the funder’s requirements must be followed.

Existing Grants

In general, if a SRP is already a PI/co-PI on a grant at the time they transition to SRP status, they will be allowed to continue that work until the grant period ends and if the funder allows. The SRP should have or bring a co-PI onto the grant wherever possible. This assures continuity of the grant work should the SRP’s status as a SRP should end. It also assures that a full-time employee of the University is involved with the project and has the authority to manage the administrative aspects of the grant such as approving time and expenses charged to the grant. In addition, some funders may require the SRP to transition to a consultant role and be replaced in the PI role with a full-time faculty member.

Seeking New Grants

SRPs may submit new grant applications and serve as a PI on a new grant as long as:

1. The SRP is in good standing and has had multiple previous grants.
2. The new grant funding primarily benefits students.
3. The SRP is paid through the grant as a contractor/consultant and not an employee.

Similar to the guidelines for an existing grant, the grant should have a co-PI on the new grant that is a current full-time employee. That person does not need to be paid or can be paid minimally (depending on the terms of the grant). The co-PI will be responsible for the “administrative” aspects of the grant such as approving time for payroll purposes, approving time and effort reports (if applicable), approving expense reimbursement requests, etc. The Co-PI must be fully engaged in the substance of the grant-funded work and not simply handle the administrative tasks. This arrangement also allows for a smooth transition should the SRP leave before the grant period ends, allowing the Co-PI to assume responsibility for the grant as the new PI.

Depending on the work being done, it may not be possible to find a Co-PI who has the appropriate expertise and who is also a full-time University employee. In this case, the Department Chair will be responsible for the administrative functions. In this scenario, the Department Chair’s time is considered part of the indirect costs and the Department Chair will not be identified as a team member in the grant application. If the grant application includes a “facilities, equipment and other resources” or similar section, the Department Chair can be mentioned as one of the resources supporting the grant. If the Department Chair will be fulfilling the “administrative” role, this must be noted on the GPAF Internal Routing Form prior to the Chair’s signature. By signing the GPAF with this note, the Chair will be agreeing to manage the administrative aspects of the grant.

Incoming Faculty

Incoming faculty are welcome and encouraged to apply for grants on behalf of Valparaiso University, continue working on grants applied for or awarded before they arrive at the university, or to transfer grants from a previous institution. These decisions can be made in collaboration with and approval of the Department Chair and Dean.

Scenario 1

If the new faculty member is relatively inexperienced (in general and/or with grant writing in particular), it would be advisable to have them partner with a more experienced PI, either formally or in an advisory capacity. Depending on the subject matter and previously existing relationships, the PI may/may not be at Valpo. Inexperienced faculty should be advised to apply for appropriate grants – either those for which they would be a Co-PI (rather than a PI) or smaller grants that provide a good point of entry for new researchers.

Scenario 2

More experienced new faculty may apply for grants as would existing Valpo faculty.

Staff as PIs

Staff are allowed and encouraged to serve as PIs or Co-PIs on grants. Staff members are generally employed either full-time or part-time. As they transition from one employment status to another, the scenario above that is most similar to their situation would apply.

FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships are awarded to individuals, not to the University. Fellowships are often administered by the University to ease paycheck processing, benefits administration, and employee taxes. Fellowships are subject to a Fellowship Application Form (FAF) internal review process analogous to the GPAF internal review process. Any anticipated changes in employment status should be discussed before the FAF routing and an explanation included in the FAF packet. The final decision lies with the Dean.

Scenario 1

If a faculty member moves to another institution after the fellowship is awarded, the administration of the fellowship would transfer to the new institution. The new institution will then be the source of paychecks and benefits.

Scenario 2

If the PI is not moving to another institution (i.e., retiring), then the fellowship administration might remain with Valpo. Communication with Payroll would need to be clear about benefits to be deducted (or not) and other changes needed as a result of the retirement.

ADHERING TO FUNDER REQUIREMENTS

Should the terms of the grant or fellowship differ from this policy, Valparaiso University will adhere to the requirements outlined in the grant or fellowship contract.