

Office of the Vice Provost for Research

This is to clarify the practice with regard to proposals that need the approval of the Vice Provost for Research in the Division Approval Form (DAF).

The general policy¹. Whenever a research proposal includes a PI or Co-PI who is not an active professorial faculty member, the division is required to submit the proposal for review and approval by the Vice Provost for Research. This should take place only after the proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Division Chair. All such proposals (except those by Emeritus Professors) must include the Faculty Sponsor memo (attached) from an active professorial faculty member agreeing to provide oversight of the project.

The proposals and budgets must conform to policies described in the table below. Any requests for deviation will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and must be submitted at least one week prior to any submission deadlines.

Summary of Caltech policies		
Position Type	Is it necessary to have a Professorial Faculty Member as PI or co-PI?	Can Students and Postdocs be Supported?
Research Professor	no	yes
Research Assistant Professor	no	yes
Faculty Associate	no	yes
Senior Faculty Associate	no	yes
Emeritus Professor	no	yes (with an advisor of record)
Other faculty*	yes	no
Postdoctoral Scholar**	yes	no
Member of the Professional Staff	yes	no
Staff Member*	yes	no
*Other faculty and staff members should generally not be designated as PI or co-PI. **Postdoctoral scholars should generally not be designated as PI or co-PI except for programs that are not aimed specifically for post-docs. See exceptions for Postdoctoral Fellowships below.		

An exception for Postdoctoral Fellowships. At Caltech, postdoctoral scholars occasionally apply for a type of grant that is called a “Postdoctoral Fellowship.” Such awards typically provide support for the

¹ The Caltech Faculty Handbook states that “Members of the Beckman Institute, members of the professional staff, or, on rare occasions, other faculty or staff members or postdoctoral scholars, may serve as principal investigators under special circumstances with the approval of their Division Chair and the Vice Provost. Approval requires a supervising professorial faculty member assume responsibility for the validity and importance of the research and management of the budget.”

postdoc in the form of a stipend and may also include very limited funds for supplies and materials, and other expenses. Some sponsors require that the postdoc be listed as the Principal Investigator on the application and that the faculty sponsor or advisor be listed as the Co-PI. Other sponsors require that the postdoc's faculty sponsor be listed as the PI and the postdoc be listed as the Co-PI. In either instance, it is not necessary to obtain the Vice Provost's signature on the DAF, as long as the following applies:

- The proposal is being submitted in response to a Postdoctoral Fellowship solicitation, not a research grant².
- The DAF clearly identifies the postdoc's faculty sponsor/advisor.
- The Division Chair has indicated approval of the proposal by signing the DAF.
- The postdoc has a current Conflict of Interest disclosure on file.

If the postdoc is submitting a proposal for a sponsored research project; i.e., one that covers more than a stipend/salary and nominal supplies and materials, the Vice Provost's signature will be required.

Whenever there is any doubt about whether or not a specific proposal should be submitted to the Vice Provost for review and approval, please contact the Office of Sponsored Research for guidance.

When a postdoc is not yet at Caltech or has not yet been accepted by Caltech: There may be situations when a postdoc may wish to submit an application for a Postdoctoral Fellowship before coming or being accepted to Caltech. In such cases, the postdoc should follow the same procedures as all other postdocs who are applying for a Postdoctoral Fellowship:

- Complete a Division Approval Form (DAF) that clearly identifies the postdoc's faculty sponsor/advisor.

² NIH Research Career Development Awards, grants in the "K" series, e.g., K99, "Pathway to Independence," are research grants, not Postdoctoral Fellowships.