

# US National Institute of Health (NIH) projects

## Guidelines UNIGE

# Responsibilities and Authorisations

V03.2021

*These Guidelines apply to all NIH projects. They are not intended to be a legally binding document or regulation. Please always refer to the latest version of the guidelines available on our web site, to NIH official sources and to the UNIGE directives and policies. Research Service cannot be held liable.*

*If you have questions, please contact Research Services or DIFIN.*

## 1. Responsibilities

Please be aware that any contractual, ethical/data or financial problem not identified and not corrected before the project submission may, if the project is selected, lead to non-signature of the contract, non-reimbursement of costs and additional audits during and after the project.

The Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) for UNIGE is responsible for all administrative, contractual, financial, ethical, data protection/management, scientific/technical data and information aspects concerning his contribution to the project. The PI/PD is also the principal and usually the only contact person for the PTE and/or the NIH.

In order to prevent future problems leading to potential time, money and image loss for the PI/PD and UNIGE it is essential for the PI/PD to take notice of her/his responsibilities, to clear any key issue using the compliance self-check form, to setup appropriate lab/group-internal management resources and procedures and to ensure the proper follow up of the activities and project related documentation.

If a PI/PD leaves UNIGE, she/he shall inform the department/Faculty as well as DIFIN and Research Service as soon as possible. For ongoing projects, the before-mentioned parties decide on the conditions of project transfer (project follows PI/PD) with some part remaining at UNIGE or not. If the project is already terminated, the PI/PD ensures, with the department/Faculty, the proper archiving of all project relevant documents in case of audits.

**Please note that Research Services essentially provide specific information and advice, in close collaboration with the other relevant administration services (Legal services, Unitec, DIS, DISTIC, CUREG, etc.). For specific budget questions, the PI/PD should directly contact DIFIN-UNIGE.**

## 2. Authorisations

At UNIGE, full professors and associate/assistant professors and senior researchers (i.e. MER) are allowed to submit research projects on their own as PI/PD endorsing the overall responsibility of the project submission and subsequent project execution/management.

### 2.1 Derogations

Only in exceptional and duly justified cases, non-professors/MER in charge of the project's research activities may act as PI/PD, on request of the hosting Faculty/Department/Institute, with the necessary hierarchical authorizations, and the final Rectorate's derogation.

**At the stage of project preparation/submission**, the PI/PD must obtain the formal approval from the hierarchical authorised person-s. We strongly advise to (pre-) formalise such authorisations using the Compliance self-check form. Please be aware that such procedure may take some time and should therefore be undertaken well ahead of the submission deadline.

Please note also that, if the project is funded, the hierarchical authorisation needs confirmation by the Vice-rector in charge of research following a formal derogation request (formal derogation request letter) once the notice of award is released or during the sub-award review/signature process.

Hierarchical authorisations:

- For teaching staff (*corps d'enseignement et de recherche*) -> Professor/MER directing the research group/lab (= *le/la garant-e*) + Director of Department + Dean or Director of Institute;
- For technical staff (PAT) -> Director of Division/Service + Vice-Rector in charge of this Division/Service.

**At the stage of the issue of the notice of award or of the sub-award signature**, a formal derogation request letter should be addressed to the Rectorate, right once the notice of award is released or at the beginning of the sub-award review/signature process.

The letter should state the following:

- Project key data (programme, project acronym-title, start/end date, budget UNIGE, etc.);
- Status of PI/PD at UNIGE;
- Confirmation that the PI/PD will follow the project over its full duration and, if relevant, the measures which are foreseen in case the PI/PD would leave UNIGE before the end of the project;
- Role of PI/PD in the project and his eventual rights to sign the agreement (and any subsequent project related agreements/contracts) and the scientific/financial reports on behalf of UNIGE;
- Right of PI/PD to open and operate the project-related financial account independently;
- Name of the professor guaranteeing (*le/la garant-e*) the execution of this arrangement, usually the Professor/MER directing the research group/lab. Please note that this person will also countersign the agreements and all project related contracts and reports.

The letter should be signed by the same hierarchical authorised persons mentioned above ("At stage of project preparation/submission"):

- For teaching staff (*corps d'enseignement et de recherche*) -> Professor/MER directing the research group/lab (= le/la *garant-e*) + Director of Department + Dean or Director of Institute;
- For technical staff (*PAT*) -> Director of Division/Service + Vice-Rector in charge of this Division/Service.

The letter should be addressed by email to the vice-rector in charge of research [Brigitte.Galliot@unige.ch](mailto:Brigitte.Galliot@unige.ch) with [euresearch@unige.ch](mailto:euresearch@unige.ch) copied.

The Vice-Rector in charge of research communicates his/her decision by email, with [euresearch@unige.ch](mailto:euresearch@unige.ch) copied.

*NB: The relevant UNIGE directives/policies apply, without however covering all aspects. The PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR and his/her hierarchical authorities are fully responsible for the derogation process. Research Services do not intervene in the derogation request process, but provide the above information on an indicative level subject to the before mentioned UNIGE directives/policies. PI/PD may be asked to comply with additional eligibility criteria if requested by the NIH or by the US Institutions such as the PTE.*

### 3. Special Cases

- **RETIREMENTS: For PI/PD retiring before the end of the project (+ 6 months)**, an authorisation for the continuation of research activities beyond retirement must be requested to the Rectorate through the Legal Services;  
→ [Authorization for post-retirement activities of professors \(memento UNIGE\)](#)
- **SPECIAL NEEDS: For any project implying significant needs for additional working/lab space and infrastructures and/or high financial transfers** (e.g. UNIGE as Pass Through Entity), the director of the hosting department/unit must be informed and, if relevant, the necessary agreements must be drawn up;
- **UNIGE/HUG: For researchers with a double affiliation**, their UNIGE affiliation and hierarchy is the relevant one for the commitment of UNIGE in NIH projects.
- **NCBI dbGaP**: PD/PIs wishing to submit an access request to the NCBI dbGaP must be permanent employees of their institution (UNIGE) at a level equivalent to a tenure-track professor or senior scientist with responsibilities that most likely include laboratory administration and oversight. Laboratory staff and trainees such as graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are not permitted to submit requests.

### References, further information, contacts

[UNIGE rules and policies](#)

[Research Services - Euresearch](#)