

# RESEARCH & GRADUATE STUDIES:

## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A NEW RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

### Allocation of Responsibility: Proposal Development and Writing

- **PI:** Conceptualizes the research problem, identifies key personnel (Co-Is, external partners), is ultimately responsible for ensuring all proposal components are complete.
- **Co-Is:** Further refine the research questions asked, select the appropriate methodologies/activities, identify additional key personnel, craft narrative, etc.
- **Key Personnel:** Assist with key aspects of the proposal related to their areas of expertise
- **Collaborators:** Responsibilities can vary, depending on degree of participation (advisor, subaward, contractor, etc.)

Responsibilities during the proposal phase should be decided upon early in the planning process. These responsibilities can include:

- Defining the parameters of the research project
- Establishing the aim, goal(s), objectives
- Developing the research design
- Writing the proposal
- Collecting appropriate documentation
- Submitting the proposal for funding

### Planning for the Research Project: Assigning Credit vs. Allocation of Responsibility (effort)

The PI (s) will decide how to distribute the responsibilities and is/are ultimately responsible for the success of the project.

- If there is a breakdown in how the responsibilities should be carried out (e.g. negligence, innocent mistakes, scientific misconduct, academic misconduct) the principal investigator(s) are held accountable to the funding agency, affiliated research institutions, and members of research disciplines.
- Under shared leadership models (multiple PIs, co-Is, etc.) it is critical to develop a shared understanding of responsibilities early, to ensure that all parties understand their roles and how they will be held accountable to the team.

More information can be found here:

[https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/niu\\_collabresearch/collabresearch/relationship/relationship.html](https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/niu_collabresearch/collabresearch/relationship/relationship.html)

## Looking ahead to the research: Establishing a shared set of expectations

Below are common components of a research project that should be discussed early in the proposal development process, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the level of work, credit and effort expected.

**Goals:** identify shared long-term goals for the project (number students trained, papers published, etc)

- SMART: Specific, measurable, aligned with the broader picture, realistic and time driven

**Roles:** clearly define roles for each member of the team (PI, co-Is, staff, etc.)

- Who will be responsible for the activities related to the SMART Goals? What will these responsibilities entail?
- How will credit be shared? How will authorship be allocated on publications?

**Resources:** what resources are needed to successfully to perform this work

**Accountability:** identify who will be responsible for each critical milestone

**Timeframe:** determine what timeframe the work needs to be done in, and in what order

**Empowerment:** identify what each of the team members will need to have autonomy/ to do their work

## There are several objectives consider when discussing roles, responsibilities and project vision \*

\*modified from <https://datamgmtinedresearch.com/project-roles-and-responsibilities>)

1. To assign specific team members to project roles and delineate the responsibilities of those roles
2. Assess equity in responsibilities
  - a. Including time needed to complete tasks
  - b. Number of responsibilities assigned to each team member (not overloading any one team member)
3. To assess the skills needed for responsibilities
4. To assess any training need to fill gaps in knowledge
5. Estimate costs (person time and resources) associated with roles
6. Contingency plans
  - a. For transitions out of the role or for absenteeism

Below is a template table to help your team begin to determine how effort and credit will be allocated across the research project.

Title	Role	Name	% effort	% credit
<b>Principal Investigator</b>				
<b>Key Responsibilities</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>				

Title	Role	Name	% effort
<b>Co-Investigator</b>			
<b>Key Responsibilities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>			

Title	Role	Name	% effort
<b>Other staff</b>			
<b>Key Responsibilities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>			

Title	Role	Name	% effort

<b>Key Responsibilities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>			