

NSF Salary Policy: Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

Does the NSF salary rule apply to all faculty members and staff charged to an NSF grant?

Answer:

No. The NSF policy applies only to senior personnel. The NSF Grants Policy Guide (GPG) defines senior personnel as:

“1. (co) Principal Investigator(s) -- the individual(s) designated by the proposer, and approved by NSF, who will be responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project. NSF does not infer any distinction in scientific stature among multiple PIs, whether referred to as PI or co-PI. If more than one, the first one listed will serve as the contact PI, with whom all communications between NSF program officials and the project relating to the scientific, technical, and budgetary aspects of the project should take place. The PI and any identified co-PIs, however, will be jointly responsible for submission of the requisite project reports.

2. Faculty Associate (faculty member) -- an individual other than the Principal Investigator(s) considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.”

Question:

Who does the NSF two-months salary policy not apply to?

Answer:

The NSF two-months salary policy does not apply to:

1. Post docs
2. Research scientists not budgeted as senior personnel
3. Other personnel not budgeted as senior personnel

Question:

Does greater than two months salary budgeted for senior personnel on multiple NSF awards constitute as approval from NSF to charge greater than two month salary on NSF funds?

Answer:

Yes. Per an email from Charles Zeigler on February 2, 2008, Charles wrote:

“The proposal and approved budget is incorporated by reference in the award notice. Therefore, approval by NSF on a subsequent award with additional effort for that faculty member constitutes approval for more than 2 months effort on more than one NSF award.”