



**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments**  
**Policy ER 21**

**Implementing Executives:** Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor; Senior Vice Chancellor for Research  
**Responsible Units:** Office of the Provost; Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research  
**Category:** Employment Related  
**Effective Date:** January 4, 2023

**I. Purpose**

The University of Pittsburgh (“University”) participates in the [Intergovernmental Personnel Act \(“IPA”\) Mobility Program](#) to improve institutional understanding of government, to offer professional development for University faculty and staff, to establish and grow relationships with other institutions and individuals, to improve our understanding of activities occurring elsewhere, and to improve the quality, success rate, and impact of our proposals and research and to learn about opportunities for our students and trainees.

This Policy establishes the University’s administration of its participation in the IPA Mobility Program, including the approval, management, and evaluation of IPA assignments.

For more information on the IPA Program, including FAQs related to participating in the program, please visit: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty/ipa-program-faqs> .

**II. Scope**

This Policy applies to the University’s administration of its participation in the IPA Mobility Program and to all faculty<sup>1</sup> and staff. This Policy does not apply to IPA assignments with the Veterans Administration.

**III. Definitions**

- A. Cost-Sharing: Financial arrangements involved in an IPA assignment that are negotiated between the University and the sponsoring government organization. Such costs may include employee pay, supplemental pay, certain fringe benefits, travel, and relocation costs.

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<sup>1</sup> Bargaining Unit Faculty Members are currently excluded from this Policy, pending collective bargaining negotiations with the Faculty Union.

- B. Host Organization: The government organization where the IPA Assignee will work.
- C. IPA Assignee: A faculty or staff member employed by the University who enters into an IPA agreement.
- D. On Appointment: An IPA Assignee is on appointment if the federal organization directly pays the IPA Assignee. When the position is a full-time position, the assignee enrolls in a leave-without-pay status from the University. IPA Assignees will have few restrictions on their roles at the department or agency. (Compare to “On Detail.”)
- E. On Detail: An IPA Assignee is on detail if the federal organization pays the University, and the University pays the IPA Assignee. Such a person retains University benefits and follows University leave policies. IPA Assignees should expect that they will not be able to sign certain documents. Details must be worked out in the IPA agreement. (Compare to “On Appointment.”)
- F. Supervisor: The administrative Unit head for the IPA Assignee at the University (e.g., department chair or division director).
- G. Unit: A responsibility center, school, department, office, or other grouping at the University that is responsible for the supervision of the IPA Assignee.

#### IV. Policy

The IPA Mobility Program is an opportunity for the University, including its faculty and staff, to advance the University’s academic mission and provide professional development. To help ensure proper planning is performed throughout an IPA assignment, the sections below provide requirements for participating faculty and staff, as well as their appropriate Supervisors, to follow during an IPA assignment.

##### A. Requirements before an IPA Assignment

##### i. Eligibility and Planning

The prospective IPA Assignee who will be assigned to work for a federal agency must be a regular, full-time employee of the University and should not be employed on a temporary assignment or in a temporary role. More specific eligibility requirements are listed below:

- ***Tenure-stream, untenured faculty.*** Tenure-stream faculty in their probationary period may participate in an IPA provided that they have received a positive mid-point review or equivalent and have obtained their Supervisor’s approval of their written plan for achieving promotion to associate professor with tenure within the allowable duration of service without tenure in the tenure stream. Those who have not received a positive review *are not eligible* for an IPA. Tenure-stream faculty who have not yet reached their mid-point review are also eligible, with the approval of their Supervisor. Faculty in this

situation will need to take the IPA as a leave for professional enhancement (See, [University Policy AC 24 Faculty Leave for Professional Enhancement](#)).

- ***Tenure-stream, tenured faculty.*** Tenured faculty may participate in an IPA with the approval of their Supervisor.
- ***Appointment-stream faculty.*** Appointment-stream faculty may participate in an IPA, provided that their most recent performance review was positive, and they have the approval of their Supervisor.
- ***Staff.*** Staff may participate in an IPA provided that they are beyond their provisional period, that their most recent performance review was positive, and they have the approval of their Supervisor.

Both On Detail and On Appointment IPA assignments are permitted; however, when there is a choice, the University prefers On Detail IPA assignments because typically there is greater flexibility afforded to the IPA Assignee allowing for greater support for University efforts.

The prospective IPA Assignee shall provide their Supervisor with information that sufficiently outlines the scope (including whether the IPA assignment is On Detail or On Appointment), the duties, and the duration of the prospective IPA assignment. The prospective IPA Assignee shall have the burden to demonstrate the IPA assignment aligns with the mission of the University and the Unit.

In advance of accepting an IPA assignment, the prospective IPA Assignee must work with their Supervisor to consider whether and how they will continue their University responsibilities (including their research and other programs); how responsibilities for direct reports/trainees will be covered; how any conflict of interests will be addressed during the IPA assignment (including any limitations imposed by government restrictions following the IPA assignment); and how performance will be evaluated during the IPA assignment.

University IPA Assignees who oversee centers, labs, and/or students must work with their Supervisor to develop a plan to maintain those responsibilities while fulfilling the IPA appointment. Any accommodation made must be consistent with conflict-of-interest limitations of the IPA assignment.

The IPA Assignee then must prepare a written plan for review and approval by their Supervisor. Required content is provided below, see “Section V. Responsibilities”.

- ii. Supervisor Considerations for Accepting, Delaying, or Denying an IPA Assignment Request

The IPA Mobility Program is for “purposes that are of mutual concern and benefit to the Federal agency and to the non-Federal organization.” To this end, the Supervisor must make a determination that the University has such a concern and will receive a benefit.

The IPA requires the University to provide either the same position or a similar position at the same rate of pay upon the IPA Assignee's return. Due to the expiration of sponsored awards that may be paying the prospective IPA Assignee's salary at the time the IPA assignment begins, there may not be funds available to pay for that position at the end of the IPA assignment. To this end, the Supervisor should not contemplate an IPA agreement for employees whose labor distribution may be uncertain at the end of the IPA assignment. Once the Supervisor has signed an IPA agreement, they are "guaranteeing" that a position will be available for the IPA Assignee upon completion of the IPA assignment. Therefore, the Supervisor must be able to support an employee under an IPA agreement and will be responsible for all costs incurred by the University that the IPA agreement does not cover, including re-employment of the employee.

Where the sponsoring government organization and the University receive a benefit from the IPA assignment, and the government organization requests Cost-Sharing, the Supervisor must establish a plan to cover the Cost-Sharing. When the federal agency permits reserving a portion of time to University activities, Supervisors are encouraged to ensure the IPA Assignee may attend ongoing research, recruiting, student mentoring, and other University business.

In reviewing the request for an IPA assignment, the Supervisor must consider at least the following factors when either approving or denying the request:

- Does the prospective IPA Assignee meet the eligibility requirements listed above?
- Is the professional enhancement that is sought by the prospective IPA Assignee relevant to their work for the University?
- Does the IPA assignment align with the mission of the University and the Unit, and will the University receive a benefit?
- Does the duration, commencement, and expiration of the IPA assignment create an unreasonable burden on the Unit?
- Can the IPA requirement for the same position or a similar position at the same rate of pay upon the IPA Assignee's return be met?

Delaying the IPA assignment request may be recommended by considering the above items, and also considering:

- Can the position be filled after a modest delay?
- Would a modest delay enable the Unit to make adjustments to support an IPA assignment?

iii. Appealing a Delay or Denial Decision of an IPA Assignment Request

A faculty member who is not in the health sciences may appeal a Supervisor's IPA assignment delay or denial in writing to the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor ("SVC-P"); a staff member who is not in the health sciences may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Business & Operations ("SVC-BO"); and a faculty or staff member in the health sciences may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences ("SVC-HS"), within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notification of the IPA assignment request decision. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written appeal, the SVC-P, the SVC-BO, or the

SVC-HS will decide to endorse, reverse, or modify the IPA assignment request decision. The decision of the SVC-P, the SVC-BO, or the SVC-HS shall be final and will be reflected in a writing that explains the reasons for the decision.

#### B. Requirements during an IPA Assignment

Administrative Units rely on faculty and staff to lead centers and research and to continue the educational mission of the University. The Supervisor needs to consider organizational and financial implications of a faculty or staff member taking an IPA assignment (See Section IV.A.ii).

Upon approval from the Supervisor, some University administrative responsibilities may be put aside for the duration of an IPA assignment. At the discretion of the Supervisor, there may be some University administrative responsibilities that are essential to University operations that the IPA Assignee must continue (e.g., training, department planning).

During an IPA assignment, all IPA Assignees are required to complete and maintain necessary conflict-of-interest disclosure forms as provided by [University Policy RI 01, Conflict of Interest Policy for Research](#).

#### C. Requirements after an IPA Assignment

Upon completing the IPA assignment, the IPA Assignee must notify their Supervisor in writing of their change in status, including any conflict-of-interest issues that they must continue to respect as a result of their recent IPA assignment.

### V. **Responsibilities**

This Policy shall be the shared responsibility of the individuals and Units below. For the University to obtain maximum benefit, each is expected to communicate effectively with the others.

#### A. IPA Assignee is responsible for:

- Discussing IPA opportunities/interests with their Supervisor.
- Sharing, as soon as practicable, proposed IPA assignment information with their Supervisor, and the Office of Sponsored Programs. Relevant information to share include the IPA assignment's proposed start date and duration, any compensation from the sponsoring organization, and IPA assignment duties.
- Providing a written plan to their Supervisor for continuity of support for students, patients, and/or other personnel; address conflict-of-interest issues; teaching plans; opportunities for coverage; and performance review while on an IPA assignment.
- Coordinating the execution of the agreed-upon IPA assignment plan.

- Adhering to applicable post-employment restrictions.
- B. The Supervisor, in coordination with upper-level administration (as may be appropriate) is responsible for:
- Reviewing IPA assignments and plans for students and other personnel during IPA assignments.
  - Making necessary changes to division assignments and duties, including any effort on sponsored projects.
  - Reviewing, and modifying as necessary, for the approval of plans to address conflict-of-interest issues.
  - Determining, when Cost-Sharing is requested, if any discretionary funds are available.
  - Coordinating, where applicable, UPMC responsibilities with the University of Pittsburgh Physicians to ensure costs are covered.
  - Discussing return opportunities and plans with the IPA Assignee (1 year prior to completion of IPA assignment).
  - Providing University position equal or similar to the position held by the IPA Assignee prior to the IPA assignment and as agreed upon.
- C. Office of Sponsored Programs is responsible for:
- Notifying relevant campus offices of IPA agreement issues.
  - Reviewing IPA agreements for sponsored research issues, including any post-employment restrictions.
  - Submitting any necessary requests to sponsors, as appropriate.
  - Signing IPA agreements on behalf of the University, after the resolution of any issues, and where authorized to do so.
- D. Office of Human Resources is responsible for:
- Reviewing and/or providing salary, fringe benefits, and holiday information for IPA agreements for faculty and staff.
  - Overseeing the review and approval of requests for leave for staff.
  - Overseeing a staff member's request to continue or waive benefits during an IPA assignment.
  - Coordinating with the Office of the Provost on a faculty member's request to continue or waive benefits during an IPA assignment.
- E. Office of the Provost is responsible for:
- Overseeing the review and approval of requests for leave for faculty (e.g., professional enhancement leave).
  - Consulting with the faculty IPA Assignee's Supervisor on plans for IPA Assignee's return to the University and any effects of the IPA assignment on tenure or promotion.
  - Coordinating with the Office of Human Resources on a faculty member's request to continue or waive benefits during an IPA assignment.

- F. Sponsored Projects Accounting Office is responsible for:
- Generating billing and cost centers for IPA agreements.
  - Closing out IPA cost center at the end of the period of performance.
  - Reminding IPA Assignee of any restrictions that apply after service.

## **VI. Contact Information & Public Accessibility**

This Policy is posted under Employment Related Policies on the Office of Policy Development and Management's website and can be found at: <https://policy.pitt.edu> .

For specific questions related to this Policy or IPA assignments, please email [IPA@pitt.edu](mailto:IPA@pitt.edu) .

## **VII. Related Authorities**

[Intergovernmental Personnel Act Provisions](#)  
[University Policy RI 01, Conflict of Interest Policy for Research](#)  
[University Policy AC 24, Faculty Leave for Professional Enhancement](#)  
[FAQs](#)