

California Model Agreement: Identifying Key Personnel

The California Department of General Services (DGS), the University of California (UC), and the California State University (CSU), developed the California Model Agreement (CMA) as an agreement template that consists of the CMA Standard 213 Agreement Form, Exhibits and the University Terms and Conditions (UTC).

The purpose of Exhibit A2 is to identify Key Personnel (KP) by name, institutional affiliation, and project role. Any change to named KP requires prior State approval. [see UTC, Clause 9]

Key Personnel: "The Principal Investigator and other individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the agreement. The University identifies key personnel in each proposal." [see UTC Definitions]

Differences between Key Personnel and Other Project Personnel

Project personnel include all individuals involved in the project, whereas *Key Personnel* refers to a smaller subset with a substantive role. Based on their subject matter expertise and role in performing the scope of work, the University PI is responsible for designating Key Personnel. All project personnel contribute to the project, as their compensation must be justified by their work under the agreement.

	Key Personnel	Other Project Personnel
CMA Exhibit	Exhibit A2	Exhibit B2 (Budget)
Scope of Work Role	Contributes specialized expertise critical to project design and direction; can supervise Other Personnel; communicates with state agency on project progress; not easily substitutable	Performs portion of the project's scope of work; substitutable
Personnel Changes	Require State prior approval	Does NOT require State prior approval unless Scope/Budget affected
Examples:	PI, Co-PIs, Senior Faculty/Researchers	Student Researchers, Postdocs, Technicians

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Why aren't all project Personnel considered Key Personnel?

A1: The PI/Co-PI are responsible for directing the project and ensuring its success. If they leave, the project may not continue. Other Personnel can generally be replaced without affecting project outcomes, so they are not designated as Key Personnel.

Q2: Should graduate students or postdoctoral scholars be considered Key Personnel?

A2: No. Their primary role is educational. While they make valuable contributions, their work is guided by the PI/Co-PI. Listing them as KP may misrepresent their trainee role, where the PI/Co-PI mentors them through both research and education.

Q3: If an individual devotes a high percentage of effort to a project, does that make them Key Personnel?

A3: Not necessarily. Effort percentage alone does not define Key Personnel. What matters most is whether the individual's expertise is essential to the project's design and execution. For example, a technician contributing 75% effort performing routine tests may best be classified as Other Personnel, not Key Personnel. In contrast, a faculty member devoting only 10% effort may be integral to the success of the project.