
Research Funding Administration Procedures

Policy Sponsor:	Provost and Vice-President Academic
Name of Parent Policy:	Research Funding Administration Policy
Policy Contact:	Manager, Research Services
Procedure Contact:	Manager, Research Services
Effective Date of Procedures:	March 26, 2015
Review Date:	Annual

Purpose

To provide direction for the financial administration of external research funding at Athabasca University (AU).

Definitions

Principal Investigator	The grant or award recipient who is also responsible for intellectual leadership and financial management of a Research project.
Research	An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.
Research Funding Agreement	A written agreement entered into to provide or receive funding to facilitate research.
Researcher	Anyone who conducts research activities. Includes, but is not limited to, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, adjunct professors, visiting professors, institutional administrators and any other personnel involved directly or indirectly in research.



Restricted Research Funds Financial contributions received from an external Sponsor which are reserved for a specific research purpose.

Sponsor An external entity that enters into a Research Funding Agreement with AU to provide financial or other support for research.

Procedure

1. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)

General Oversight

In the conduct of the research project the PI is responsible for:

- adhering to relevant legislated requirements, the Sponsor Research Funding Agreement and AU policies,
- forecasting expenditures and managing the budget,
- managing and supervising research personnel,
- ensuring that obligations with respect to intellectual property are met,
- submitting agreed upon deliverables and preparing and submitting requisite narrative reports by the posted deadlines and in the format specified in the Research Funding Agreement,
- retaining a copy of all research reports and data,
- informing the Research Centre of any known circumstances that could prevent satisfactory completion of the project or compliance with any terms and conditions of the Research Funding Agreement or AU policy.

Financial Management

The PI is responsible for providing true, complete and accurate information for expenditures and for ensuring that expenditures against the restricted research account:

- are necessary to the research project being undertaken,
- are for the purposes for which the funds were granted,
- are for eligible costs associated with the approved research project,
- are accurately coded and described on expense claims, purchase orders, etc.,
- are incurred within the specified term (start and end date) of the project,
- are reasonable and comply with the terms and conditions of the Research Funding Agreement and applicable AU policies and financial guidelines, and
- represent the most effective use of the awarded funds.

If the funding awarded by the Sponsor is different from the budget identified in the original application, the PI must submit a revised budget to the Research Centre.



Disruptions to Research

Circumstances may arise which may adversely affect the research activity funded by a Sponsor. In order to help mitigate these effects, the PI shall notify the Research Centre of any changes that may impact the terms and conditions of the Research Funding Agreement, including, but not limited to:

- temporary absences due to Research & Study leave, extended leave of absence or sick leave,
- changes in academic or employment status with AU that may affect their eligibility to continue to hold the research grant or award,
- significant deviations from the proposed research as approved by the Sponsor,
- changes to the research which may impact certifications (human ethics, animal care, biohazards, etc.),
- deviations from the approved budget, and
- changes which may impact the ability to complete the agreed upon research activities/ deliverables.

2. RESEARCH CENTRE

The Research Centre provides the following administrative services:

- submits requests to Financial Services to create new restricted research accounts and to close such accounts upon completion of a research project,
- informs the PI of the restricted research account code details,
- authorizes invoices, expenditures and payments,
- submits invoice and expense claims to Sponsor for receipt of funds, as required,
- maintains financial records,
- assists the PI with completing research related staff appointment forms for submission to Human Resources and approves the budget for such appointments,
- reviews research staff timesheet submissions and authorizes payment for hours incurred,
- authorizes reimbursement for travel and expense claims,
- records third party contributions-in-kind,
- works with Financial Services to facilitate the submission of financial reports to the Sponsor in a timely manner.

Notifications and Consultations

When necessary, the Research Centre shall:

- inform the PI as soon as possible if the Research Centre becomes aware of any significant adverse matter in respect of the project,



- liaise with the Sponsor where changes in budgets or clarification of terms is required, and
- notify the Sponsor of any changes in academic or employment status of the PI that may affect the eligibility of the PI to continue to receive funding.

3. FINANCIAL SERVICES

Financial accounting of research funding is subject to the procedures and audit of Financial Services. As an integral part of research funding administration within AU, Financial Services is responsible for the following functions:

- creating restricted research accounts,
- recording in AU's cash record system the source and purpose of Restricted Research Funds received,
- generating invoices and/or issuing payments in accordance with the Research Funding Agreement,
- recording AU contributions-in-kind, and
- verifying financial reports prior to submission to Sponsors, as required.

4. OWNERSHIP OF EQUIPMENT

The PI is responsible for the effective stewardship of project equipment and/or assets.

The PI will perform an annual inventory of research equipment with an acquisition value of \$5,000 or greater and retain the inventory for audit purposes.

When reasonably possible, the equipment will be made available to other Researchers to make use of, as appropriate.

If the Researcher is no longer associated with AU, the recovery of items purchased from restricted research funds will fall under existing Human Resources business practices.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. F-25](#)
[Post-Secondary Learning Act, S.A. 2003](#)



Related References

[Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC, effective January 1, 2013, and as amended from time to time)

[Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

[Research Funding Administration Policy](#)

[Delegation of Expenditure Approval Authority Policy](#)

[Purchasing Policy](#)

[Research Integrity Policy](#)

[Expense Reimbursement Policy](#)

History

The Governors of Athabasca University, March 26, 2015 Motion # 196-06 (Approved)