
Research Funding Administration Policy

Policy Sponsor:	Vice-President Academic
Policy Contact:	Manager, Research Services
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Procedure:	Research Funding Administration Procedures

Purpose

Athabasca University (AU) is committed to excellence in research and the responsible stewardship of funds provided in support of research. This policy provides direction for the financial administration of external research funding.

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 that 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.

Policy Statements

A. Restricted Research Funds

AU is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that Restricted Research Funds are administered and expended in accordance with legislated requirements and the terms and conditions set out in the Sponsor's Research Funding Agreement.

A separate restricted research account shall be created to track expenditures for each Research Funding Agreement.

B. Responsibilities

Research Funding Agreements are entered into on behalf of AU and shall not be written in the name of an individual researcher, department, institute, Centre, school or faculty.

General authority to enter into a Research Funding Agreement rests with the Associate Vice-President, Research.

A Principal Investigator (PI) is not authorized to sign a Research Funding Agreement on behalf of AU.

Research Funding Agreements shall be vetted by the Research Centre prior to execution.

The Research Centre shall administer restricted Research Funds received by AU.

AU shall not disburse any funds on behalf of a PI until all specified certification requirements, including those of human ethics, animal care, and any other special permits or licenses have been secured by the PI and submitted to the Research Centre.



AU has the right and responsibility to withhold payment of expenses submitted for reimbursement that contravene legislated requirements, the Research Funding Agreement, and/or AU Policy.

Should funds remain in the restricted research account upon completion of the term of the Research Funding Agreement, these residual funds shall be managed in accordance with the Research Funding Agreement and related guidelines.

The PI is responsible for the conduct of the research and for financial oversight of the research funds, including signing authority. The PI shall notify the Research Centre in writing of any delegation of signing authority.

Expenditures or encumbrances that are deemed to be ineligible and/or exceed the amount of the research funds awarded by the Sponsor shall be the responsibility of the PI.

C. Ownership of Equipment

Ownership of equipment purchased with Restricted Research Funds administered by AU rests with AU for primary use of the principal investigator, unless otherwise stated in the Research Funding Agreement.

AU is responsible for the stewardship of these assets whether located on University premises or at non-University premises.

AU will house, maintain and insure the equipment (as required), and take reasonable measures to protect it during its useful life.

If the equipment is to be loaned or transferred to another institution, AU shall abide by the terms and conditions as set forth in the Research Funding Agreement.

The PI is responsible for acquisition planning, procurement and ongoing effective and efficient stewardship of assets, including safeguarding (e.g., from theft, misuse, waste, abuse and loss), utilization, maintenance and disposal of items in accordance with the Research Funding Agreement and AU policy and procedures.

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, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[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 Procedures](#)

[Delegation of Expenditure Approval Authority Policy](#)

[Purchasing Policy](#)

[Research Integrity Policy](#)

[Travel and Expense Claim Policy](#)

History

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