



## Policy on External Research Funding Applications and Agreements

Classification:

Responsible Authority: Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

Executive Sponsor: Academic Vice-President and Provost

Approval Authority: Senate

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform set of requirements and procedures for the development, approval and administration of Research Agreements associated with externally-funded Research Projects conducted at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX).

### SCOPE

University-wide. Note: not all aspects or elements of this policy will apply to all types of external research proposals and agreements. Questions concerning elements of this policy can be addressed to the Associate Vice President, Research and Graduate Studies.

### DEFINITIONS

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|------------------------|---|
| Research Application   | A written proposal requesting funding from a Granting Agency or external sponsor in order to facilitate the creation of new knowledge, and/or the creative use of existing knowledge, and/or the organization and synthesis of existing knowledge and/or creative expression. |
| Research Project       | A project governed by a Research Agreement.   |
| Granting Agency        | Any public or not-for-profit funding source which provides funding for a Research Project.  |
| External Sponsor       | Any external partner(s), other than a Granting Agency, which provides funding for a Research Project.   |
| Principal Investigator | The lead researcher at StFX who is responsible for a Research Project.  |

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| Researchers        | Includes the Principal Investigator, as well as other faculty, students and staff involved in a Research Project, and also includes faculty, students and staff from other universities or colleges, student research assistants and contract researchers.   |
| Co-applicant(s)    | Researchers who share the lead on a project application.   |
| Faculty Member     | St. Francis Xavier University faculty as defined by the Collective Agreement between the StFX AUT and StFX University.   |
| Research Team      | The Researchers participating in a Research Project.   |
| Research Agreement | <p>Research Agreement refers to any of the following legal arrangements involving St. Francis Xavier University, Researchers, and Granting Agencies or External Sponsors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Research Grant</b> is an award provided by a Granting Agency to an individual Principal Investigator or a group of Researchers working in collaboration to support research in a defined area. Research grants are made according to the regulations of the Granting Agency for a specific funding amount and a specific time period.</li><li>• <b>Research Contract</b> is an agreement to deliver the results of a specific Research Project to an External Sponsor or Granting Agency at a specific time and for a pre-negotiated price.</li><li>• <b>Research (Technical) Services Contract</b> is a services agreement of a more routine nature that still requires expertise or laboratory facilities to conduct the work, for example, provision of specialized or certified analytical services that are not routinely available from private sector laboratories.</li><li>• <b>Contribution Agreement</b> is similar to a Research Contract, but typically involves multiple funding sources such as a combination of government agency, private sector sponsorship and a University contribution. Contribution Agreements, particularly (but not exclusively) those with Federal or Provincial Government agencies may contain restrictions on publication of research results, claims against Intellectual Property, or other conditions that require them be treated as Research Contracts.</li><li>• <b>Non-Disclosure Agreement or Confidentiality Agreement</b> is a legal contract that outlines confidential materials or knowledge that is shared among the University, Researcher(s) and external parties who wish to share with each other but wish to restrict from use by other parties.</li><li>• <b>Material Transfer Agreement</b> is a contract that governs the transfer of biological materials from the owner or authorized licensee to an institution for research purposes. Materials may include cultures, cell lines, plasmids, nucleotides, proteins, bacteria, transgenic animals, plant cultivars/genotypes, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals and materials. A Material Transfer Agreement governs issues such as ownership of the transferred materials and of modifications and derivatives made by the recipient; limits on the</li></ul> |

use of the materials by the recipient institution; confidentiality of information related to the materials; rights to inventions and research results and in some instances, handling requirements of hazardous materials.

**Direct Costs** All costs that can be identified and attributed to a Research Project or set of activities with reasonable accuracy. Direct Costs include, but are not limited to, salaries and benefits, equipment rentals and purchases, travel and field support, and supplies and services.

**Indirect Costs** Costs that are common to some or all research activities undertaken at the University. Indirect Costs include, but are not limited to:

- Use of laboratory capital equipment and general University buildings/equipment.
- Support and technical staff time.
- Cleaning and maintenance.
- Utilities (heat, power, water, telephone, etc.).
- Accounting, administrative and computer services.
- Legal and consultative services.
- Library and data management expenses.
- General and project coordination/management.
- Ethics, animal use, and health and safety committees.
- Depreciation and other indirect costs.

## POLICY

### 1. Research Project Applications

- All applications for external research funding, including research contracts and contribution agreements, must be submitted through the Research Services Group (RSG) and must undergo review by either the Research Grants Office (RGO), the Industry Liaison Office (ILO), or the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS). This practice ensures that applications or contracts are complete, appropriately edited and formatted, and compliant with internal and external requirements.
- All applications for research projects that will be administered by StFX must be reviewed and approved by the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS) or the Academic Vice-President and Provost (AVP) prior to submission to a Granting Agency or External Sponsor.

### 2. Research Agreements

- All Research Agreements must be reviewed and signed by the AVPRGS and/or AVP prior to the creation of a research account for the project. Research Agreements without the signature of the AVP or his/her designate (normally the AVPRGS) are invalid and not legally binding on the University. The Academic Vice-President and Provost has the authority to reject any proposed Research Agreement.

- Research Agreements are between external parties and the University. Individual researchers may not directly enter into any Research Agreement with an external party if the project comprises part of their employment at StFX or if the project will be administered or undertaken at StFX.
- Principal Investigators must submit draft Research Agreements to the Research Services Group for review by the RGO and/or ILO, who will help to finalize the Research Agreement. The Principal Investigator is responsible for estimation of the direct costs associated with a research project and for conducting the research according to the terms and conditions of the Research Agreement, including the budget, timelines and deliverables of the research project. The Principal Investigator is also responsible for meeting any requirements of the Research Agreement and complying with all applicable University, Granting Agency and External Sponsor policies when carrying out a research project. Finally, the Principal Investigator is responsible for monitoring research project account budgets and avoiding cost over-expenditures.
- Researchers are required to follow the terms of the StFX Collective Agreement as these relate to research, and must also follow any applicable University policies.

### 3. Overhead Charges for Indirect Costs

- Overhead charges to cover indirect costs of research must be included in all applicable research grants, research contracts, and contribution agreements as a cost item (this excludes Tri-Agency grants, as well as Canada Foundation for Innovation project grants). Indirect costs should be included on any external funding used to lever tri-agency or CFI funding. Adjustments should be made to the project outline and range of work contained in all applicable funding applications so that all required costs can be included in the total budget. Where a contractor or sponsor (including a government agency) has an established policy that specifies an overhead rate that is different from the StFX University rate, the University will accept that rate if it is verified by the contractor or external sponsor in a way that is acceptable to the University. Grants from U.S. Government Agencies and from U.S. Universities are usually treated as contracts, and overhead must be included in budgets at the U.S. Government rate.

### 4. Applicable Indirect Cost (Overhead) Rates

The StFX-AUT Collective Agreement Article 2.7.2 Section 5.1 outlines the required University Indirect Cost (Overhead) Rates on research grants and contracts, as follows:

- Overhead charges to cover indirect costs of research must be included in all applicable research grants, research contracts, and contribution agreements as a cost item. The University shall normally include a flat rate overhead charge of 25% to cover the indirect costs of research in any external research funding application or agreement (including research contracts and funds used to leverage support from other funding programs). This excludes Tri-Agency grants (which are covered by the federal Research Support Fund), as well as Canada Foundation for Innovation project grants. Where a contractor or sponsor (including a government agency) has an established policy that specifies an overhead rate that is different from the StFX University rate, the University will accept that rate if it is verified by the contractor or external sponsor in a way that is acceptable to the University. Grants from U.S. Government Agencies and from U.S. Universities are usually treated as contracts, and overhead must be included in budgets at the U.S. Government rate. The Academic Vice-President & Provost may accept a lower rate or waive overhead charges for the indirect costs of research if agreed to in advance in writing.

### 5. Distribution of Overhead Charges

- All funds collected from overhead charges for the indirect costs of research shall be applied to these costs directly. As such, 40% of annual indirect costs will be applied to the University's General Revenue (for items such as facilities management and financial administration) and 60% will be applied as follows: 10% to the Principal Investigator's research program, 15% to the Principal Investigator's Department or Program, and 35% to the Research Office. A report detailing the distribution of these funds will be made to the StFXAUT by March 31st each year.

#### 6. Research Account Authorization and Expenditures

- For each research project administered at StFX, a research account must be established (some research projects which are renewed, or which receive an amendment, may continue to use a pre-existing account). Normally, the Principal Investigator (PI) on a research contract will be the account holder (i.e., will have primary signing authority on the account).
- Financial Services will make research funds available to the PI once the Research Agreement has been signed by all authorized parties and the PI has obtained all applicable Research Ethics Board and other certification approvals. Financial Services and the Office of the AVPRGS (Research Operations Officer) have the responsibility to withhold approval of research expenses that contravene Granting Agency, External Sponsors or University policies.
- Principal Investigators (PIs) are responsible for ensuring that all expenditures are undertaken in accordance with Research Agreements, as well as policies and requirements of Granting Agencies or External Sponsors. The Research Operations Officer (Office of the AVPRGS) has the responsibility of reviewing financial workflow expenditures associated with research accounts.
- For contracts and contribution agreements, Financial Services staff will assist the PI or research account holders by preparing and submitting invoices and financial statements as requested in the terms of the Research Agreement. The PI should include the name of the external client as well as the address, contact name, dollar amount details and any other information required by the contract or contribution agreement.

#### 7. Over-expenditures in Research Accounts

- Over-expenditures are generally prohibited in research accounts, unless the accounts relate to multi-year projects where over-expenditures are permitted by the Granting Agency or External Sponsor. PIs and researchers responsible for research accounts are responsible for the management of their research funding to avoid over-expenditures, except as provided by multi-year awards and agreements.
- In multi-year research projects, there may be circumstances where expenditures are required in one fiscal period in anticipation of the receipt of approved funding in the next fiscal period. Administrative flexibility is therefore permitted for over-expenditures, subject to the following conditions: In any year except the final year of a multi-year grant, over-expenditures of up to \$3,000 per grant can be initiated by the individual grant holder, subject to the standard procedures for approval of expenditures.
- Over-expenditures in excess of \$3,000 must be pre-approved, as set out below. These requests are subject to a maximum limit of 25% of the following year's grant allotment. Over-expenditures in any grant year must be recovered from the following year's grant allotment. Over-expenditures must not take place in the final year of the grant. A written request for approval to overspend a grant by more than \$3,000 must be initiated by the PI or research account holder and forwarded to the Research Operations Officer in the Office of the AVPRGS for approval.

- Grantees are responsible for monitoring research account expenditures associated with Research Agreements, as well as for any over-expenditures that are not the result of administrative error. When circumstances permit, the University will charge over-expenditures against unpaid PI salary if it is included as part of the Research Agreement budget. Where PI salary is neither included in the Research Agreement nor unpaid to the PI, the University will charge over-expenditures against other eligible research funds of the PI. In cases where over-expenditures occur and the grantee does not have PI salary or other eligible research funds, the grantee is required to provide a cheque to StFX Financial Services to cover the over-expenditures.
- When difficulties arise to the extent that the Principle Investigator cannot fulfill the terms of a Research Agreement, the PI should immediately contact the AVPRGS to seek advice and provide all the information concerning the specific circumstances and as far as possible, document all actions taken. If the PI has failed to full the terms of a Research Agreement resulting in non-payment from the third party, the PI will normally be held responsible for any over-expenditures or outstanding third party obligations.

#### 8. Release from Teaching Responsibilities

- Any Faculty member, who will require release from her/his standard teaching duties in order to comply with a Research Agreement, must apply in writing to their Dean and the AVP prior to the submission of the proposed Research Project to a Granting Agency or External Sponsor.

#### 9. Research (Technical) Services Contracts

- Any Faculty member, who intends to provide research (technical) services to an external sponsor with more than incidental use of the University's equipment, facilities or other resources, shall do so only under a Research Agreement between the University and the External Sponsor. The fees charged to the External Sponsor for the technical services shall be at hourly rates consistent with rates charged for similar services in the applicable industry sector, and shall include indirect costs in accordance with this policy. The fee schedule and any amounts paid to the Faculty member shall be subject to the approval of the AVP or her/his delegate (normally the AVPRGS). If a Faculty member's time is included as a direct cost in the Research Agreement, her/his time and the fee schedule shall be subject to the approval of the AVP or her/his delegate (normally the AVPRGS) upon recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty to which the Faculty member belongs.

#### 10. Independent (Personal) Research Services, Contracts, Business Activities

- In accordance with the provisions of the StFX Collective Agreement, if a Faculty member wishes to provide any independent research services through a personal contract (rather than through the University) as part of her/his own business, those activities are not considered to be part of the Faculty member's employment with the University. The University has no liability in regards to these activities and the Faculty member is not covered by the University's liability insurance when carrying out research services or activities through a personal contract or for a business that they are involved in. The University's liability insurance only covers the Faculty members when the individual is engaged in research activities related to his or her employment with the University.
- Faculty members are not authorized to use University resources in carrying out personal research services or other activities not related to their University employment except in cases where the Faculty member's non-employment activities involve only the minor or incidental use of University space, equipment, facilities, supplies, or services. University resources include, but are not limited to, equipment purchased with funds from research grants.

- If a Faculty member wishes to use University resources in more than a minor or incidental manner, the individual may apply in writing, in advance, to the AVP (or her/his delegate) and such permission may be conditional upon payment of a fee for the use of University resources. If the University grants permission to the Faculty member to use the University's resources in undertaking personal research services or other activities not directly related to University employment, this does not constitute an approval of the activities or an acceptance by the University of any liability related to these activities.

## PROCEDURES

1. All researchers wishing to apply for external research funding associated with a research project or which will result in a Research Agreement, must consult with the Research Grants Office (RGO), the Industry Liaison Office (ILO), or the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS) well in advance of the application submission deadline or planned application submission date. Planning ahead will allow time to consider all relevant avenues of support, ensure that proposals are well prepared in order to maximize chances of success, and include any relevant University overhead charges (if applicable).
2. The applicant must complete a *StFX Research Approval Form* for each external funding application. This Form must be delivered to the AVPRGS along with the required electronic and/or hard copy application documents for all research project applications submitted by StFX or its employees (including applications in which the researcher is a collaborator or co-applicant). This Form provides the basic information required by the RSG for ROMEO Data Entry (ROMEO is the StFX Research Information Database System).
3. All research funding applications that are to be administered by StFX should include administrative overhead charges wherever applicable. The Form includes a line for indirect costs to be noted separately in each application.
4. All research funding applications that include cash or in-kind contributions from the University or partner organizations must include documentation to verify the sources and amounts that are that are being included as commitments in the application.
5. The Research Application Form associated with each external research funding application/proposal must bear the signatures of the applicant(s), the Department Chair, the Dean/Director, and the institutional signing authority (AVPRGS or AVP). The Research Application Form includes a researcher accountability statement (i.e., agreement to comply with key internal and any externally applicable policies concerning research).
6. All external research funding applications that have a firm competition deadline should be submitted to the Research Services Group (RSG) at least 4 weeks prior to the funding agency's deadline. All other applications must be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance of intended submission date. Allowing this lead time is especially important for sufficient review and due diligence, as well as managing workloads, for example, when numerous grant applications are being processed at once.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1: StFX Research Application Form

## RELATED POLICIES

StFX Policy on Research Integrity

## RELATED MATERIALS

Other University policies consulted in the preparation of this policy:

Acadia University:

[http://research.acadiau.ca/tl\\_files/sites/research/grantcontractguide2013.pdf](http://research.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/research/grantcontractguide2013.pdf)

Saint Mary's University:

<http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/ResearchAgreementsPolicy.pdf>

University of New Brunswick:

[http://es.unb.ca/apps/policy-repository/\\_resources/php/download-policy.php?id=YZql](http://es.unb.ca/apps/policy-repository/_resources/php/download-policy.php?id=YZql)

[http://es.unb.ca/apps/policy-repository/\\_resources/php/download-policy.php?id=YZuk](http://es.unb.ca/apps/policy-repository/_resources/php/download-policy.php?id=YZuk)

University of Prince Edward Island:

[http://files.upei.ca/research/research\\_quick\\_start\\_guide.pdf](http://files.upei.ca/research/research_quick_start_guide.pdf)

## APPENDIX 1

StFX Research Application Form