Research Support Fund (RSF)

The Research Support Fund (replacing the Federal Indirect Cost Program) is a Government of Canada fund that helps Canadian universities, colleges, and their affiliated research hospitals and institutes with the hidden costs of research.

- [About the program][1]
- [Eligible Expenses][2]
- [Financial Administration Guide][3]

Definition of Indirect Costs

There a number of centralized institutional activities and services that support the research mandate of the University. These vary in scope and size but are critical to our success.

Institutional Activities and Support Services include the following areas:

- Library: operations and information acquisitions and resources
- Computing and Communications: computing infrastructure including central services, telecommunications and data services
- Physical Plant: utilities, housekeeping, maintenance, grounds, and planning services (excluding ancillary operations)
- Research Administration: Office of Research services including central animal services, grants and contracts administration and legislated requirements for reporting on grants and activities, communications and business development
- Central Support Services: a wide range of services ranging from payroll, accounting including research accounting, audit, environmental and occupational health, security services and purchasing to institutional costs such as legal and insurance costs

Each of these activities is vital to the overall effectiveness of the institution. Coordinating and delivering these services is a complex task and there are significant efficiencies to be obtained by managing them centrally.

Overview how University of Guelph Allocates the Research Support Funds grant

In general, the allocation of RSF to specific units that support research activity at the University is calculated as:

\[
\text{Total Unit Costs} \times \text{Research \%} \times \text{Federal \%} \times \frac{\text{RSF Grant}}{\text{RSF eligible costs}}
\]

Units containing University overhead costs are identified within the broad categories outlined as eligible by the RSF program. The specific units, by category, are as follows:

- **Facilities** (Utilities, Physical Resources, Waste and Chemical Resources, Advanced Analysis Centres)
- **Management and Administration** (Office of Research, Research Financial Services, Administrative Offices, Insurance, Research Admin Information Management System)
It is then determined what portion of the unit costs are used to support research activities, using various assumptions depending on the specific unit.

The total research costs determined above are prorated to reflect the portion of research that is federally funded using a three year average of total funding received from NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR and Networks of Centres of Excellences divided over total received from external sponsors (excluding RSF & CFI). This represents total costs eligible for RSF funding.

The actual amount of the RSF grant that the University receives does not cover the total amount of eligible costs, so the grant is attributed on a pro rata basis to the eligible costs of each of the units.

Performance Indicators and Target Outcomes (2017/18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible expenditure category</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Institutional performance objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Facilities</td>
<td>Invest a portion of Research Support Fund grant in operations, upgrades and maintenance of the Advanced Analysis Centre (AAC).</td>
<td>To increase the use of centralized research scientific equipment through the University’s AAC (Advanced Analysis Centre) by offering cost-effective and efficient testing and experimental support services to researchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Resources</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund to support new research data management (RDM) process (staff and IT resources)</td>
<td>To increase the volume of collection and improve the access to research data through a centralized research management data information system. Increase the number of Data Management Plans (DMP) created by researchers. Increase the use of the Canada-wide tool DMP Assistant to create plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Administration of an institution’s research enterprise</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund to support e-system development for the administration of grants and contracts.</td>
<td>Complete initial phase of the implementation of a new research application processing system to convert paper-based process into on-line, paperless system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory requirement and Accreditation</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund for salary support of personnel within Animal Care Services for Post Approval monitoring</td>
<td>Development and initiation of Post Approval Compliance program for Animal use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund to support faculty disclosures including communication, training, and support services to faculty.</td>
<td>To be one of Canada’s most inventive universities.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Research Facilities</td>
<td>Increase the volume of activity and users by 5% next year as we strive to reach our user and income goals again. This is highly dependent upon how successful U of G faculty members are in securing grants to support their research. The transition of the AAC to the Office of Research could increase awareness and thus usage of these centrally supported facilities across campus</td>
<td>In 2017-18, the target total user fee income for the AAC was exceeded by over 15%. This total includes both internal and external income. Three AAC facilities exceeded their overall target user fee income by 31% and 45%, respectively. The other 2 met 75% of their target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Resources</td>
<td>Increase volume of data and usage statistics on the RDM in FY 2017-18 by 50%. Establish a baseline of number of</td>
<td>The total number of faculty members using the AAC remained consistent as compared to last year, but the total internal user fee income increased by over $100 000. The Genomics Facility’s internal income represented a large portion of this increase. External user fee income almost doubled compared to last year ($55 846 in 2016-17, $103 941 in 2017-18). This fact may be a little misleading as a couple of major external users paid for services upfront that may carryover for a couple of years. All facilities met or exceeded their target external user fee income for 2017-18. Although overall, we exceeded our target user fee income for this fiscal year, we understand that there will be continued variability in the yearly total user fee income due to such things as the availability of council funds, the global budget (for external users), the retirement of major users and the success of our own grant applications to obtain new equipment (which can attract more users). We establish “surplus/emergency” accounts in each facility that contains their accumulated budget carryover balances, positive or negative. Any accrued surplus funds help offset budget carryover deficits, allow for the purchase of required small pieces of equipment and help pay for maintenance/repair expenditures that exceeded predicted expectations.</td>
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NOTE: Figure projections for FY2017-18 were based on the expectation of Tri-Agency data policy implementation which did not occur.
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<td>Researchers and Researchers creating data management plans. From a baseline established in 2016-17 of 22 researchers and 6 plans, increase in number of researchers creating Data Management Plans using the DMP Assistant tool by 25% in FY 2017-18.</td>
<td>Data sets: 15 new data sets added in 2017-2018. Number increased by 29%. This did not meet our target. Usage statistics: Number of downloads during FY2017-18 was 1,153. Number increased by 15%. However, this did not meet our target. We have 25 users in FY2017-18 and 16 plans created. The number of researchers increased by 13%. The number of users did not meet our target. The number of plans increased by 166%. This exceeded our target.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and Administration of an institution’s research enterprise</td>
<td>Testing, piloting and rollout (go-live) of the second module, grants and contracts.</td>
<td>Work progressed on the back office administrative data entry functions for grants and contracts processes using business process management tool.</td>
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<td>Regulatory Requirement and Accreditation</td>
<td>Formalized Post Approval Monitoring Program for Animal Use meeting the requirements of the CCAC.</td>
<td>A new position to add a Post-Approval Review Coordinator to Animal Care Services was filled and the incumbent is developing the review process.</td>
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<td>Intellectual Property</td>
<td>Maintain top five national ranking, in terms of inventions reported per research dollar For 2017-18, UG reported 190 inventions with a three-year average of 133. The 3-year average results in approximate invention per $1.1M, which places UG among the top Universities in the country.</td>
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Communication Stories related to use of Research Support Funds at the University of Guelph

2017/18 - New animal care program gives researchers better insights. [4]
2017/18 - Using Data Management Plans will keep you research data safe and give your research more exposure. [5]

2016/17 - New office will help UofG research get out to the world [6]

2015/16 - Technology and expertise that foster innovation [7]

Reports by Fiscal Year

Click on one of the links below to view the University of Guelph's Summary of its use of the Research Support Funds by category, Impact Statements (relevant to the FICP program prior to 2015/16) and Annual Outcomes Report by fiscal year:

- Use of Funds [8] (pie graph by category)
- Impact Statements [9] (relevant to the FICP program which preceded RSF)
- Annual Outcomes Reports [10]

Source URL: https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/report/research-support-fund

Links
[8] https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/reports/ficp-expenditures
[9] https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/reports/ficp-impact-statements
[10] https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/reports/ficp-outcomes-reports