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:

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

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 (2018/19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible expenditure category</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Institutional performance objective</th>
</tr>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<td>Research Facilities</td>
<td>Yearly, the AAC would like to increase total user fee income by 5% but there are many factors that influence the total income. The availability of funds from granting agencies, the number of successful applicants from U of G greatly influence the pool of funds available for researchers on campus to use our services.</td>
<td>In 2018-19, the target for 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 15%, 47%, and 47%, respectively. The other 2 met 75% of their target. Projected income be adjusted in 2019-20.</td>
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<td>One outcome in the 2018-19 fiscal year was the completion of the transition of the AAC to a unit within the Office of Research. Ancillary changes that accompany this transition include a website upgrade and an increase in awareness of the services we provide.</td>
<td>The total number of faculty members using the AAC increased by 4% from last year (157 to 163). It is encouraging that the proportion of faculty members that use more than one facility increased from 36% to 42% of users.</td>
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<td>External user fee income decreased significantly compared to last year ($103,941 in 2017-18, $76,886 in 2018-19) but the numbers are misleading. There was a large prepayment made in NMR 2017-18 that skews the overall tally. If the external income totals from 2014-17 are averaged, the external income total is slightly lower than that achieved in 2018-19. External income fluctuates as it is highly dependent upon factors over which the AAC has control such as the economy and provincial budgets.</td>
<td>Although the AAC has been fairly consistent in user fee income totals, there will be continued variability in the yearly total fee income due to such things as the availability of Tri-Agency funds, the global budget (for external users), the retirement of major users and the success of AAC grant applications to obtain new equipment (which can attract more users).</td>
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<td>The AAC website has been upgraded and moved to the Office of Research server. All facility websites follow the same template which makes navigating in between sites much more fluid. AAC is now a separate unit in the University of Guelph (not</td>
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<td><strong>Research Resources</strong></td>
<td>Increase volume of data and usage statistics by 15%.</td>
<td>NOTE: Figure projections for FY2018 were based on the expectation of the release/finalization of the new Tri-Age data management policy and this did not occur.</td>
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<td>Increase usage statistics in FY2018-19 by 15%.</td>
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<td>Increase number of researchers using the DMP Assistant in FY2018-19 by 15%.</td>
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<td><strong>Management and Administration of an institution’s research enterprise</strong></td>
<td>Testing, piloting and rollout (go-live) of the second module, grants and contracts.</td>
<td>Significant progress was made on the development of the business process management tool (internal research database) for back office administrative entry functions for grants and contract processes. Go-live is scheduled for May 2019.</td>
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<td><strong>Regulatory Requirement and Accreditation</strong></td>
<td>Initiate a committee of the compliance units (Research Risk, Ethics and Animal Care Services) to develop more consistent processes and identify improved</td>
<td>Committee of compliance units established with a mandate to share and implement best practices and apply a consistent approach in the processes of each unit.</td>
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<td><strong>Intellectual Property</strong></td>
<td>Maintain top five national ranking, in terms of inventions reported per research dollar.</td>
<td>For 2018-19, UG reported 206 inventions, with a 3-year average of 189. The 3-year average was lower than the target.</td>
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Eligible expenditure category | Output | Institutional performance objective
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average results in approximately 1 invention per $0.8M of research, which places U of G among the top Universities in the country in that category.

Communication Stories related to use of Research Support Funds at the University of Guelph

2018/19 - Predatory journals: [https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/predatory-journals](https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/predatory-journals) [4]

2018/19 - Open Access: [https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/open-access](https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/open-access) [5]

2017/18 - New animal care program gives researchers better insights. [6]

2017/18 - Using Data Management Plans will keep you research data safe and give your research more exposure. [7]

2016/17 - New office will help UofG research get out to the world [8]

2015/16 - Technology and expertise that foster innovation [9]

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** [10] (pie graph by category)
- **Impact Statements** [11] (relevant to the FICP program which preceded RSF)
- **Annual Outcomes Reports** [12]

Source URL: [https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/report/research-support-fund](https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/report/research-support-fund)

Links
[4] https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/predatory-journals
[5] https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/open-access
[9] https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/technology-and-expertise-foster-innovation
[10] https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/reports/ficp-expenditures
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