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]

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)
Regulatory (VP Research-General Risk, Animal Care Services, Environmental Health & Safety)

Intellectual Property (Catalyst Centre)

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Eligible expenditure category</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Institutional performance objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Facilities</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund grant in operations, upgrades and maintenance of the Advanced Analysis Centre (AAC).</td>
<td>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>
<td>Continuous improvement in both volume of services processed, relevance of services provided and response times for research services across all AAC research service facilities in FY 2016-17. Increase usage by researchers across campus (students, staff, faculty).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Resources</td>
<td>Invest portion of Research Support Fund to support RDM process (staff and IT resources)</td>
<td>Increase the number of Data Management Plans created by researchers. Increase the use of the Canada-wide tool DMP Assistant to create plans.</td>
<td>Increased number of registered researchers and associated data management plans in the DMP Assistant system each fiscal year.</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 hiring of Project manager, system procurement and technical support to complete Phase 1.</td>
<td>Complete initial phase of the implementation of a new research application processing system to convert paper-based process into on-line paper-less system.</td>
<td>Completion of conversion design and planning and the creation of test system. Begin user training and testing of initial transaction in FY 2016-17</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>
<td>Recruitment of Post Approval Monitoring co-ordinator. Post Approval Compliance program defined and commenced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization</td>
<td>Target Outcome for 2016/17</td>
<td>Reported Outcome</td>
<td>Target Outcome for 2017/18</td>
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<tr>
<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>
<td>National ranking of universities by number of disclosures per faculty.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>There is hope of increasing volume of activity and users by 5% next year but this is dependent upon how successful U of G faculty members are in securing grants to support their research. 84% of our total income for 2015-16 came from U of G users. An improvement in the stability of the global economy will help retain our external industrial users.</td>
<td>The AAC as a whole did not increase the overall volume of activity as predicted but it remained fairly consistent. The total user fee income (includes both internal and external income) decreased by 6.1% from last year. Internal user fee income decreased by only 0.4% from 2015-16. We reached 87% of our predicted total. There were 156 different faculty members from all 4 science based colleges that used the AAC in 2016-17 (down from 160 in 2015-16). This shows that over 97% of our faculty users continued to use the AAC. The lack of growth in the use of the AAC facilities could be due to the limited availability in research funds. Although external income decreased significantly (35%) from 2015-16, we reached 93% of our expected total. This was due to the fact that we exceeded last year’s external income prediction by 55%. The total number of external users remained constant (30 external users in both 2016-17 and 2015-16). There are fewer government agencies using the AAC due perhaps to budget freezes. We expect industrial user income totals to increase again as the economy stabilizes.</td>
<td>There is hope that we will 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>
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| Research Resources | Increase volume of data and usage statistics on the RDM in FY 2016-17 by 10%. | Increase in number of: Data sets added: 150% increase from 12 added in 2015-16 to 30 added in 2016-17 Files added: 497% from 166 added in 2015-16 to 992 in 2016-17 Volume increase: 441% increase from 29GB in 2015-16 to 157GB in 2016-17 Usage statistics: Increase of 479% from 1061 downloads in 2015-16 to 6153 in 2016-17 | Increase volume of data and usage statistics on the RDM in FY 2017-18 by 50%. Establish a baseline of number of researchers creating data management plans. From a baselines 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 FY2017-18 |
| Management and Administration of an institution’s research enterprise | Testing, piloting and rollout (go-live) of the first module, human ethics. System configuration and design of all e-forms for the second module, grants and contacts, 80% complete. | The human ethics module was tested and then rolled out on December 7, 2016. System configuration and design of e-forms on the grants and contacts module, 50% | Testing, piloting and rollout (go-live) of the second module, grants and contracts. |
| Regulatory Requirement and Accreditation | 1. Identification, review and/or development of all Environmental Health and Safety related policies to be undertaken 2. Additional Radiation Safety Officer to be hired to support the Radiation Safety Program. To facilitate compliance and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, the review, revision and development of radiation safety policies, processes, operating procedures, checklists and training | First stage review of Environment Health and Safety related polices completed Radiation Safety manual reviewed and approved by the regulator. Laboratory safety inspections. | ?Formalized Post Approval Monitoring Program for Animal Use meeting the requirements of the CCAC. |
packages to be continued focusing on x-rays and lasers.

3. Regulatory requirements
   1. WHIMS-GHS compliance via continued communications and program updates
   2. Standardized comprehensive lab inspection program

| Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization | Achieve top-five in national ranking. | For 2016-17, UG reported 177 inventions, with a three year average of 101. The 3-year average results in approximately 1 invention per $1.5M in research, putting UG in the top two nationally. | Maintain top five national ranking, in terms of inventions reported per research dollar. |

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

2016/17 - Research Ethics now online [4]

2016/17 - New office will help UofG research get out to the world [5]

2015/16 - Announcement: Launch of the Research Administration and Information Management System (RAIMS) [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
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