DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Research Support Fund

Accountability and Public Acknowledgment

updated May 2023

Public acknowledgment

1. *definition of the indirect costs of research, along with concrete examples of the types of expenses incurred by the institution in managing the research funded:*

   Research funding provided through the granting agencies (the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)) is generally limited to direct project costs (e.g., research equipment, research assistant salaries, etc.). Institutions whose researchers receive funding for research also incur costs to manage their research enterprise. These are often called "indirect costs of research." These costs include, for example, the costs of maintaining modern labs and equipment; costs of providing researchers with access to up-to-date knowledge resources; costs of managing and administering research; costs of meeting regulatory and ethical requirements; and costs of transferring research results to knowledge users.

   Examples of the types of expenses incurred at Dalhousie University and affiliate hospitals in managing the research funded are:

   - research space facility fees, e.g., custodial, maintenance, security, utilities and insurance, and research equipment maintenance
   - electronic data access and resources including technical support, e.g., portion of library operating costs
   - Research Services' staff assistance and oversight
   - regulatory compliance including human and animal ethics certifications and research integrity and scholarly misconduct services
   - research commercialization and intellectual property services and support through the Office of Commercialization and Industry Engagement

2. *description of the Research Support Fund (RSF) program and Incremental Project Grant stream of the RSF program, and link to the program's website:*

   The federal government Research Support Fund program assists Canadian postsecondary institutions and their affiliated research hospitals and institutes with the indirect costs associated with managing the research funded by the three federal research granting agencies:

   - the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR);
   - the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC); and
   - the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Every year, the federal government invests in research excellence in the areas of health sciences, engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities through its three granting agencies. The Research Support Fund program reinforces this research investment by helping institutions ensure that their federally funded research projects are conducted in world-class facilities with the best equipment and supports available.

Research funding provided through the granting agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) is generally limited to direct project costs (e.g., research equipment, research assistant salaries, etc.). Institutions whose researchers receive funding for research also incur costs to manage their research enterprise. These are often called "indirect costs of research." These costs include, for example, the costs of maintaining modern labs and equipment; costs of providing researchers with access to up-to-date knowledge resources; costs of managing and administering research; costs of meeting regulatory and ethical requirements; and costs of transferring research results to knowledge users.

Eligible institutions receive an annual grant through the fund to defray a portion of the indirect costs incurred to support federally funded research. The program (formerly known as the Indirect Costs Program) was introduced in 2003 as part of the federal government's strategy to make Canada one of the world's top countries in research and development.

More information on the Research Support Fund program can be found on the website:

http://www.rsf-fsr.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/index-eng.aspx

The Incremental Project Grants (IPG) funding opportunity is a new stream of the Research Support Fund (RSF), in addition to the RSF grant, that provides further support for the indirect costs of research. In 2022-23, Research Security was added as the fifth priority area of Incremental Project Grants.

The objective of the IPG stream aligns with the RSF's objective to reinforce the federal research investment by helping Canadian postsecondary institutions ensure their federally funded research projects are conducted in world-class facilities with the best equipment and administrative support available. By directing funds to specific investments and annual or multi-year projects initiated by institutions, the IPG will facilitate tracking and reporting, to better demonstrate the impact of these investments.

IPG funding is limited to institutions that meet the RSF eligibility criteria and are at the highest funding levels in the current RSF formula, which is equivalent to receiving $7 million or more in eligible direct research funding. Eligibility for the IPG will be assessed against this threshold on an annual basis.

More information on the Incremental Project Grants stream of the Research Support program can be found on the website:

https://www.rsf-fsr.gc.ca/apply-demande/ipg-sps-eng.aspx

3. *list of Dalhousie University affiliated institutions:*

- Nova Scotia Health Authority
- IWK Health Centre

See attached Affiliated Organizations Validation Form.

4. *overview of how the institution allocates its grant funds under each of the five categories:*

The Research Support Fund Grant is included as a revenue source to the University Operating budget and helps defray a portion of these costs which are imbedded in the various responsibility centres in the operating budget. For example, a portion of the grant supports utility costs for research space on university campuses which are included in the University budget for Energy, Water, Taxes, and Insurance. Most of the costs supported by the grant are ongoing. Where the federal government allocates increased Research Support Grant funding to the University, it is allocated to the various categories based on the cost drivers for each category. As an example, as additional space is provided for research activities, the grant allocated for the maintenance and insurance of space is adjusted.

The University directs funds to specific research initiatives and the following is a key strategic direction for Dalhousie over the next several years which will require funding support to achieve:

Expand the opportunities for research, scholarly and artistic work

- Direct and attract resources to priority research areas, with local, national, and international importance
- Attract and retain outstanding professors
- Attract and support excellent graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to strengthen the impact of research
- Foster undergraduate research
- Enhance research with state-of-the-art facilities and resources in accordance with the Institutional Framework for the Support of Research.

The hospitals allocate funding from the Research Support Fund to various initiatives including to maintain and revitalize existing research space and equipment; provide systems required to support research; support the administration of new research initiatives; supplement Research Ethics administration; and maintain lab safety and certification requirements.

For 2023/24, the Research Support Fund (RSF) grant to Dalhousie University (including affiliate hospitals) was $8,476,827, the RSF Incremental Project Grant (IPG) was $1,410,304, and the RSF Research Security Grant (RS) was $601,187. These funds were allocated accordingly:

Research Support Fund ($8,476,827):

Research facilities	$2,980,432
Research resources	$1,220,245
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	$3,505,645
Regulatory requirements and accreditation	$646,018
Intellectual property and knowledge mobilization	$124,487

Incremental Project Grant ($1,410,304):

Research facilities	$1,228,795
Research resources	$17,465
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	$164,044

Research Security ($601,187):

Research resources	$302,408
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	$298,779

Setting and reporting on institutional performance objectives

5. *Identify institutional performance objectives for the grant. Objectives should be in accordance with how the institution chooses to invest its grant in either one, several or all five of the eligible expenditure categories, and must include corresponding indicators and target outcomes:*

Research Support Fund
2023 - 2024

Eligible expenditure category	Output (investment or expense of RSF grant funds)	Performance Objective	Performance Indicator	Target Outcome
Research facilities	Support for Core Facilities	Promote development growth of Core research facilities and multi-user space	Core Facilities offer centralized research equipment and expert technical support to the broader research community	Core Facilities provide effective and efficient usage of research resources under a sustainable operation model
Research resources	Acquisition of a Core Facilities software management tool	Support operations of Core research facilities and multi-user space	Core Facilities offer centralized research equipment and expert technical support to the broader research community	Core Facilities provide effective and efficient usage of research resources under a sustainable operation model
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	Support for a Mitacs Business Development Specialist	Support for student research placements with industry	Number of annual Mitacs placements	Increased capacity for work integrated learning through student research
Regulatory requirements and accreditation	Support University Committee on Laboratory Animals (UCLA) members	Support UCLA members professional development and training	Conference attendance	UCLA members are more fully informed of current issues and initiatives
Intellectual property and knowledge mobilization	Recruitment of a new position in the Office of Commercialization and Industry Engagement – Manager, Computer Science	Support development and growth of applied research partnerships with industry collaborators in the big data ocean sector	Engagement and collaboration with industry partners in the oceans sector	Increased industry partnerships and/or contracts with technology partners in the oceans sector

Incremental Project Grant
2023 - 2024

Eligible expenditure category	Output (investment or expense of RSF grant funds)	Performance Objective	Performance Indicator	Target Outcome
Research facilities	Deferred maintenance undertaken in the Life Sciences Centre (LSC)	Support and improve research capacity	Research space is renewed with continued adherence to safety standards	Research space is renewed to provide a safe environment to support important research priorities
Research facilities Research resources Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	Creation of a Data Handling, Advancement, and Transformation Centre (IWK Health Centre)	Digitize and preserve research administration records in a secure electronic environment, advance administrative capacity through training, and enhance research support through faculty and researcher education	Number of digitized files, reduction in storage requirements, number staff trained, increase in grant submission/success rates, and number of collaboration consultations	A paperless administration system, improved grant and contract administration, and research excellence through continued education in best practices for research design and methodology, data analysis, grant writing, research ethics, contracts administration, and financial management
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	Recruitment of a Clinical Trials Study Start-up Specialist (x2) and Research Nurse Patient Navigator (Nova Scotia Health)	Make Nova Scotia Health the partner of choice for clinical trials	Reduced administrative burden on research teams and improved start-up timelines expected by industry partners	Better support patients and families as they interact with matching engines and virtual clinical trial platforms through equitable access to these services

Research Security
2023 - 2024

Eligible expenditure category	Output (investment or expense of RSF grant funds)	Performance Objective	Performance Indicator	Target Outcome
Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	Support development and resourcing of Research Security Management and Review Committee, including recruitment of a new position – Director, Research Security	Integrate national security considerations into the development and evaluation of research partnerships	Positive results following Agency review of funding applications	Development and evolution of processes to support critical evaluation of research partnerships, including who researchers partner with and what areas of research are at higher risk, to support researchers and government funders to undertake consistent, risk-targeted due diligence to identify and mitigate potential national security risks to research
Research resources	Support development of a risk assessment support tool – SecureScholar.ca	Access to a cost-effective but rigorous platform for Canadian research security due diligence that supports rapid sharing of relevant open-source due diligence information across Canada's research security community of practice	Percentage of projects where topic-based risks can be effectively identified and assessed using SecureScholar.ca and percentage of projects where organization-based risks can be effectively identified and assessed using SecureScholar.ca	Production version of SecureScholar.ca platform capable of supporting the majority of topic- and organization-related research security due diligence
Research resources Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise	Support the development of a new service to provide secure, reliable storage to university researchers, including recruitment of a new support position	Provide secure and reliable storage to university researchers to conduct and store research data	Number and amount of research data stores moved or housed on the new storage infrastructure and the number of consulting engagements that are completed by the new support position	Introduction of storage technology stack that will increase security and resiliency for researcher storage data leading to an improved security posture overall for the research community