
2.CC-2023: Responsible Use of Research Funds

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance on the responsible use of funds obtained by faculty (or other institutional representatives) to support research and other scholarly activities at StMU. This policy is aligned with related institutional policies and adheres to the principles of the current version of *Tri Council Guidelines on Financial Administration*.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all faculty and institutional representatives who seek out or otherwise engage in funded research activities. It also applies to offices directly responsible for supporting and managing research funds, namely those of the Director of Research and the Director of Finance, as well as the VP Academic and the VP Finance.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Director of Finance (DoF):** Manager of the Finance department at StMU. Reports to the Vice President of Finance.
- 3.2 Director of Research (DoR):** Manager of research-related activities and initiatives of the University. Reports to the Vice President Academic.
- 3.3 Equipment:** tangible or intangible items that are used wholly or in part for research purposes.
- 3.4 External Academic Research Funding:** money obtained via application to a Sponsor that is destined to support research or scholarly activities.
- 3.5 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** documentation that demonstrates organizations have consulted and coordinated the responsibilities of their grant activities.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited	Review Frequency
Academic Council	Academic	October 31, 2023		Every 5 years

- 3.6 Principal Investigator (PI):** the StMU researcher taking overall responsibility for the research project/grant and the main point of contact.
- 3.7 Research:** an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation.
- 3.8 Sponsor:** an external organization to which a faculty member has applied to/received funding to conduct a specific research project.
- 3.9 Tri Council:** Federal Sponsor of University research. It encompasses three funding agencies each with their own unique mandate which include, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Each agency operates independently and offers grants and awards that range from large multinational research projects costing in the millions of dollars to postgraduate scholarships and travel bursaries.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Director of Research (DoR)**
 - 4.1.1** The DoR is responsible for assisting, reviewing, and approving all research grant applications prior to their submission.
 - 4.1.2** The DoR's approval is necessary for any application made to a Sponsor. Applications submitted without the knowledge and approval of the DoR may not be supported by the University.
 - 4.1.3** The DoR shares up to date budgeting guidelines and policies with all faculty and offers research costing guidance.
 - 4.1.4** Institutional External Research Funding, often obtained from indirect cost models as part of grant applications, is the responsibility of the DoR and VPA.
 - 4.1.5** As the representative for research at the university, the DoR is responsible for submitting requests and reports (e.g., grant amendment forms, F300s) to internal and external stakeholders (e.g., Tri-Council agencies) in a timely fashion.
 - 4.1.6** The DoR is the main administrator for all research related online platforms (e.g., GSAP, Convergence, etc).

4.2 Director of Finance (DoF)

- 4.2.1 The DoF is responsible for establishing separate accounts for each successful research grant. When setting up an account the DoF will work with the Principal Investigator (PI) to ensure the establishment of such a unique account is made.
- 4.2.2 The DoF is responsible for ensuring that all research grant expenditures are charged against the appropriate account and expense codes.
- 4.2.3 The DoF shall provide the DoR with the necessary year end financial statements in a timely and agreed upon fashion.
- 4.2.4 The office of the DoF shall provide the Director of Research (DoR) with quarterly account reports for all external and internal research accounts.
- 4.2.5 The office of the DoF shall provide PIs with quarterly account reports for each of their external and/or internal research grants.
- 4.2.6 The office of the DoF shall make available to the PI and/or DoR active and past research account ledgers, upon request.
- 4.2.7 The DoF shall keep accurate ledgers of research-related grant accounts to ensure this data meets the requirements of the institution, its auditors, and research Sponsors.

4.3 Principal Investigator (PI)

- 4.3.1 The PI is responsible for all aspects of their grant, including, but not limited to, ensuring that all expenditures charged against such accounts are consistent with this policy and the policies of their Sponsor, the Integrity in Research policy, the Research Assistant policy, and any other relevant policy.
- 4.3.2 The PI is responsible for communicating their intent to submit grant applications to the DoR at least two weeks prior to the Sponsor deadline. Not doing so may result in the grant not being approved by the Institution.
- 4.3.3 The PI is responsible for submitting all appropriate documentation, including receipts and invoices, for grant-related expenditures in a timely manner for approval to the DoR who shall submit them to the DoF for processing.

- 4.3.4 The PI shall be responsible for restituting or reimbursing any funds used for ineligible expenditures, or for any grant over-expenditures.
- 4.3.5 The PI is responsible for all aspects of hiring Research Assistants associated with their research.
- 4.3.6 The PI, with the assistance of the DoR and DoF, is responsible for submitting all required or requested financial reports to the Sponsor.

5. RESEARCH COSTINGS

When reviewing applications for External Academic Research Funding the DoR pays special attention to the costing of research grant applications. If costings, or any other part of the application, should be deemed inadequate by the DoR, the application may not be approved for submission to the Sponsor.

5.1 Salaries & other reimbursements

- 5.1.1 The salaries of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty members, who are eligible to apply for External Academic Research Funding, are paid by the institution.
 - 5.1.1.1 PI's who receive grants may qualify for course release (*see Collective Agreement*).
 - 5.1.1.1.1 Should a PI's grant be greater than \$30,000 and allow it, the PI may opt to buy-out additional teaching responsibilities. This must be approved by the DoR and respective Dean prior to submission of the grant application. The full cost to hire a sessional instructor will be charged against the account of the designated project.
- 5.1.2 Current StMU PI's, and those who bring research funding with them to a StMU faculty position, will work with their respective Dean and follow the Collective Agreement to ensure appropriate teaching compensation (*see Collective Agreement*).

- 5.1.3 When a PI hires Research Assistants, the position and pay must be consistent with the policies of the Sponsor and StMU (see *Research Assistant Policy*).
- 5.1.4 Wages and salaries of Research Assistants hired to work on a PI's funded research project will be charged against the project account at the direction of the PI and/or DoR.
- 5.1.5 Honorariums and any other voluntary payments made to an individual for their services in the amount of \$500 or more per year are considered taxable by the Canadian Revenue Agency and require the Social Insurance Number of the payee.

5.2 Travel

- 5.2.1 Expenditures for travel must align with current institutional costings (e.g., per diem rates, mileage) (see *StMU Expense Reimbursement Handbook*).
- 5.2.2 Expenditures for travel must be reasonable with efforts made to select an economical option, or as set out by Sponsor guidelines.

5.3 Equipment

- 5.3.1 The PI must use their best judgment and expertise to gain reasonable cost estimates for all equipment included in grant applications.
 - 5.3.1.1 If equipment is obtained below budgeted cost the PI will use their discretion to redirect the surplus to other aspects of their research project or, should the Sponsor approve, have it reassigned to the General Research Fund (see 9.2).
- 5.3.2 The PI understands that StMU retains ownership of any equipment purchased with Sponsor funds, unless:
 - 5.3.2.1 the Sponsor confirms, in writing, otherwise;
 - 5.3.2.2 ownership is transferred to another institution, requiring a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines the terms the new owner must abide by;

5.3.2.3 the equipment is disposed of, wherein StMU must make reasonable efforts to use any monies acquired from disposal for research-related purposes.

6. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are those overhead costs accrued during research activities. These may include the cost of maintaining research offices, labs, equipment, and the salaries of administration staff who support research. Applications for External Academic Research Funding shall include indirect costs as part of their budget at 20% of the total requested funds when:

6.1 The Sponsor considers indirect costs of research as an eligible expense or;

6.2 The Sponsor is silent on the eligibility of indirect research costs.

6.2.1 Applications to any of the Tri Council agencies are exempt from including indirect costs as these Sponsors include these costs in their funding models via the Research Support Fund.

7. RESEARCH EXPENSES

The office of the DoF will ensure that the prompt processing of DoR approved grant expenditures are made to the PI or indicated recipients (e.g., Research Assistant), pending the submission of up-to-date and adequate documentation and evidence. (For procedures, see *StMU Expense Reimbursement Handbook*.)

8. TRANSFERS OF FUNDS

8.1 PI's may submit to the DoR a request that their grant funds be transferred to another internal account. The DoR will use their discretion to ascertain whether or not this request can be supported. If so, the DoR will work with the DoF to facilitate this transfer.

8.2 PI's may submit to the DoR a request that their grant funds be transferred in full or in part to another institution. This typically requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be established between institutions. This shall be managed

by the DoR who will negotiate an MOU that adheres to the requirements and guidelines of the Sponsor, and institution(s). Once an MOU is established the DoR will ask the DoF to transfer monies as set out in the agreement.

9. CLOSING OF GRANTS

- 9.1 The institution will hold grant funds in a separate account until they are used to the satisfaction of the PI before the Sponsors published end of grant date.
- 9.2 Should any Tri-Council grant funds remain unused at the published end of grant date, these will be redirected to the institution's General Research Fund (GRF). This trust account is under the authority of the DoR and is where unspent funds of expired or terminated grants are transferred with the authorization of the associated Tri Council granting agency. Funds from the GRF may be used at the DoR's discretion to support research at the institution and may only be used towards direct research costs.
 - 9.2.1 Any residual research grant funds from other Sponsors will also be transferred to the GRF provided this does not conflict with Sponsor policy.
- 9.3 If a PI wishes to use external grant funds after the Sponsor-published grant end, they must notify the DoR of their intentions here and follow Sponsor guidelines to seek an extension. This must be enacted at least 1 month before the end of grant date. If successful, the PI must provide evidence of such to the DoR who will liaise with the DoF to arrange the approved extension of funding.
- 9.4 If a PI wishes to use internal grant funds after the published grant end, they may submit to the DoR a request in writing citing clear grounds for an extension. This must be done at least 1 month before the published end of grant date. The DoR will use their discretion to make a decision here. Barring unforeseeable circumstances, a PI may not be granted more than 1 extension to their internal grant. If successful, the DoR will write to the DoF to arrange the approved extension of funding.
- 9.5 The PI is responsible for submitting any Sponsor-required financial reports related to their specific grant upon the completion of the research project.

10. AUTHORITIES AND OFFICERS

Approving Authority: Academic Council

Designated Executive Authorities: Vice-President Academic, Director of Research, Vice-President Finance

Procedural Authority: Director of Finance, Director of Research

11. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Collective Agreement, StMU Faculty Association and Board of Governors (currently ratified)
- Integrity in Research and Scholarship policy (2020)
- StMU Expense Reimbursement Handbook (n.d.)
- Student Wage Policy (2019)
- Research Assistant Policy (2023)
- Research Administration Roles and Responsibilities Policy (2009)