Management of Research Funding Policy

Responsible Officer: Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Approved by: Vice Chancellor
Approved and commenced: August, 2013
Review by: August, 2016

Relevant Legislation, Ordinance, Rule and/or Governance Level Principle:
- University of Tasmania Act 1992
- Governance Level Principle 7 – Procurement and Contracts
- Ordinance 7 – Execution of Documents by the University

Responsible Organisational Unit: Office of Research Services

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1 Objective

The objective of the Management of Research Funding Policy is to:

- ensure that research funds are managed in accordance with the funding agreements, relevant Financial Management statutes and relevant policies of the University of Tasmania.

1 Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff, students, visiting fellows and scholars, and persons holding discretionary titles of the University of Tasmania (hereafter referred to as researchers), who are involved in the conduct of research associated with the University
- all staff (hereafter referred to as administrators), who are involved in the administration of research funds associated with the University
- all funds provided to the university for the purpose of conducting or supporting research (hereafter referred to as research funds).

2 Policy Provisions

The University acknowledges that research funds represent a large investment of public and private funding and must be managed in line with public expectations of good governance, transparency, corporate social responsibility and the efficient and effective use of funds.

2.1 Research funds

The following criteria are to be applied to determine that the purpose of the provision of funds is for the conduct or support of research:

3.1.1 Designated Research Funds

All funding received which states it is for the purpose of supporting a designated research project. This includes internal and external grants, contract research, research consultancies and collaborative or commercial research ventures.

2.2 Funding Agreements

A funding agreement that constitutes a contract is required prior to the acceptance and transfer of designated research funds. This agreement may be instigated by either party, and must be reviewed by the University’s Legal Office. The funding agreement must be signed in accordance with the Schedule of Contract Delegations (under development).
Where funds are received from donations of public fundraising an internal agreement outlining the conditions of the use of funds must be entered into prior to the release of funds.

Consideration must be given to the provisions noted in Appendix A in the drafting of either a formalised legal contract or an internal agreement.

3.2.1 Collaborative Research

Where the University is involved in any collaborative research project, a collaborative research agreement must be established in accordance with the University’s Collaborative Research Policy.

3.2.2 Types of financial arrangements

The type of financial arrangements between the University and other research Institutions must be clearly defined by a formal agreement. Types of financial arrangements and required definitions are detailed in the procedures underpinning this policy.

Where the University is the administrating institution a financial agreement by way of contract must be entered into between the funding body and the University. This is the primary contract and all sub-contracts for the disbursement of funds must reflect the intent, principles, expectations and standards of the primary contract.

Where the University is a participating institution, but not the administrating institution, a contract must be entered into which defines the University’s involvement as research.

3.2.3 Research Funds Life Cycle

The management of research funds comprises a series of stages commencing with the preparation for any funding application and concluding with the acquittal of the funding agreements and the closing of the research funding account.

3.2.4 Planning

The following planning requirements apply:

- Applications for funding are required to be costed in accordance with the costing guidelines of the University or the relevant funding body.

- Principal Investigators are required to ensure requested research funds are sufficient to cover the cost (including UTAS indirect and risk management costs) required to achieve anticipated research outcomes. Requested research funds and University in-kind contributions must be approved by the Head of Budget Centre and DVC-R (or delegate).

3.2.5 Initiation
Formal funding agreements and ethics consent are required prior to expenditure of research funds.

3.2.6 Duration

Funds will be managed through the grant in accordance with the funding agreement, the provisions of this policy (specifically clauses 4.3 and 4.4) and related procedures.

3.2.7 Completion

All research accounts must be closed at the end of the research project and surplus funds, as defined in accrual accounting, must be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the funding agreement and internal University procedure.

3.3 Responsibilities

The management of research funds is a shared responsibility comprising of planning, day to day management, governance and accounting.

Responsibility for the management of funds, including the identification, management and mitigation of risks, is to be devolved down to the most practical level. The most practical level is that at which actions can be performed, verified, controlled and rectified.

The University reserves its right to take carriage of any aspect of the management of research funds in order to fulfil its legal and contractual responsibilities to government or to any funding body. This will occur only when there is reason to believe that if such action were not taken the university would be in breach of its legal or contractual obligations.

3.3.1 Mutual Responsibilities

Everyone responsible for an aspect of the management of research funds for a research project will must act to support the governance, management and accounting of those research funds. They must supply information and documentation as required to the relevant personnel in a timely manner.

3.3.2 University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania is required to have robust and transparent governance processes in place that provide assurance that the standards of financial management meet public expectations.

The University is required to provide the infrastructure to administer research funds with integrity. To this end Financial Services, will:

- establish separate project account(s), for each new research agreement within the finance system
- make project reports available detailing all financial transactions and summarising the financial status of individual research projects
• prepare invoices to Funding Bodies in accordance with funding agreements
• prepare financial acquittals for Funding Bodies and other Funding Partners as required under funding agreements
• co-ordinate independent audits of research funds as required under funding agreements
• assist in the conduct of internal audits of research funds as initiated under the Internal Audit Program
• conduct audits as required and in accordance with the Auditor General’s Office
• ensure all research funds are linked to a research project in the Research Management Database (RMDB).

3.3.3 Budget Centres

The Heads of Budget Centres, or Delegate/s, are required to ensure:

• expenditure of research funds are in accordance with the approved funding agreement and budget
• expenditure of research funds are approved appropriately prior to the release of funds in accordance with the Schedule of Contract Delegations (under development).

3.3.4 Principal Investigators

Principal Investigators are required to ensure:

• expenditure of research funds is in accordance with the approved funding agreement and budget and within the timeframes outlined in the funding agreement or funding agreement variations approved by the funder
• expenditure, including salary related costs, is allocated to the correct project account in a timely manner
• appropriate documentation is obtained in support of the expenditure of research funds.

3.3.5 Researchers and Research Personnel

Researchers and Research Personnel are required to:

• obtain appropriate clearances for the expenditure of any project funds
• provide appropriate documentation in support of expenditure of research funds in a timely manner.

3.4 Inappropriate use of Research Funding

Anyone who is concerned that research funding may have been used inappropriately, or who has reason to suspect the mismanagement of any research funds, is required to take action in a timely manner. Appropriate Action includes

• a) consult with a Research Integrity Adviser

and/or
• make a formal notification to the Research Integrity Co-ordinator, in accordance with the *Management of Allegations of Misconduct procedures*  

or

• b) If the concern relates to potential fraudulent mismanagement, comply with the *Control of Fraud and Corruption Policy*.

### 4 Definitions and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Unit</td>
<td>Means the secondary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, reporting directly to the College Executive Deans, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract / Funding Agreement</td>
<td>A Contract / Funding Agreement must include a written offer, acceptance, consideration (what each party gives to the other at the agreed price for the other's promise) and the intent that it is a binding agreement. A contract can take the form of an exchange of letters or a formalised contract (legal contract).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics Consent</td>
<td>Ethics approval or ethics consent of early release of research funds to develop the ethics application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Budget Centre</td>
<td>A budget centre is a unit within the University's financial management structure that is functionally and financially distinctive. They include Colleges, Academic Units, CRCs, administrative sections and University Business Enterprises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational Unit</td>
<td>College, Faculty, School, Centre, University Institute, other University Entity, Division, Section or University Business Enterprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
<td>The first named University of Tasmania researcher. Also can be referred to as Lead Chief Investigator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Personnel</td>
<td>Personnel other than researchers utilising grant funds - e.g. Research Assistants, Technicians, Administration Officers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>The creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new or substantially improved concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Funds</td>
<td>Any funds provided for the purpose of conducting or supporting research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Funding Account</td>
<td>University finance system project account used to administer research funds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>The Officer authorised by the University of Tasmania to sign agreements on behalf of the organisation in accordance with the <em>Schedule of Contract Delegations</em> (under development).</td>
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5 Supporting Documentation

- Collaborative Research Policy
- Control of Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Delegations Policy
- Financial Management of Research Funding Procedures (under development)
- Management of Allegations of Research Misconduct Procedures
- Research Funding Clearance Form
- Schedule of Contract Delegations
- The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- University of Tasmania Research Grants - Administration and Accounting Procedures

6 Versioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Version</th>
<th>Version 1 – Management of Research Funding Policy; approved Month, 2013, amended in December 2016 to incorporate Colleges.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Version</td>
<td>Version 2 – Management of Research Funding Policy; approved July 2013, amended in December 2017 to reflect College structure and nomenclature.</td>
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Appendix A

Formal agreements and contracts.

A formal agreement must be in writing. The agreement must be signed and dated.

The process of establishing the agreement must include a written offer, written acceptance, consideration (what each party gives to the other at the agreed price for the other’s promise) and it must be clear that the intent is that it is a binding agreement.

The terms of the agreement must consider the following aspects:

- Intellectual Property
- Confidentiality
- Copyright
- Sharing commercial returns
- Responsibility for ethics and safety issues
- Reporting requirements of funding body
- Reporting responsibilities to appropriate agencies
- Protocols to be followed when disseminating research outcomes
- Management of research materials and research data through the project and beyond the life of the project.
- Ownership of equipment and resources purchased.
- Standards to be applied to the procurement maintenance and disposal of equipment