

Research Support Fund Allocation of Grant Funds 2015-2016

Being able to offer a broad range of research-related services is a critical element in building research capacity within Athabasca University and recruiting and retaining highly qualified academics, research chairs and research trainees (e.g., undergraduate and graduate students; postdoctoral research fellows). Providing the infrastructure required to support researchers and build research capacity is however costly. Whereas the direct costs of research are funded through grants and awards, indirect costs such as the day-to-day operational expenses incurred in supporting researchers' endeavors (e.g., costs of facilities and resources; administrative support, including staff salaries and benefits; adherence to regulatory requirements), are normally the responsibility of the university.

The [Research Support Fund](#), which is a federal government investment in research, helps Canadian postsecondary institutions cover the indirect costs of managing research funds awarded by the three federal granting councils (National Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)). Opportunities exist for institutions to use the funds provided by the Research Support Fund to offset expenditures in five categories:

1. Research facilities
2. Research resources
3. Management and administration of an institution's research enterprise
4. Regulatory requirements and accreditation
5. Intellectual property and knowledge mobilization

Athabasca University has elected to invest the funds it receives from the Research Support Fund as follows.

Management and Administration (70%). Funding in this category is used to provide administrative support for researchers to facilitate the submission of research grant applications and aid in the financial management and related reporting requirements of grants and awards. A portion of this funding is also used to defray the costs of (a) grantsmanship mentorship, which is intended to help increase the quality and competitiveness of grant applications, (b) the Research Portal, which is designed to **track grant applications, certifications and awards and (c) a subscription to an electronic database that** allows researchers to identify potential sources of government, industry and other funding, within Canada and abroad related to their research focus.

Regulatory Requirements (30%). Funding in this category is used primarily to support the functions of the Research Ethics Officer in providing administrative support to the AU Research Ethics Board (REB). Other responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to,

- conveying information to the Research Ethics Board and to researchers about relevant human ethics policies and guidelines;

- coordinating the ethics approval process;
- providing feedback to applicants about the status of their applications; and
- tracking certifications to ensure compliance with applicable policies and guidelines.

Both of these functions are essential to building and enhancing research capacity and recruiting and retaining highly qualified researchers and research trainees to Athabasca University.