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Research Support Fund Allocation of Grant Funds 2016-2017

Offering 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., administrative support, including staff salaries and benefits; adherence to regulatory requirements) are normally the responsibility of the university.

The [Research Support Fund](#) program is a federal government investment in research that helps Canadian postsecondary institutions cover a portion of the indirect costs of managing research funds awarded by the three federal granting agencies (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), National Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), 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

In 2016-2017 Athabasca University plans to invest its Research Support Fund (RSF) grant as follows:

Management and administration. As in previous years, funds will be 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 will also be used to defray the costs of

- grantsmanship mentorship and grant-writing workshops, which are intended to help increase the quality and competitiveness of grant applications;
- software license, maintenance and hosting fees for the AU Research Portal, which is a system designed to track grant applications, certifications and awards; and
- 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. 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.

Funding will also be used to help defray costs of ongoing training of REB members in ethics review (e.g., honorariums for community Board members, mileage costs associated with travelling to board meetings, and costs associated with attendance at relevant events).

Intellectual property and knowledge mobilization. This past year, Athabasca University (AU) received funding from Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF) Applied Research and Innovation Activities Program (ARIAP) to partially fund an Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) position for a one-year term. With additional financial support from the university and the Research Support Fund grant we were able to fund the position on a full-time basis. One of the primary goals of the ILO role is to strengthen AU's academic-industry partnerships. In the coming year, we plan to build on the progress made to date in the development of these academic-industry partnerships and to continue funding this position, with the help of the Research Support Fund.

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