

Research Support Fund Allocation of Grant Funds 2017-2018

Overview

Offering a broad range of research-related services is a critical element in building research capacity within Athabasca University and in 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; ensuring 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), Natural 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

Strategic Investment

The Research Support Fund is an important contributor to Athabasca University's continued success in sustaining and extending its research agenda. In 2017-2018, Athabasca University will strategically invest its Research Support Fund award in the following initiatives.

Management and administration. Researchers require skilled administrative support to facilitate the submission of research grant applications and to assist with the financial management and related reporting requirements of grants and awards. Other strategic initiatives in this category include

- grants mentorship, including grant-writing workshops and expert one-on-one grantsmanship mentorship, to help increase the competitiveness of research grant applications;
- software license, maintenance and hosting fees for the AU Research Portal, which is used to track grant applications and awards as well as human and animal ethics certifications; and
- subscription to an electronic database to help researchers to identify potential sources of government, industry and other funding, within Canada and abroad.

Regulatory requirements. Ensuring compliance with human and animal ethics policies and standards is an integral component of the role of our Research Ethics Officer. Other responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to,

- providing administrative support to the Research Ethics Board;
- conveying relevant information to the Research Ethics Board and to researchers;
- coordinating both human and animal ethics approval processes; and
- tracking certifications to ensure compliance with applicable policies and standards.

Funding in this category will also be used to help defray the cost of seeking and sustaining Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) certification, in conjunction with the University of Alberta.

Intellectual property and knowledge mobilization. Continuation of the work of our Industry Liaison Officer is critical to sustaining the momentum garnered to date in developing strong and productive academic-industry partnerships with a view to bringing new products and services to market. This important knowledge mobilization initiative also serves to increase the number of industry-based training opportunities available to students and postdoctoral fellows. These functions are essential to building and enhancing research capacity and recruiting and retaining highly qualified researchers and research trainees to Athabasca University.