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Centre d'Imagerie Pré-Clinique
Pre-Clinical Imaging Core

POLICY # 001

PCIC BILLING POLICY

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Contents

Policy purpose

This policy outlines the strategy and rules for billing users of the Pre-Clinical Imaging Core (PCIC) for using the equipment and service available and provided by the core facility. The purpose of this policy is to describe how the PCIC user fees are applied and how the invoices are created.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all users and their principle investigators (PI) who use PCIC equipment and services. These include internal and external users. Additional rules may apply to external users which will be provided by the PCIC staff during the initial discussions an planning phase.

Definitions

- **PCIC**

Pre-Clinical Imaging Core

- **PI**

Principle investigator, Head of the lab, Lab admin

Policy statements

PCIC, as one of the twenty-five University of Ottawa core facilities, provides access to broad range in vivo imaging equipment, expertise, and services to numerous users of different origin (internal, external, industry). A core facility functions as a discrete unit providing professional services and support dedicated to technologies relevant to a specific area. Existence of core facilities allows for smart usage of resources and ensuring sustainability of expensive equipment [Core facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca)](). Collecting user fees is a critical part of ensuring sustainability of the core facility.

PCIC collects user fees to recover the costs at least partially for equipment maintenance (service contracts, repairs, quality assurance). If conditions allow, the fees can be used to update, upgrade, or add equipment related accessories and software options.

PCIC works to ensure equality and fairness of billing among users of the same origin. Therefore, the core facility in cooperation with the University of Ottawa research office has developed common user fees for each user category.

PCIC supports clarity and transparency in usage and billing procedures. Therefore, PCIC has developed this policy to ensure clarity and transparency among its users. User fees and main rules are also published on PCIC website to ensure easy access to this information: [Fees and Billing | Core Facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca)]().

Due to the volume of users of equipment, PCIC takes measures to ensure that equipment is booked appropriately. This means that once equipment is booked, it must be used in the booked time otherwise PCIC will apply a penalty for holding the equipment. The existence of other users must be acknowledged and considered when equipment is booked. Excessive booking without use of the equipment will not be tolerated by PCIC.

Procedures

Definitions

User categories

User categories are defined by the University of Ottawa and these categories apply to all University of Ottawa core facilities including PCIC.

PCIC provides equipment and services to the following user categories:

- Internal users

Internal users are researchers located at and funding the services from University of Ottawa and/or other institutions affiliated with University of Ottawa. The list of affiliated hospital research institutes is available at Research centres and institutes | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca). The rates for University of Ottawa researchers and affiliates are lower than those of external users, thanks to a subsidy provided by University of Ottawa including Faculties and affiliated Research Institutes for its own scientists.

- External academic and government users

External academic and government users include researchers located at funding the services from a non-affiliated academic institution and governmental agencies.

- Industry users

User fees

The user fee schedule is defined for each category per equipment and service. For current fee schedule, please see below and/or visit Fees and Billing | Core Facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca).

User fees are determined according to competitive fees in other similar institutions in Ontario as well the number of PCIC users and level of annual revenue. Once fees are drafted by PCIC staff and University of Ottawa Research office representative, the proposed schedule is reviewed by the PCIC advisory committee. The PCIC committee represents CEOs and users from all affiliated institutes using services of PCIC. If committee reaches a quorum and members agree on the proposed fee schedule, the new fees are applied.

When new fee schedule is finalized, all users are informed before the schedule takes effect via email and PCIC website.

User fees are checked on a regular basis to ensure the above conditions are followed.

Additional fees may apply to external users: Indirect Costs of Research | Innovation Support Services | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca).

Billing strategy

Each principal investigator will be invoiced with details of the charges incurred. Invoices are sent quarterly within the fiscal year as follows:

- First week of July for April / May / June

- First week of October for July / August / September
- First week of January for October / November / December
- First workday of April for January / February / March
  - This invoicing is done the first day of April to provide the option of including the invoice into March.

Cancellation of booking 24 hours and less before the booking will be penalized by a 1 hour full fee for the booked equipment. Booking equipment requires careful planning and making adjustments if the equipment is not available at desired time. Although, last minute cancellation can occur due to multiple factors that user may not be in control of, existence of the booking in the system prevents other users from using the equipment at that time. Therefore, cancellation policy is applied.

PCIC bills for used isoflurane for anesthetizing animals and supplies used during the session. User must therefore fill out an post-usage form to list the time for used isoflurane and numbers of used supplies.

Billing for training

The training session is designed to give full attention to the trainee with giving the opportunity to handle the equipment while in training. Training provided by PCIC ensures consistency of information between users and avoids loss of steps critical for proper operation and handling of the equipment.

Therefore, the training fee applies to one trainee per equipment.

Training is applied to users that will be handling the equipment (main user). Summer students and other students that are intended to only assist the main user and are not intended to operate the equipment themselves are allowed to attend the training of the main user. This student will not be approved access to the room. If this student becomes a main user, they must receive the training as a main user.

Training of main users is mandatory to ensure proper operation and handling of the equipment. The training also provides general knowledge on the different functionalities of the equipment. Each training is billed a flat fee published on the PCIC website Fees and Billing | Core Facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca).

It is encouraged that new users contact PCIC if they are not sure whether the technology will be good for their needs before requesting access and training for the equipment.

Training fee includes equipment use, PCIC manager time and training material that is provided to trained users after the training.

Billing for equipment use

Charges are tracked based on online reservations made in the scheduling system. It is the responsibility of the user to accurately book the equipment.

For MRI, charges are based on the time of using the MRI equipment including directly related procedures necessary for the scanning. Time starts at MRI machine preparation/initialization (usually around 5-10 mins) followed immediately by first animal preparation and ends when last animal is done and back in cage and data is transferred. Data transfer is done immediately after the last scan is completed (about 2 mins). If animal preparation is done by ACVS technician,

extra fee for ACVS technician time will be applied at $35/hour between 7 am and 3 pm and $70/hour outside these hours as per ACVS fee schedule.

PCIC tracks the use of equipment by booking regardless of its purpose. PCIC does not discriminate between equipment initialization, imaging procedure, and data analysis. PCIC does not discriminate between protocol development or running an optimized experiment. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to discuss their plans with PCIC at stage of experimental design. This will improve planning for funding.

PCIC recognizes the variability of imaging session lengths for MRI and thus proposes a step-by-step strategy for MRI protocol development. This strategy proposes 1-hour or 2-hour sessions at a time and giving the option of ending or pausing the process before it becomes too expensive. With these short sessions, the MRI operator will get information to estimate further steps and the estimated length. Note that these will be only more or less rough estimates depending on the project and may change with more sessions.

Billing for services

PCIC provides the following services

- Training
    - o Please see Billing for training section
- Protocol development and consultation
    - o Please see Billing for equipment use section
    - o If users require longer than 1-hour consultations with significant input of the PCIC manager in experiment design, the time of the PCIC manager will be billed as consultation time as per current fee schedule.
    - o Initial consultations with PCIC manager (usually up to 1-hour long) which consist of basic understanding of user needs are free
    - o Any time the PCIC manager is requested to develop protocol on other equipment than MRI, the PCIC manager time will be billed extra as consultation service. MRI is operated by the PCIC manager and therefore PCIC manager time is included in the fee.
- Post-processing (data processing)
    - o Any time the PCIC manager spends on data analysis and processing outside equipment booking, this time will be billed as post-processing service
- End-ro-end
    - o End-to-end service is billed individually based on the request. This will be a combination of all of the above described services and equipment use fees

Comments

PCIC encourages users to contact the core facility for advice and help with planning. This may not only help users use the equipment best way possible but they may also discover other options.

Reference list

Fees and Billing | Core Facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca)

Core facilities | University of Ottawa (uottawa.ca)

Roles and Responsibilities

PCIC manager is responsible for updating fees on the website.

PCIC manager is responsible for updating this policy.

PCIC manager is responsible for information users about any changes in a timely manner.

PCIC manager is responsible for following consistently the billing strategy and rules.

PCIC manager is responsible for proper billing.

PCIC manager is responsible for keeping track of proper booking of equipment and applying cancellation policies where needed.

Appendices

Revision history

Version number	Revision notes
01_2022-06-24	Creation of original policy document

Authorship and Signatures

SOP created by:

Name: Jana Mlynarova, PhD.

Date: 24 June 2022

Position: PCIC manager

SOP revised by:

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Signatures

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