



uOttawa

**UNIVERSITY  
OF OTTAWA**

# **RESEARCH CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS HANDBOOK**

**OVPRI – OCTOBER 2024**

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# Introduction

Prior to developing a research proposal for external funding, Principal Investigators (PIs) need to understand whether they are preparing an application for a grant or for a contract. They must also determine their eligibility to apply for the funds and gain a comprehensive understanding of the University's internal policies and processes related to sponsored research.

It's also important to understand that various types of contracts exist for specific purposes, each with its defined scope.

PIs should also familiarize themselves with the three offices within the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) that handle negotiations for different types of research contracts, along with each office's specific responsibilities (see page 7 for more details).

# Grant vs. Contract

There are typically two types of sponsored research awards: Research Grant and Research Contract. The most important difference between a contract and a grant lies in whether the researcher is legally obligated to deliver specific outcomes.

## Research Grant

A research grant is a financial award provided by a funding agency or organization (such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, National Resources Canada, etc.), usually to support a specific research project. It is typically awarded based on the merit of the proposed research and the qualifications of the researcher. A grant enables the performance of self-directed research, where there is no contractual obligation for performance. There may be terms and deliverables, such as reporting requirements, and payment schedules, **but performance and outcome requirements are less specific.**

## Research Contract

A research contract is a legal agreement between a researcher or institution and a funding entity (which could be a government agency, private company, or non-profit organization) to perform specific research services or deliverables. Contracts are often used when the funder requires more direct control over the research process and outcomes and **expects specific results in exchange for funding.** The scope of work, deliverables, and milestones are explicitly defined in a contract.

# Research Agreement Types

When it comes to research agreements, there are various types that cater to different needs and circumstances. Some common research agreement types include:

## **Collaborative Research Agreement**

Facilitates collaborative research of mutual interest between the researcher(s) and the partnering institution(s), in which project results may be solely owned by one party or shared.

## **Grant/ Funding Agreements**

Specifies the terms and conditions of a grant, outlining the funding, objectives and reporting requirements. Rights to intellectual property usually vests with the recipient.

## **Research-related service contract**

This type of contract often involves specialized expertise or facilities with the researcher performing work of a routine nature, such as analysis, testing or other services requiring little or no original intellectual input. Rights to arising intellectual property usually remain with the sponsor.

## **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

An MOU is used to formalize a general understanding and the alignment of intentions between parties. MOUs should not be used if a legally binding commitment is required. MOUs do not include provisions regarding ownership of intellectual property.

## **Transfer of funds agreement**

Inter-institutional transfers occur when a uOttawa principal investigator sends funds to researchers at other institutions or when a PI from another institution sends funds to a University of Ottawa researcher.

## **Material Transfer Agreement (MTA)**

An MTA governs the transfer of research materials between institutions, specifying terms for use and restrictions. Some examples of these materials include cells, tissues, gene sequences, metals and alloys, soil samples, plants and seeds, rock samples and polymers.

## **Non-Disclosure/Confidentiality Agreement (NDA)**

In absence of a collaboration agreement, an NDA allows for the exchange of confidential information between involved parties and aims to prevent the disclosure of such information to external entities, when required. Establishing An NDA before initiating any research and development discussions with external parties could help protect the confidential information. NDAs specifically pertain to discussions regarding the work to be performed and do not cover the actual performance of the work itself. The discussions should not include any promises of ownership regarding any arising IP of any kind and should not give away background IP.

## **License Agreement**

Governs the use, transfer, or commercialization of intellectual property required to perform a work or resulting from the research.

## **Clinical Trial Agreement**

Specifies the terms and conditions for conducting clinical trials between researchers and other institutions or industry partners and sponsors.

# Who is eligible to hold a research fund at uOttawa?

To hold research funding at uOttawa, a Principal Investigator/researcher must meet the conditions outlined in [section 6.1 of Policy-48 Administration of Research Grants and Contracts](#)

- The individual must have an academic appointment or employment relationship with the University for the full duration of the Research Grant or Research Contract;
- The individual must be eligible according to the Research sponsor's policies and/or requirements; and
- The administering Faculty and /or academic unit accepts full responsibility for the oversight, performance, financial management and administration of research funds and any research agreement.
- Such other conditions as the Vice-President, Research and Innovation may establish in light of the circumstances of the proposed research.

# Where to start?

Before a Principal Investigator begins discussions with sponsors and funding agencies, they must consult with the **Research Advisor within their faculty**. As set out in [section 4.1 \(b\) of Procedure 29-3](#) established pursuant to Policy 48, the Research Advisor is there to assist the researchers complete the application, gather the necessary documents, and secure internal approvals.

[Click for the contact information of the faculties' Research Advisors.](#)

**All contracts and all applications requiring institutional approval/signature must be submitted at least 10 business days before the deadline.**

The research contract process starts with RMS conducting an intake and triage process and assigning the file to the applicable OVPRI office. Then, a sponsored grant/contract agreement is drafted, after which the responsibilities are reviewed and negotiated.



# OVPRI Offices

Depending on the nature of the application/contract and the source of funding, the application and/ or contract might be assigned to one of the three offices at the OVPRI responsible for pre-award support, contract negotiations and authorized signature.

**For support in negotiating and executing the application/contract, an email requesting assistance from Research Management Services (RMS) must be sent to the [RMS Intake inbox](#), where the request will be reviewed and submitted to the appropriate office within the OVPRI.**

OVPRI UNIT	SPONSOR TYPE
<b>Research Management Services (RMS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governments, national (Federal, Provincial and Municipal, except DND and NRC)</li> <li>- Associations and Foundations, national</li> <li>- Academic institutions, national</li> <li>- Tri-Agency agreements (non-industrial)</li> </ul>
<b>International Research and Experiential Learning (IREX)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Associations, Governments, and Foundations, international</li> <li>- Academic institutions, international</li> <li>- Canadian Government agencies with international mandate (GAC, DRC, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation Support Services (ISS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industry partners, national and international</li> <li>- Tri-Agency agreements and programs linked to private and industrial sector</li> <li>- National Research Council (NRC) and Defence, national and international</li> <li>- All Material Transfer Agreements (MTA), Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) and</li> <li>- Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA)</li> </ul>

[Click here to Learn more about the OVPRI and its offices](#)

# Required Documents

All submissions must include:

- ✓ The editable version of the draft agreement (if provided by the sponsor/funding agency)
- ✓ A proposal/application/statement of work detailing the work

All revenue-bearing agreements must also include:

- ✓ A detailed budget
- ✓ The completed and signed RE form:  
The research advisor in the faculty can guide the Principal Investigator through the RE approval process.

**You must log into [eAwards](#) to access and complete the RE form.**

The eAwards portal is part of an institutional grants and contracts management software and database that helps researchers and administrators manage and track research funding portfolios, from application through to approval, certification and awarding of funds.

Click here to learn more about [eAwards](#).

# Outside Professional Activities

The University of Ottawa supports the outside professional activities of faculty members, since they improve their effectiveness as scholars and teachers. However, these activities must be consistent with the faculty member's commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities to uOttawa. Each faculty member's primary professional responsibility is to uOttawa. As a result, faculty members must remain mindful of potential conflicts that may arise between their external professional pursuits and their duties as a faculty member (see [APUO Collective Agreement Article 33.b \(i\)](#)).

Before including outside professional activities in a contract budget, faculty members must seek approval from the Dean of their faculty, who will assess whether such outside professional activity conflicts with the member's responsibilities to uOttawa ([APUO Collective Agreement Article 33.b \(ii\)](#)).

**Pursuant to [section 3.2 of Procedure 29-6](#) established pursuant to Policy 48, if a Principal Investigator is directly receiving payments for professional services they are providing and for their expertise, they must seek approval from their faculty Dean and provide a clear and detailed breakdown in the form of a budget table.**

**Researchers who receive professional fees or other compensation directly for their professional expertise under a research contract are obligated to inform Research Management Services or the applicable OVPRI unit when submitting the proposal/application/research contract for review and negotiation.**

If a researcher performs professional services through a personal contract (in which uOttawa is not listed as a party), they must assume the costs of using uOttawa's facilities and cannot use the services of uOttawa's administrative offices.

Should the external professional activities require the use of uOttawa's facilities, equipment, supplies, or services, the researcher would be responsible for covering any additional costs incurred, unless otherwise approved by the Dean ([APUO Collective Agreement Article 33.c](#)).

# Indirect Costs of Research / Overhead

All budgets for contracts or grants shall include the cost of University overhead and the indirect costs of research unless these costs have been documented by sponsor policy as an ineligible expense or as a condition of the application for the specific funding program in question.

“Indirect costs” or “Overhead Rate” reflect the costs incurred by the University to support research. It is important that these costs be covered to ensure that the University’s research functions properly. Payment of these costs helps offset administrative services for research, University research programs, competitions, chairs, prizes, and University maintenance costs.

According to [section 3.1 of the Procedure 29-5](#) established pursuant to Policy 48, Indirect Costs / Overhead Rate is determined by the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation (OVPRI) based on national and provincial standards.

[Explore various overhead rates for different research contract categories.](#)

**Prior to engaging in negotiations with funding agencies regarding eligible indirect costs, it is essential that the researcher notifies the OVPRI office handling their file. The OVPRI office is responsible for negotiating directly with the funding agency to determine indirect costs. Failing to do so could potentially result in a change in the final funding amount the researcher receives.**

# Execution and Signature

ALL research-related agreements and documents, including award letters for grants, must be negotiated and executed by the designated staff within the OVPRI ([Board By-law No. 3](#)).

Please note that Dean, Vice-Dean, Departmental Chair or Principal Investigator **DO NOT** have signing authority for research agreements such as Collaboration Research Agreements, Data Sharing Agreements, Material Transfer Agreements etc. This includes interinstitutional agreements, partnership agreements, research contracts and research-related service contracts.

**If a faculty member (whether Principal Investigator or an administering faculty personnel) drafts, reviews, negotiates and/or signs a research contract, this document will NOT be accepted by OVPRI for the purposes of establishing research accounts. Bringing in designated OVPRI staff from the start prevents the need to re-negotiate agreements.**

# Financial Administration

Once the research contract has been signed by all parties, a Research Grants & Awards Specialists will open a research account for the project. Each Faculty has a designated Research Grants & Awards Specialists at RMS.

[Click here to find the contact information of the Research Grants & Awards Specialists for each faculty.](#)

Once your account has been activated, the Principal Investigator can access the project's financial information through the [Workday portal](#) (uOttawa login required).

Once the account has been opened, if there are any issues or questions, researchers may reach out to their faculty finance office for guidance.

## **Changing the approved budget after the contract has been signed**

Minor changes (between 5% and 10%) normally do not need external approval, but this will depend on the contract. Budgetary changes that exceed 10% may require approval and negotiation with the sponsor. If the researcher intends to change the project budget after the contract has been signed, they must contact the contract office ([RMS](#), [ISS](#), [IREX](#)) managing their contract.

# Contact Information

## Research Management Services



Tabaret Hall  
Room 159  
550 Cumberland St  
Ottawa, Ontario Canada  
K1N 6N5



Tel: 613-562-5841



General support: [info-sgr-rms@uottawa.ca](mailto:info-sgr-rms@uottawa.ca) <mailto:fo-sgr-rms@uottawa.ca>



Contract Support: [recherche.contrats\\_research.contracts@uottawa.ca](mailto:recherche.contrats_research.contracts@uottawa.ca)



<https://www.uottawa.ca/research-innovation/research-management-services>

## Innovation Support Services



800 King Edward Avenue  
SITE Building, Room 3042  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 6N5 Canada



Tel: 613-562-5399



General support: [iss@uottawa.ca](mailto:iss@uottawa.ca)



<https://www.uottawa.ca/research-innovation/innovation-support-services>

## International Research and Experiential Learning



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550 Cumberland St  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1N 6N5



Tel: 613-562-5800 ext. 1271



Contract support: [IREXgrants@uottawa.ca](mailto:IREXgrants@uottawa.ca) and [subventionsRIEX@uottawa.ca](mailto:subventionsRIEX@uottawa.ca)



<https://www.uottawa.ca/research-innovation/international-research-experiential-learning>