

Research Support Fund Allocation 2025/26

The Research Support Fund (RSF) assists Canadian postsecondary institutions with the costs associated with managing their research enterprise, helping them to maintain a world-class research environment. AU acknowledges the essential support of the RSF to enhancing the university's priority and capacity on research.

RSF Amount and Allocation Areas

The notional grant amount for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is \$759,849. Athabasca University expects to allocate the funds within the following three categories:

Management and Administration of the Institution's Research Enterprise:

Research administration supports for grant application and research proposal development, grant-writing workshop facilitation, post-award financial administration, grants management software; training of research administration personnel, and development of the redesigned Strategic Research Plan.

Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation: Coordination of AU's research ethics activities and processes.

Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization: Supports initiatives for research development, commercialization, and digital knowledge mobilization.

The table below charts a pathway for success—from output to outcomes—in each of these categories of strategic utilization of the RSF.

RSF Performance Objectives

RSF Eligible Expense Category	Output (investment or expense of RSF grant funds).	Performance Objective	Performance Indicator	Target Outcome
(3) Management and Administration of the Institution's Research Enterprise	Projected: 55% of RSF investment. Invested in resourcing eligible research administrative roles for life-cycle support of grant administration. Invested for grant administration systems, capacity building, and strategic plan mobilization.	Increase supports and success rates for Tri-Agency grants submitted. Maintain strong administrative processes and capacity in alignment with strategic research directions.	Number of grants submitted to Tri-Agency funding programs and success rates. Strategic research priority area inclusion in grant systems processes and reports.	Maintain or increase sponsored research revenue. Maintain or increase percentage of faculty holding (i.e., awarded) external funding.
(4) Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation	Projected: 15% of RSF investment. Maintain strong regulatory requirements and ethics processes.	Continued regulatory vigilance, coordination, and management.	Effective delivery of ethics reviews and process enhancements.	Maintain or increase the number and efficiency of research ethics applications processed.
(5) Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization	Projected: 30% of RSF investment. Enhance services for research development, knowledge engagement, and impact.	Develop and refine research development supports and impact initiatives, as well as the promotion and protection of IP.	Internal and external engagement in research development supports and impact initiatives as well as the promotion and protection of IP.	Enhanced contribution of research development to grant submissions. Diverse and broad reach of knowledge mobilization initiatives supported through the RSF. Administration of agreements with industry, and for the use of research findings.

Research Support Fund Outcomes and Impact 2025/26

For the period April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

Strategic Investments

In 2025-2026 Athabasca University (AU) invested its Research Support Fund grant (\$759,849) in the following expenditure categories:

Management and Administration of an Institution's Research Enterprise: Salaries and benefits for research administration support for grant development and facilitation, provision of financial services, grants management software, and capacity building.

Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation: Coordination of AU's research ethics activities, processes, and related certification/memberships costs for animal care and use for research purposes.

Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization: Supports and initiatives for research development, innovation, commercialization, and digital knowledge mobilization.

The table below charts a pathway for success—from output to outcomes—in each of these categories of strategic utilization of the RSF.

RSF-2025-00069 Performance Outcomes

RSF Eligible Expense Category	Output (investment or expense of RSF grant funds).	Performance Objective	Performance Indicator	Target Outcome	Reported Outcome
(3) Management and Administration of the Institution's Research Enterprise	Projected: 55% of RSF investment. Invested in resourcing eligible research administrative roles for life-cycle support of grant administration. Invested for grant administration systems, capacity building, and strategic plan mobilization.	Increase supports and success rates for Tri-Agency grants submitted. Maintain strong administrative processes and capacity in alignment with strategic research priority areas.	Number of grants submitted to Tri-Agency funding programs and success rates. Strategic research priority area inclusion in grant systems processes and reports.	Maintain or increase sponsored research revenue. Maintain or increase percentage of faculty holding (i.e., awarded) external funding.	ACHIEVED: 50.68% Tri-Agency funding levels were maintained. The proportion of faculty holding external funding experienced an increase of 31% compared to the previous year (from 17.5% to 23%), arising from an increased number of submissions of applications for external research funding by faculty members (44% increase year-over-year).
(4) Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation	Projected: 15% of RSF investment. Maintain strong regulatory requirements and ethics processes.	Continued regulatory vigilance, coordination, and management.	Effective delivery of ethics reviews and process enhancements.	Maintain or increase the number and efficiency of research ethics applications processed.	ACHIEVED: 17.76% The overall number of ethics applications submitted by faculty members and students that were processed was similar to the previous year. Maintained a high level of rigour in the review and processing of ethics applications for all grant funded research projects requiring approval, while also seeking continual improvement.

(5) Intellectual Property and Knowledge Mobilization	Projected: 30% of RSF investment. Enhance services for research development, knowledge engagement, and impact.	Develop and refine research development supports and impact initiatives, as well as the promotion and protection of IP.	Internal and external engagement in research development supports and impact initiatives as well as the promotion and protection of IP.	Enhanced contribution of research development to grant submissions. Diverse and broad reach of knowledge mobilization initiatives supported through the RSF. Administration of agreements with industry, and for the use of research findings.	ACHIEVED: 31.56% AU continues to expand its research impact through strategic partnerships, researcher engagement, and collaboration with external organizations. Key activities include province-wide initiatives, seed funding, support for local projects, leadership in national networks, and knowledge mobilization resources that strengthen Alberta's innovation ecosystem. The Research Office at AU continues to provide consultations services and support for the protection of intellectual property involving faculty members, including the creation of letters of understanding and revenue sharing agreements.
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