

Research Support Fund Allocation of Funds 2019-2020

Overview

In March 2018, Athabasca University launched its re-imagined [Strategic Research Plan](#), in conjunction with the implementation of the university's [Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities Strategic Plan](#). The [Strategic Research Plan](#) signals a shift from merely doing research to identifying strategic research priorities, including building a sustainable research infrastructure to support research and innovative excellence.

A thoughtful and effective infrastructure is needed to support research excellence and build research capacity. The Research Support Fund is key to attaining these goals and helps defray the indirect costs of research, such as the day-to-day operational expenses incurred in supporting researchers' endeavors (e.g., administrative support; ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements; building strong academic-industry partnerships with a view to bringing new products and services to market).

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

Strategic Investment

The notional grant amount for the 2019-2020 fiscal year is \$285,735.

The Research Support Fund is an important contributor to Athabasca University's continued success in supporting and building research capacity. In 2019-2020, Athabasca University will strategically invest its Research Support Fund award in the following initiatives.

Research resources. Building a sustainable research infrastructure is an important goal in the Strategic Research Plan. The creation of an infrastructure to accommodate high performance computing and extremely large databases has been a need expressed by Athabasca University researchers. Providing access to technology that will allow this type of research with appropriate technical support will be crucial to researchers institution-wide.

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 investments 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; and
- 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.

Regulatory requirements and accreditation. 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 maintaining the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) certification, in conjunction with the University of Alberta.