

Research Contracts and Grants Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy determines the framework within which staff members apply for research grants or develop research contracts that are submitted through the Research Application Summary (RAS) system or its successor, administered by the Research Office. This includes the development of research funding applications and research contracts, and the administration and acquittal of funded research projects. This does not include consultancies through La Trobe Consulting (see [La Trobe Consulting Policy](#)) or Outside work (see [Outside Work Policy](#)).

(2) The University's research and other relations with external organisations should be formed and approved in accordance with clear principles and consistent criteria.

(3) Commitments can only be made to other organisations for research and other services if all resources required to undertake the work have been identified and the cost of performing the work has been determined. Decisions about prices to be charged or costs to be recovered must be based on consistent principles that comply with all relevant legal requirements and codes.

(4) Contracted services or duties to be performed by a staff member on behalf of the University for research work to be undertaken under any funding agreement must be approved by authorised officers of the University (delegates).

(5) These Procedures are to assist staff members of the University in applying for research grants or developing research contracts with sources both internal and external to the University that are submitted through the Research Application Summary (RAS) system administered by the Research Office.

(6) These Procedures are also to assist delegates to assess whether the necessary resources to perform the work are available and the costs have been fully identified. All proposals for contract research agreements must be costed in accordance with these procedures. This includes the development of research funding applications and contracts, and the administration and acquittal of funded research projects. This does not include La Trobe Consultancies (see [La Trobe Consulting Policy](#)) or Outside Work (see [Outside Work Policy](#)).

(7) Income from Research contracts must be dealt with in accordance with these Procedures.

Section 2 - Scope

(8) Applies to:

- a. all La Trobe University campuses and external research locations
- b. all Research contracts
- c. all applications for Research
- d. all La Trobe University staff members

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(9) Research contracts are subject to the following:

- a. the work must fall within the expertise and capabilities of the staff member proposing to undertake it;
- b. the work must be appropriate to a University and unlikely to infringe the general freedom of enquiry of the University and of staff members;
- c. the work must not place the interests of a staff member above that of the University;
- d. any potential conflicts of interest must be managed according to the [Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure](#);
- e. recovery of costs must be attempted, consistent with requirements of the University;
- f. financial contributions and the use of University space and facilities must be identified and approved in accordance with University policies and procedures;
- g. competitive neutrality principles must be applied;
- h. work must not be aimed at or likely to result in harm to the life or wellbeing of any person;
- i. students may not be involved, except in fulfilment of an approved course requirement or otherwise only with voluntary consent and for fair payment;
- j. students will be subject to an employment contract (e.g. casual or contractor) where payment other than for a scholarship is made.

(10) La Trobe University is committed to best practice in all aspects of research as laid out in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#).

(11) All Research proposals or applications must be endorsed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) or person to whom s/he has delegated that responsibility prior to submission.

(12) Staff members must act to ensure that the University maximises Research income by declaring all income in the Higher Education Research Data Collection or its successors.

(13) La Trobe does not accept funding from inappropriate sources and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) has the right to veto Research contracts on this basis, including where they are primarily funded by individuals or organisations involved in improper activities (for example, individuals or organisations involved in the tobacco industry), which may not comply with applicable laws (including but not limited to the [Defence Trade Controls Act 2012](#) and the [Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011](#)) or which may be inconsistent with the terms of any University agreement.

(14) The University will generally not enter into Research contracts that limit the ability of a student to meet examination requirements of the University, for example, by:

- a. restricting the inclusion of research results in a student thesis;
- b. limiting seminars which are part of the course requirements (noting that some confidentiality conditions may be required to protect agreements between parties);
- c. allowing the funding agency to vet a student thesis before its submission;
- d. limiting the ability of the University to have a student thesis examined;
- e. delaying the submission of a student thesis.

(15) The University recognises that from time to time Research contracts may require some student limitations, including with regarding to confidentiality and publication.

(16) The University will, where necessary, require students, honorary or visiting staff involved in a Research contract

to enter into an appropriate deed consistent with that contract, including with regard to confidentiality, publication and intellectual property.

(17) The University recognises that bodies providing funding for research and/or education programs are entitled to specify the fields and scope of the programs, and to monitor their quality and timeliness.

(18) The University recognises that commercial or other considerations might sometimes require delays in publication.

(19) Bids for University contracts or tenders must abide by the [Competition and Consumer Law Compliance Policy](#).

(20) Subject to restrictions contained in the Research contract and agreement of the Delegate, surplus from Research contracts may be deposited in a staff member's Outside earnings account to be available to support research or teaching, noting that balances of any surplus will remain with the University upon termination or departure from the University by the Staff member.

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Contract Proposals

(21) Proposals for all internally and externally funded Research projects must be submitted via the Research Application Summary (RAS) portal or its successor administered by the Research Office. All resources required to undertake the proposed project must be identified and costed in accordance with the Research Project Calculator.

Part B - Costing Contract Proposals and Grant Applications

(22) Staff members proposing to undertake Research on behalf of the University under a Research contract or under a competitive research grant must ensure that the proposed work is properly costed using the University's Research Project Calculator.

(23) Costs must include direct and indirect costs, and academic staff time, and must take into account the funding rules of the funding body or sponsor.

(24) All costs must be declared in order to receive approval by the relevant delegate.

Part C - Pricing Contract Proposals and Grant Applications

(25) In the case of research proposals, if the staff member proposes to charge less than the full cost, a justification must be provided based on specific benefits to the University, which may include commercial benefits or academic or reputational benefits. Approval must be given by the delegate and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) for charges less than the full cost and the difference between the full cost and the agreed charge may be required to be paid by the relevant School/Area.

(26) In all circumstances, the pricing decision must comply with competitive neutrality requirements, where applicable, in accordance with the Research Project Calculator.

(27) Pricing proposals must be approved by the relevant delegate via the RAS.

(28) In the case of research grant applications, the funding sought must include direct costs and a recovery for indirect costs at the applicable rate in accordance with the Research Project Calculator unless:

- a. the delegate has waived the indirect cost recovery, or
- b. the grant is a competitive grant; or

- c. the published conditions of the granting body explicitly exclude recoveries of indirect costs.

Part D - Approval of Contract Proposals and Grant Applications

(29) All Research contract proposals and research grant applications must be submitted via the RAS (rmenet.latrobe.edu.au/rmenet) or its successor.

(30) The delegate must have written evidence that the staff member has:

- a. obtained or will obtain clearances from relevant Ethics Committees prior to conduct of the research;
- b. made the certifications required for a research proposal, and that any potential conflicts of interest and / or intellectual property issues will be managed in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure](#) and the Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures;
- c. followed all relevant policies and procedures, including the procedure for this policy on costing, pricing and recovery of infrastructure costs;
- d. ensured that all contractual obligations will be complied with such as reporting requirements.

(31) The Delegate must certify in all research proposals or applications that the staff member will:

- a. ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with La Trobe University's statutes, regulations and procedures;
- b. meet all School or Administrative Division commitments detailed in the application;
- c. identify any special funding that will be required;
- d. be able to fund any shortfall in salary and/or salary service rates;
- e. ensure appropriate monitoring and accountability processes;
- f. manage the budget;
- g. manage the workload of the staff member to take into account a successful application;
- h. be responsible for any over-expenditure, excepting litigation costs, if these are incurred.

(32) Any legal conditions deemed to be accepted by applicants or tenderers must be reviewed and approved by Legal Services before submission.

(33) All Research contracts must have been approved by Legal Services before signature.

Part E - Contract Signing

(34) Contracts may not be signed by any person except an officer authorised under the University's [Contract Signing Delegations](#) as amended or replaced from time to time.

Part F - Income and Contract Proceeds

(35) Income under Research contracts must be paid into the University's bank account and managed in accordance with the University's business procedures and any contractual conditions pertaining to use of funds.

(36) Subject to restrictions contained in the Research contract and/or agreement of the delegate, surplus from research contracts may be deposited in a staff member's outside earnings account to be available to support research or teaching, noting that balances of any surplus will remain with the University upon termination or departure from the University by the staff member.

Section 5 - Definitions

(37) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Consultancy — services or duties performed by a staff member through La Trobe Consulting. Consultancy work is over and above the staff member's workload allocation and/or University duties unless otherwise agreed but does not include research.
- b. Delegate — Head of School or Administrative Division of the staff member, or a person to whom they have delegated a responsibility under this policy in writing.
- c. La Trobe Consulting — an administrative function of the Consulting and Contracts Team in the University Research Office, through which a staff member may perform work with the consent of the University for an external organisation or individual on behalf of the University on a commercial basis for an agreed cost.
- d. Ethics Committee — Human Research Ethics Committee, Animal Ethics Committee, La Trobe Institutional Biosafety Committee (LTIBC).
- e. Outside earnings account — an individual staff account within the University's financial management and accounting system used to capture and report on revenue and expenditure associated with funding received by a staff member that is not University research or operational funding.
- f. Outside work — is work performed by a staff member in their personal capacity outside their contract of employment with the University.
- g. Research Application Summary (RAS) — the University's system to manage the review and approval of internally and externally funded research and grant applications (see rmenet.latrobe.edu.au/rmenet) or its successor.
- h. Research — as defined in the Commonwealth's Higher Education Research Data Collection specifications as amended from time to time.
- i. Research contract — means a University contract relating to Research including research grant, research consulting, funding agreement, research collaboration agreement or other research contract.
- j. Research income — as defined in the 2014 Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications or its successors in later years.
- k. Research Project Calculator - any calculator approved by the Research Office.
- l. Staff member — any employee of the University.
- m. Student — a student enrolled at the University.
- n. Submission — a draft proposal that is presented to a delegate for approval prior to it being presented to the prospective external party for whom it is ultimately intended.
- o. University service — University service forms part of a staff member's workload allocation and requires approval from the staff member's Supervisor as part of Career Success. It therefore does not require prior approval by a Delegate and may include the following activities or types of activities:
 - i. committee participation;
 - ii. organising and/or attending meetings, forums, seminars etc;
 - iii. consultancy;
 - iv. community service;
 - v. industry liaison and grant funding applications;
 - vi. leadership;
 - vii. management and administration;
 - viii. internal and external professional work;
 - ix. occasional lectures for other institutions (but not courses of lectures);
 - x. examining higher degree theses;

- xi. reviewing papers or books;
- xii. editorial work for an academic journal;
- xiii. participating in or organising academic conferences;
- xiv. assessing grant applications;
- xv. service of up to the equivalent of ten days per year on boards or committees (other than boards or committees of companies);
- xvi. occasional newspaper articles or other media contributions;
- xvii. writing scholarly works, whether commissioned or non-commissioned.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement); Research Office.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Research Office.

Status and Details

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