

Research Contracts and Grants Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

- (1) This Policy determines the framework for staff members and students to apply for, propose and engage with organisations in externally funded and unfunded research. This Policy does not include non-research consultancies or Outside work through the [Outside Work Policy \(Academic\)](#).
- (2) The University's research and engagement with external organisations should be developed 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 activities to be performed by a staff member on behalf of the University for research to be undertaken under any research contract must be approved by authorised officers of the University (delegates).
- (5) Income from Research contracts must be dealt with in accordance with these Procedures.

Section 2 - Scope

- (6) Applies to:
- all La Trobe University campuses and external research locations
 - all Research contracts
 - all applications and proposals for external research funding
 - all La Trobe University staff members including honorary staff, visiting staff and students involved in research

Section 3 - Policy Statement

- (7) Research contracts are subject to the following:
- the work must fall within the expertise and capabilities of the staff member and students involved in the research;
 - the work must be appropriate to a University and unlikely to infringe the general freedom of enquiry of the University and of staff members and students involved in research;
 - the work must not place the interests of a staff member and students involved in research above that of the University;
 - any potential conflicts of interest must be managed according to the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#);
 - due diligence must be undertaken to manage any potential risk of foreign influence and foreign interference;

- f. recovery of costs must be attempted, consistent with requirements of the University;
- g. financial contributions and the use of University space and facilities must be identified and approved in accordance with University policies and procedures;
- h. competitive neutrality principles must be applied;
- i. work must not be aimed at or likely to result in harm to the life or wellbeing of any person;
- j. students may not be involved, except in fulfilment of an approved course requirement or otherwise only with voluntary consent and for fair payment;
- k. students will be subject to an employment contract (e.g. casual or contractor) where payment other than for a scholarship is made.

(8) All Research proposals or applications must be endorsed by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) (SDVC(R&IE)) or delegate prior to submission.

(9) 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.

(10) La Trobe does not accept funding from inappropriate sources and the SDVC(R&IE) has the right to veto Research contracts on this basis, including where they are primarily funded by individuals or organisations attempting to undermine the University's autonomy, pursuing opportunities to alter or direct the research agenda, recruit post-doctoral researchers and academic staff or are 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](#)) and [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018](#) or which may be inconsistent with the terms of any University agreement.

(11) 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.

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

(13) The University will, where necessary, require students, honorary staff or visiting staff involved in a Research contract to enter into an appropriate deed consistent with that contract or agreement, including with regard to confidentiality, publication, intellectual property and applicable laws.

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

(15) Bids on behalf of the University for tenders must abide by the [Competition and Consumer Law Compliance Policy](#).

(16) 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 - Procedures

Part A - Project Proposals

(17) Proposals for all internally and externally funded Research projects must be submitted via the University's Research Management Platform, PRIME. All resources required to undertake the proposed project must be identified and costed in accordance with the Budget in PRIME including direct and in-direct costs and academic staff time, align with relevant funding rules and be approved by the relevant delegate.

(18) Where a Research project involves external collaborators, agreements should be entered into with the relevant collaborating organisations prior to their commencement in the project. These agreements should be consistent with the principles of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) and [NHMRC supporting guide 'Collaborative Research'](#).

Part B - Pricing Project Proposals

(19) 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 SDVC(R&IE) or delegate 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.

(20) In all circumstances, the pricing decision must comply with competitive neutrality requirements, where applicable.

Part C - Approval of Project Proposals

(21) All research approvals must be submitted and approved via PRIME. By approving the proposal through PRIME, the delegate is confirming evidence that the project lead has:

- a. obtained or will obtain clearances from relevant Ethics Committees prior to the 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 the [Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- c. undertaken risk based due diligence in line with the Due Diligence Framework;
- d. followed all relevant policies and procedures, including this policy;
- e. confirmed that all contractual obligations will be complied with.

(22) The Delegate by approving the proposal through PRIME certifies that the project lead 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 University resources that will be required;
- d. be able to fund any shortfall in salary and/or salary on-costs;
- e. ensure appropriate monitoring and accountability processes;
- f. manage the budget;
- g. ensure project lead will manage their workload to undertake the research as agreed;
- h. be responsible for any over-expenditure, excepting litigation costs, if these are incurred.

(23) Any legal conditions deemed to be accepted by the University as part of a research proposal must be reviewed and approved by Legal Services before submission, unless otherwise agreed to by Legal Services.

(24) All Research contracts must have been approved by Legal Services before contract signing, unless otherwise agreed to by Legal Services.

Part D - Contract Signing

(25) Contracts may not be signed by any person except an officer authorised as per the [Contracts Policy](#) and under the [Contract Signing Delegations](#) as amended or replaced from time to time.

Part E - Income and Contract Proceeds

(26) 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.

(27) 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.

Part F - Compliance with Research Policy and Procedures

(28) Any matters arising that may affect compliance with any Research contract and/or agreement must be reported to the Delegate and the Research Office.

(29) La Trobe University is committed to best practice in all aspects of research as outlined in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) and the University's [Research Integrity Policy](#).

(30) All researchers involved in collaborative research projects must observe responsible research practices and report any potential breaches in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) and [NHMRC supporting guide 'Collaborative Research'](#).

Section 5 - Definitions

(31) For the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Consultancy: services or duties performed by a staff member through the [Outside Work Policy \(Academic\)](#). 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. Ethics Committee: Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), Animal Ethics Committee (AEC), La Trobe Institutional Biosafety Committee (LTIBC).
- d. 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.
- e. Outside work: is work performed by a staff member in their personal capacity outside their contract of employment with the University.
- f. PRIME: the University's Research Management Platform to support the review, approval, milestones and

- financial management of research proposals and projects.
- g. Project lead: Staff member of the University responsible for leading and managing research proposals and projects.
 - h. Proposal: a draft research 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.
 - i. Research: as defined in the Commonwealth's Higher Education Research Data Collection specifications as amended from time to time.
 - j. Research contract: means a University contract relating to Research including research grant, research consulting, funding agreement, research collaboration agreement or other research contract.
 - k. Research income: as defined in the annual Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications.
 - l. Staff member: any employee of the University.
 - m. Student: a student enrolled at the University.
 - n. 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.

Status and Details

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