

# Research Contracts and Grants Policy

## Section 1 - Key Information

<b>Policy Type and Approval Body</b>	Academic – Academic Board
<b>Accountable Executive - Policy</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement)
<b>Responsible Manager - Policy</b>	Executive Director, Research Office
<b>Review Date</b>	16 June 2028

## Section 2 - Purpose

- (1) This Policy outlines the University's expectations for staff and students when applying for external research funding and engaging with external organisations for research-related activities.
- (2) Research and engagement with external organisations must be carried out in accordance with University policies.
- (3) Commitments to other organisations to conduct research and provide research services can only be made 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 or Grant Agreement must be approved by authorised officers of the University (delegates).
- (5) Research Income must be managed in accordance with these procedures.

## Section 3 - Scope

- (6) Applies to:
- a. all La Trobe University campuses and external research locations;
  - b. externally funded applications, proposals, Research Contracts and Funding Agreements;
  - c. all La Trobe University staff members including honorary staff, visiting staff and students involved in La Trobe University research.
- (7) This Policy does not include work conducted under the [Outside Work Policy \(Academic\)](#).

## Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Vetoing acceptance of external funding from inappropriate funding sources	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement)
Approvals for all research proposals and budgets	School Dean (Delegate)

## Section 5 - Policy Statement

(8) Externally funded research is subject to the following:

- the work must fall within the expertise and capabilities of the staff member and/or students involved in the research;
- the work must be appropriate to the University and unlikely to infringe the general freedom of enquiry of the University and of staff members and/or students involved in research;
- the work must not place the interests of a staff member and/or 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 in accordance with the [Risk Management Policy](#) and [Foreign Engagement Policy](#);
- recovery of costs must be attempted, consistent with requirements of the University;
- financial contributions and the use of University space and facilities must be identified and approved in accordance with University policies and procedures;
- competitive neutrality principles must be applied;
- students will be subject to an employment contract (e.g. casual or contractor) where payment other than for a scholarship is made.

(9) All Research proposals or applications must be endorsed by the School Dean or nominee prior to submission.

(10) La Trobe does not accept funding from inappropriate sources and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) has the right to veto externally funded research 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 postdoctoral 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 or Grant Agreements for external research funding that limit the ability of a student to meet examination requirements of the University, for example, by:

- restricting the inclusion of research results in a student thesis;
- limiting seminars which are part of the course requirements (noting that some confidentiality conditions may be required to protect agreements between parties);
- allowing the Funder to vet a student thesis before its submission;
- 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 or Grant Agreements for externally funded research 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 or Grant Agreement for externally funded research, to enter into an appropriate deed consistent with the Research Contract or Grant Agreement, including with regard to confidentiality, publication, intellectual property and applicable laws.

(14) The University recognises that Funders are entitled to specify the fields and scope of the programs, and to monitor their quality and timeliness.

(15) Proposals on behalf of the University for tenders must abide by Australian [Competition and Consumer Law](#). See the University's Factsheet on Australian Competition and Consumer Law, the University's [Contracts Policy](#), and the [ACCC](#) website, for further information.

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Research Proposals

(16) Proposals for all externally funded Research projects must be submitted via the University's Research Management Platform, PRIME for approval by the Project Lead's School Dean or nominee prior to submission to the Funder.

### Part B - Costing and Pricing Proposals

(17) 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 School Dean 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.

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

### Part C - Approval of Project Proposals

(19) Research proposals and budgets must be submitted and approved via PRIME prior to submission to the Funder attaching the University's [Research Budget Tool](#) or equivalent. By approving the proposal through PRIME, the School Dean or nominee is confirming the agreed Price as outlined in Part B is acceptable, and 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 [Risk Management Framework](#) and Foreign Engagement Framework;
- d. confirmed that the planned project is lawful and complies with La Trobe University's statutes, regulations and procedures;

- e. followed all relevant policies and procedures, including this Policy;
- f. confirmed that all contractual obligations will be complied with.

(20) The School Dean 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. manage their workload to undertake the research as agreed;
- h. be responsible for any over-expenditure, excepting litigation costs, if these are incurred.

## Part D - Contracting and Contract Signing

(21) Where a Research project involves external Funders or collaborators, Research Contracts and Grant Agreements should be entered into with the relevant collaborating organisations as required. These contracts should be consistent with the principles of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) and NHMRC supporting guide 'Collaborative Research', as required and must comply with the University's [Contracts Policy](#).

(22) Research Contracts and Grant Agreements 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 - Research Income

(23) External Research income must be paid into the University's bank account and managed in a research account (WBS), in accordance with the University's business procedures and the Research Contract or Grant Agreement's terms and conditions pertaining to use of funds.

## Part F - Compliance with Research Policy and Procedures

(24) Any matters arising that may affect compliance with any Research Contract or Grant Agreement must be reported to the School Dean and the Research Office.

(25) 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](#).

(26) 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 7 - Definitions

(27) For the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Costing: the process of determining and calculating all the expenses associated with conducting a research project. This includes both Direct Costs and Indirect Costs. The purpose of costing is to accurately assess the total financial requirements for completing the research and to ensure that the project is financially viable.

- b. Delegate: School Dean or Head of 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. Funder: Funder refers to an external entity providing research funding or payment for a research project including funding agencies, government organisations, community and industry partners.
- e. Pricing: Pricing is the process of determining the amount of money that is charged for a product or service. It involves setting a value ("Price") based on various factors such as costs, market demand, competition, and perceived value, and may not always reflect the actual cost of producing or delivering the product or service.
- 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 Collaboration: research projects that are initiated by the University, or developed/undertaken collaboratively with the Funder. These projects should have mutual benefits in addition to receiving research income and/or generating research findings (e.g. strategic partnerships).
- k. Research Consulting: research projects initiated by a Funder. The University's specialised expertise is purchased in order to deliver an output for, and on behalf of, the Funder.
- l. Research Contract and/or Grant Agreement: means a University contract relating to research including research grant, Research Consulting, funding agreement, Research Collaboration Agreement or other related contract to be managed in accordance with the [Contracts Policy](#).
- m. Research Income: as defined in the annual Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications.
- n. Staff member: any employee of the University.
- o. Student: a student enrolled at the University.

## Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(28) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#) and supports compliance with the [Australian Competition and Consumer Act 2010 \(Cth\)](#).

(29) Associated information includes:

- a. [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- b. [Contracts Policy](#)
- c. [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#)
- d. [Foreign Engagement Policy](#)
- e. [Research Integrity Policy](#)
- f. [Outside Work Policy \(Academic\)](#)
- g. [Risk Management Policy](#)
- h. [Research Integrity Policy](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	16th June 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	16th June 2028
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	16th June 2025
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Manager - Policy</b>	Alistair Duncan Executive Director, Research Office
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Research Office