

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH GRANTS (AI SINGAPORE)

Matters to resolve before proceeding with research

Approvals from Ethics Committees

1. A letter with the necessary approval(s) from the relevant ethics board and committees must be sent to Grantor, where and when applicable. Failure to do so may delay the disbursement of Funds.

Research Collaboration Agreements

2. The Institutions may undertake work on the Research in collaboration with a Collaborator. Where and when this occurs, the Investigators are responsible for putting in place research collaboration agreements that are undertaken by the Institutions.

Disbursement of funds

3. All Institutions (including Host and Partner Institutions) will be required to ensure that the expenditures are fundable, necessary and reasonable for the conduct of the Research and verify claimed items with source documents, before submitting the funds requisition to Grantor.
4. A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided in the Annex.
5. All expenditure should be incurred (based on invoice or service rendered date) within the Term¹.
6. In general, prudence should be exercised for all project costs, and expenditures claimed must comply with the Institutions' internal procurement processes, guidelines and policies.
7. Grantor reserves the rights to reject any claims that have resulted from changes to Research without prior approval from Grantor and items found not to be fundable, not necessary, not reasonable, not relevant or not used for the Research.

¹ Expenditures related to on-boarding of research personnel may be supported before the start of Term, but must be made in accordance with the Institutions' human resources policies and after the date in which the Grantor receives the completed Acceptance Form.

Expenditure of Manpower (EOM)

8. Funding of Research Personnel under the grant must comply with prevailing and consistently applied human resource guidelines of the employing Institution(s).
9. This will extend to Institutions' prevailing policies on associated human resources costs (e.g. staff insurance, overtime claims, staff relocation, employment benefits, employment levy, employment pass, pre-examination medical check-up, housing allowance, service award and recruitment associated cost).
10. All EOM related expenses shall be pro-rated taking reference from the project start date, except for lump-sum insurance claims, which shall be allowable as claimed. As a general principle, staff costs should be charged based on time commitment to the Research.
11. Details of Research Personnel employed under the Funding must be provided in the manpower listing, and continuously updated, including new additions and those whose employment have ended.
12. All Institutions must adhere to the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices².
13. The Institution(s) are allowed to make manpower changes (i.e. increase/decrease in headcount, change in designation or scheme of hires, change in time commitment to the grant), as long as the changes are necessary for the Research, comply with the Institution(s)' policies and does not exceed the EOM vote.
14. Claims for staff performance bonus should be submitted within six (6) months following the end of the Term. For Host Institutions that practise accrual of performance bonus, balance Funds should either be returned or claimed within six (6) months if the pay-out comes after the end of the Term. In instances where the end of the Term does not coincide with the regular annual appraisal cycle, the Institution(s) will be allowed to submit a final performance bonus of the Research Personnel, based on the prevailing human resource policies and pro-rated to the number of months of service from the last appraisal of such Research Personnel to the end of the Term.

² Please refer to www.mom.gov.sg for details of the Fair Consideration Framework.

Equipment (“EQP”)

15. The Institutions / Investigators shall ensure that the purchase of each equipment is necessary for the Research or activity supported by the Funding and is not otherwise reasonably available and accessible.
16. For high value equipment purchase, Investigators are required to update the list of equipment acquired, as part of the Yearly Progress Report submission. Grantor may require the Institutions / Investigators to allow approved Third Parties to access and use the equipment, subject to the availability of the equipment.
17. The Institutions are allowed to make changes within the EQP vote (i.e. changes in quantity and changes in equipment), provided that these changes are (i) necessary, relevant and used for the Research; (ii) do not constitute a change in Research; and (iii) are kept within the approved equipment vote budget.

Other Operating Expenses (“OOE”)

18. The Institutions are allowed to make changes within the OOE vote (i.e. changes in quantity and changes in OOE items), provided that these changes are (i) necessary, relevant and used for the Research; (ii) do not constitute a change to the Research; and (iii) are kept within the approved OOE vote budget.

Overseas Travel (“OT”)

19. It is the responsibility of the Investigators / Institutions to ensure that all travel expenses are in line with the Institutions’ consistently applied policy on travel. The Institutions are to ensure that any travel undertaken is in relation to the Research only and for no other purpose.
20. The purpose of the travel should be directly relevant to the Research and necessary to accomplish the Research objectives.
21. Virement of Funds into the OT vote is not allowed.

Research Scholarship (“RS”)

22. Postgraduate stipend must align with the prevailing rates set by the Ministry of Education. Postgraduate stipend and tuition support will not attract indirect costs.
23. Virement from RS vote to other budget category votes is not allowed, regardless of variation amount.

Indirect Costs

24. Indirect costs in research are those costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored research project, but contribute to the ability of the Institutions to support such research projects (e.g. providing research space, research administration and utilities, and not through the actual performance of activities under the sponsored projects).
25. The Grantor does not manage indirect cost funding. Investigators should refer and adhere to their Institutions' policy of managing indirect cost funding.

Variations to the Research

Virement between Votes

26. Grantor delegates the approval authority for the virement of funds between the votes to the Institution's Director of Research (or equivalent), subject to a cumulative amount not exceeding ten percent (10%) of the total project direct cost value.
27. For virements cumulatively above ten percent (10%), the approval authority remains with the Grantor. Requests for virement should be submitted to Grantor no later than three (3) months from the end of the Term.
28. Retrospective virement requests or late requests to Grantor will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification.

Inter-Institutional Virements

29. Inter-Institutional virements, where applicable, require the Grantor's approval and acknowledgement from the Director of Research (or equivalent) for all Institutions involved.

Grant Extension

30. Request for no-cost grant extension should be made to the Grantor before the last three (3) months (for AI Singapore 100 Experiments Programme) or last six (6) months (for AI Singapore Research Programme and Grand Challenge Funding Scheme) of the original end of the Term. Any variation requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.
31. A one-off project extension should not be more than a total of six (6) months. An extension beyond six (6) months will require compelling justification.

Change in Lead Principal Investigator/Investigators (Not applicable for Talent Award)

32. Grantor's approval will be required for a change in the Lead Principal Investigator/Investigators.
33. The Lead Principal Investigator plays a significant role in steering the Research towards its intended objectives. As such, the Host Institution will be required to inform the Grantor immediately and provide a mitigation plan, should there be a long leave of absence by the Lead Principal Investigator or change to the Lead Principal Investigator. The Host Institution will be required to provide the Grantor an assessment of why the proposed Lead Principal Investigator would be a suitable fit to steer the Research towards its envisaged goals. Grantor reserves the right to suspend / terminate the Research if the mitigation plan is not satisfactory.

Change in Host Institution

34. Grantor's approval will be required should there be a change in Host Institution. The request must be made to Grantor and be endorsed by the Director of Research (or equivalent) of both the existing and new Host Institutions.

Change in Research Scope

35. Grantor's approval will be required for any change(s) to the scope of the Research. This includes change, removal or addition of scientific objectives, deliverables/Key Performance Indicators or milestones.
36. If an activity/task initially meant to be carried out by the Investigators/Institutions is subcontracted or entrusted to a third-party, this would also constitute a change in Research and Grantor's prior approval will be required.

Audit and Progress Reports

Annual Audit Report

37. The Host Institution is required to submit an Annual Audit Report, in accordance with the audit terms of reference as provided by the Grantor separately.

Yearly Progress Report

38. The Institutions are required to submit a Yearly Progress Report within one (1) month from the end of the Financial Year (by 31 May) or on such earlier date as reasonably required by grantor. The requirement to submit a Yearly Progress Report is waived if the project start date is three (3) months or less from the end of the reporting FY.

Final Report

39. The Institutions are required to submit a Final Report within two (2) months following the end of the Term.

Comprehensiveness of Reports

40. Investigators will be required to give additional information about the progress and outcomes of any Research if the information submitted in the Yearly Progress Reports and/or the Final Report is deemed to be inadequate.

Final Claim/ Statement of Account (if applicable)

41. The Institutions are required to submit a Final Claims / Final Statement of Account (if applicable) within four (4) months from the end of the Term.

Debarring of Investigators

42. Lead Principal Investigators who fail to submit the Final Report and/or Final Statement of Account (if applicable) within the stipulated timelines will be debarred. Debarred Lead Principal Investigators will not be eligible to submit new grant applications as Lead Principal Investigator for a period starting from the final report submission, and ending one year from the date the overdue Final report and/or Final Statement of Account is received by Grantor.

Publication Policy – In Conjunction with Clause 13 of the AISG Pillar T&Cs

43. The Institutions/PIs shall ensure that all publications arising from publicly funded Research are made openly available no later than twelve (12) months after the official date of publication.
44. At the very least, the author-accepted manuscript³ (AAM) of the publication shall be deposited in the Institution's publicly accessible repository, which is to be listed on the NRF website.

Acknowledgement Guidelines

45. All Institutions/PIs should attribute their awards/grants to the NRF Singapore.
46. At any time, during or after completion of the Research, Institutions/PIs should acknowledge NRF Singapore for its Funding support in any publication (including the Internet) of any material based on or developed under the Experiment/Research/Project.
47. Published materials include scientific publications, books, journals, articles, newsletters, brochures, posters, websites, conference materials, case studies and reports.
48. In public communication, efforts should be made to acknowledge the NRF Singapore's support in media releases, interviews, speeches, videos or any other media materials.

³ The author-accepted manuscript (AAM) is the full and final text of the work (as accepted for publication including all changes arising from peer review). Documents that have been typeset or copyedited by the publisher are not considered AAMs.

49. The acknowledgement guidelines for the following scenarios are as follows :

General Acknowledgement Statement with Disclaimer

“This research/project is supported by the National Research Foundation, Singapore under its AI Singapore Programme (AISG Award No: AISG-100E/GC/RP/RPKS-YYYY-XXX⁴). Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the views of National Research Foundation, Singapore [and Implementing Agency⁵, if applicable].”

Acknowledgement Statement – Multiple Funding Sources

If there is more than one funding source, the names of each source of funding are to be placed in order of the funding value, for example (assuming that the maximum funding is from NRF Singapore):

“This research/project is supported by the National Research Foundation, Singapore under its AI Singapore Programme (AISG Award No: AISG-100E/GC/RP/RPKS-YYYY-XXX), <other funding source name> and <other funding source name>. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the views of National Research Foundation, Singapore [and Implementing Agency, if applicable].”

⁴ This shall be based on the grant award reference number, as indicated in the Letter of Award.

⁵ Implementing Agency – In this instance refers to AI Singapore.

NON-FUNDABLE DIRECT COSTS

Type of Expenses	Description	Additional Remarks
Salaries of Lead PI / Investigators / Visiting Professors & researchers/ Collaborators/ general administrative support staff	Not allowable.	<p><u>For Visiting Professors & Researchers</u></p> <p>Allowable: Costs like honorariums, airfare, accommodation, transport and per diem are allowable. These costs are categorised as OOE.</p> <p>No longer Allowable: Staff benefits including Skill Development Levy (SDL) and Medical and Healthchoice Policies are <u>not allowable</u>.</p>
Teaching buy outs	<u>Not allowable</u> for the hiring of substitutes to perform the Investigators' teaching duties.	
Stipend top-up for existing post-graduate scholarship holders	Not allowable.	<p>Allowable*: Overseas/international or local student applicants are allowable. The student need not be a full time student enrolled in local IHLs.</p> <p>* The student <u>must not</u> be on a scholarship, receive a stipend, award and/or tuition support.</p>
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	Not allowable.	<p>Allowable*: Overseas/international or local undergrad student interns/assistants are allowable.</p> <p>* The student <u>must not</u> be on a scholarship, receive a stipend, award and/or tuition support.</p>
Costs related to general administration and management	<p>Not allowable. **</p> <p>** Includes common office equipment, such as furniture and fittings, office software, photocopiers, scanners and office supplies.</p>	<p>Allowable: Programme administrative staff should be claimed under EOM category as they contribute to the overall objectives of the programmes.</p> <p>Storage devices and courier/postage charges are allowable if required for the Research.</p> <p>No longer Allowable: "Office supplies" including name cards, ordinary office stationery such as pens, pencils, stapler and calculators etc. are <u>not allowable</u>.</p> <p>Consumables, printers/ photocopiers and printing charges for general office internal printing are <u>not allowable</u>.</p>

Costs of office or laboratory space	Not allowable. ** ** Includes renovation/outfitting costs, rent, depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditures such as water, electricity, general waste disposal and building/facilities maintenance charges.	
Personal productivity tools & communication expenses	<u>Not allowable</u> , unless the use of mobile phones and other form of smart devices were indicated in the methodology for the Research.	Allowable: Personal productivity tools and communication expenses including mobile phones, wearable/smart devices, telephone and internet charges must be clearly indicated in the methodology for the Research from the start.
Audit* & Legal fees *(Includes internal and external audit)	Not allowable.	
Entertainment	Not allowable.	No longer Allowable: Business meals are <u>not allowable</u> .
Refreshment	Not allowable.	Allowable: Refreshments for hosted Conference or Workshop for the Research. No longer Allowable: Business meals are <u>not allowable</u> . Refreshment for hosting delegations and meetings etc. are <u>not allowable</u> .
Fines and Penalties	Not allowable.	
Patent Application	Not allowable. ** ** This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost.	
Professional Membership Fees	Not allowable.	
Staff retreat and team- building activities	Not allowable.	