

Policy Redesign Project

All policies and procedures are being reviewed as part of this project. This document is pending review, but remains in effect until the review is carried out.

Policy on Research Grant and Equipment Transfers

Establishment: Council, 5 December 2002

Last Amended: EDA, September 2010

Nature of Amendment: Change of terminology - AOU to School

Date Last Reviewed:

Responsible Officer: Director, Research Services Office

Preamble

This document is concerned with the principles and procedures to be followed when a researcher:

- (i) ceases to work at the University and seeks to transfer a research grant and/or equipment and materials obtained for the purpose of prosecuting the research to a new institution; or
- (ii) receives grant funds administered by another institution or requests that grant funds or equipment be transferred from the University to another institution to support activities associated with the grant.

Definition

Equipment and materials is defined as any item of a permanent nature with a life expectancy of at least two years. Books, journals, glassware and plastic-ware, and materials, items or components purchased to repair an item of equipment are usually regarded as consumable items.

The decision as to what constitutes an item of grant-funded research equipment or materials that is the subject of a transfer request is a matter for the relevant School to determine on a case-by-case basis.

1. General Principle

The University will endeavour to ensure that grant funds and equipment are deployed in a manner which best achieves the outcomes expected from the research that has been funded.

2. Principles Relating to Transfer of Grants and Equipment

2.1 Where the terms of an externally funded grant address the issue of ownership and disposal of grant-funded equipment and changes to key personnel, including transfer of researchers and equipment to other institutions, the terms of the grant will apply.

2.2 All equipment purchased from internal University funds is the property of the University.

2.3 External research grants and equipment/materials purchased from such funds, and which are still needed for the prosecution of the staff member's research projects, may be transferred with a staff member transferring to another institution.

2.4 Requests to transfer external research grants held jointly with other staff members of the University and requests to transfer associated grant-funded equipment/materials will be the subject of specific recommendations in each case, following wide consultation between all of the investigators named in the research grant application and the relevant Deans of School.

2.5 Internal University research funds and equipment purchased from such funds may not be transferred. However, in the event that it can be shown that items purchased from such funds are not required by any other staff member, the transferring staff member may make a case for transferring the items, providing that the staff member or the staff member's new institution reimburse the University the reasonable market value of any items to be transferred.

2.6 Requests to transfer items purchased with both external research funds and internal University funds will be the subject of specific recommendations in each case, following wide consultation between the relevant Institute Research Director, all the investigators named on the grant application and the relevant School.

2.7 Inter-institutional negotiations with respect to the transfer of grants and equipment will be undertaken by the Research Services Office, in consultation with the relevant Research Institute Director and Faculty Head.

3. Decision-Making Process in Relation to Requests to Transfer Research Grants and/or Equipment

The process to be followed in relation to a request by a departing staff member to transfer the administration of a grant and/or items of grant-funded equipment/materials to another institution are as follows (a flow chart and checklist that summarise this process can be found at Attachment 1 and 2):

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Dean of School, when advised of the pending resignation or retirement of a staff member to arrange immediately for the preparation by the staff member of an inventory of all grants, research equipment and materials under the supervision/control of the staff member. This list should be provided at least three (3) months before the expected date of departure (or as soon as practicable after the date of departure is confirmed). The list should identify any grants and/or research equipment/materials the staff member wishes to transfer to another institution.

3.2 The Dean of School shall:

- (i) inform the Research Services Office about any grant that has been requested to transfer; and
- (ii) request information from the Inventory Officer about the depreciated value of any equipment that has been requested to transfer, if relevant.

3.3 The Research Services Office shall provide the Dean of School with:

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- a copy of the grant application;
 - details of the nature and duration of funding;
 - details of any staff paid from the grant;
 - balance of grant funds to date; and
 - details of any equipment purchased using grant funds.

3.4 The departing staff member, the other investigators named on the grant and the Deans of School of all investigators shall seek initial agreement on the following, with particular reference to the relative time commitment of each investigator on the project:

- whether administration of the grant should be transferred to the staff member's new institution (this would normally be the case for single investigator grants);
- for grants held jointly by multiple Flinders investigators, whether administration of the grant can remain at the University under the supervision/control of another Flinders investigator named on the grant, with the possibility of some of the grant funding being transferred for expenditure by the transferring staff member at the new institution;
- for grants held jointly by multiple Flinders investigators, whether administration of the grant should transfer to the new institution, with the possibility of some of the grant funding remaining at the University for expenditure by Flinders investigators involved in the grant;
- items to be retained by the University;
- items to be transferred, including dates from which items can be removed;
- payment for items to be transferred, if applicable, including the apportionment of any revenue to be shared between Schools.
- A written record of discussions will be retained by all parties.

3.5 The Dean of School of the transferring staff member will forward recommendations on the transfer of grants and/or equipment and the sale price, if appropriate, including the apportionment between Schools of any revenue to be shared as per 5.2, to the Head of Faculty and the relevant Institute Research Director.

3.6 In the absence of agreement, all information provided under 3.2 and 3.3 and submissions from all investigators named on the grant shall be submitted to the Head of Faculty and the relevant Institute Research Director. Each investigator shall be invited to provide information on what has been achieved to date in relation to prosecution of the project, what remains to be achieved, how it is to be achieved, with what resources and by whom. The Head of Faculty and Institute Research Director will evaluate evidence and argument, especially the relative time commitment to the project of each of the investigators and make a judgement as to how the grant funds and equipment should best be deployed in order to achieve the outcomes expected from the research that has been funded.

3.7 Following consultation with the Head of Faculty, the Institute Research Director will advise the Research Services Office of any grant which has been recommended to transfer. The Research Services Office will liaise with any relevant external granting bodies to seek approval for the transfer of the grant.

3.8 A schedule listing equipment and materials which may be removed will be drawn up which, when signed by the Head of Faculty and the Institute Research Director, will become the authority by which the equipment and materials may be removed from the University.

3.9 The schedule listing equipment and materials items for transfer shall be provided to the University Inventory Officer and will include information about whether ownership of the equipment is to vest in the new institution or is to be retained by the University.

3.10 Inter-institutional disputes involving the transfer of grants and/or equipment will be negotiated by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Research Services Office, in consultation with the relevant Research Institute Director and Faculty Head.

4. Removal of Equipment from the University

4.1 Where ownership of the equipment is to vest in another institution, it will so vest when the equipment is removed from the University to be transported to the new institution.

4.2 Approval of the removal of the equipment to another institution is subject to the following conditions:

(i) All costs of removal to the other institution will be met by:

- the grant, if the conditions of the grant so permit and if funds are available for the purpose in the grant; or
- the other institution.

(ii) Where the University will retain ownership of the equipment, all costs of returning the equipment to the University when the project ends and, if so required, reinstallation at its original site, will be met as in 4.2(i).

(iii) Costs of removal includes the cost of any structural alterations or minor works necessary to remove the equipment from its site and, if occasion arises, to reinstall the equipment when it is returned to its original site.

(iv) Insurance

- Where the ownership in the equipment is to vest in another institution, that institution is responsible for arranging all insurance it requires to cover the equipment from the time it is removed from the University.
- Where the University retains ownership in the equipment, the University will arrange insurance cover for the equipment while in transit to and from the other institution and while at that institution.

5. Revenue from the Sale of Research Equipment

5.1 Should the terms of the grant specify that research equipment may be disposed of only as directed by the grantor and the revenue generated by the disposal returned to the grantor, the terms of the grant will apply.

5.2 Where the University's procedures apply, application of revenue received as reimbursement for transferred equipment shall be in accordance with the following principles:

- Where the research grant was a block grant to a School or research group, the revenue shall be available to that School or research group.
- Where the research grant was for a specific project, the revenue shall be available to the School or research group of which the transferring staff member is a member.
- In any case where it appears that more than one School or research group is entitled to share the revenue, the revenue shall be apportioned between those Schools or research groups in such shares as the Head of Faculty and Institute Research Director determines after consultation with all stakeholders.

6. Grant Funding Shared between Institutions

6.1 Prior to transferring funds to another institution to support the activities on a grant that is administered by the University, the agreement of the other institution shall be obtained that the institution will comply with the funding body conditions, including the requirement to provide a financial acquittance of the funds so transferred at the end of the funding year.

6.2 Prior to expenditure of any grant funds received by the University, where the grant is administered by another institution, the University and the other institution shall each sign a letter of agreement containing

details of the grant (investigators, title, funding source) and the amount of funding to be transferred to the University.