

GENERAL RESEARCH FUND POLICY			
Effective Date	December 18, 2018	Policy Type	Academic
Responsibility	President and CEO	Cross-Reference	Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide Research Grants Policy
Approver	Academic Council	Appendices	None
Review Schedule	Five Years, or as warranted by Tri-Council Policy Revisions		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy describes the administration of the General Research Fund (GRF) and the decision-making process for allocation of money from the GRF. The GRF is a fund held in trust by the Polytechnic on behalf of the Tri-Council Agencies, into which funds remaining unspent at the termination of Tri-Agency funded projects are deposited.

2. Background

- 2.1. Since 2010, NWP has been approved to apply for research funding under programs administered by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), collectively known as Tri-Agency, or Tri-Council Agencies.
- 2.2. As per the NSERC - 2016 Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide, all Tri-Agency grants that have not been renewed or extended, that have been terminated, or have been completed, may contain residual balances of funds allocated in prior years and/or issued in the current fiscal year. Upon termination of a Tri-Agency research grant, NSERC and SSHRC will allow unspent funds from prior years to be retained by the Polytechnic under certain conditions determined by the NSERC Finance and Awards Administration Division. The principal requirement is that retained funds will be transferred to a General Research Fund (GRF); a fund held in trust by the Polytechnic on behalf of the Tri-Council Agencies. CIHR does not allow transfers to the GRF.

3. Policy Objective

- 3.1. This policy governs the administration of the GRF.
- 3.2. This policy governs the decision-making process for the allocation of funds from the GRF.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to the administration of funds remaining at the termination of an NSERC or SSHRC funded research activity, or, following the sale of NSERC or SSHRC funded equipment or facilities.
- 4.2. CIHR does not allow for the transfer of residual funds to the GRF. Any money remaining at the end of the grant period must be returned to the agency.
- 4.3. The retention and use of allowable residuals from non-Tri-Council funds will be governed by the terms of agreements specific to those funds.

4.4. This policy is complimentary, and in addition to, other pertinent academic and administrative policies governing the administration of Tri-Agency funds.

5. Definitions

- 5.1. "CIHR" refers to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- 5.2. "GRF" refers to the General Research Fund, money held in trust by the Polytechnic on behalf of Tri-Council Agencies
- 5.3. "NSERC" refers to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- 5.4. "SSHRC" refers to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- 5.5. "Tri-Agency" or "Tri-Council Agencies" means the collective administration and regulation of research funding programs coordinated by CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC

6. Guiding Principles

- 6.1. Administration of the GRF shall adhere to the principles and requirements of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada 2016 Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide, or any subsequent Tri-Agency amendments or updates to the Guide (Appendix A). As per the Guide, the Tri-Council Agencies expect that:
 - 6.1.1. The Polytechnic will use GRF funds for the broad purpose of enhancing the quality of research in the natural sciences and engineering (NSERC residual funds), or in the social sciences and humanities (SSHRC residual funds).
 - 6.1.2. GRF funds will be directed towards covering direct costs incurred in undertaking research activities, in accordance with Tri-Agency guidelines.
 - 6.1.3. Funds must be spent in a timely manner.
 - 6.1.4. Tri-Council Agencies can adjust forthcoming payments to the institution or request a reimbursement in the case when no future payments are scheduled for any current-year funds not required for the purpose for which they were granted.
- 6.2. GRF Administrative requirements:
 - 6.2.1. The GRF will be administered separately from all other Polytechnic funds. The GRF will be maintained 'in trust' on behalf of the Tri-Council Agencies and is not to be included in general Polytechnic accounting.
 - 6.2.2. Amounts transferred to the GRF will meet the Tri-Agency definitions of residual balance, including:
 - 6.2.2.1. Residual balances of funds allocated for research activity in prior years and/or issued in the current fiscal year.
 - 6.2.2.2. Proceeds from any sale of equipment purchased, or facilities established with funds granted by NSERC or SSHRC.
- 6.3. Spending of GRF Funds:
 - 6.3.1. Expense eligibility, accounting practices, and expense authorization will be in accordance with the Tri-Council Financial Administration Guide.
 - 6.3.2. Only the President and CEO (or authorized delegate) will approved expenditures from the GRF.
 - 6.3.3. No commitment of GRF funds (purchase orders, contracts, etc.) will be made without the prior written authorization of the President and CEO (or delegate).

- 6.4. Carry-Over of GRF Funds:
 - 6.4.1. In accordance with Tri-Agency Guidelines, a portion of GRF funds may be carried over on an annual basis. The annual minimum allocation and use of GRF funds will be 50% of the total opening balance as of 1 April of each year. Any amounts remaining in excess of 50% on the following 31 March will be returned to NSERC or SSHRC, as applicable.

- 6.5. Reporting:
 - 6.5.1. Completion and submission of Tri-Council Statement of Account (Form 301) for a financial year defined as 1 April to 31 March, shall be made by 30 June each year.
 - 6.5.2. Balances available for transfer will be confirmed and authorized annually by NSERC or SSHRC following submission of the annual Statement of Account (NSERC Form 301 or equivalent).

- 6.6. Allocation:
 - 6.6.1. GRF funds will support research activities in the areas of natural sciences and engineering, or, social sciences and humanities, as applicable. GRF funds may be allocated to internal research seed grants, project bridge or top-up funding, or other eligible activities. Recipients do not have to be current or previous holders of Tri-Agency awards.
 - 6.6.2. In all cases, GRF funds will be directed towards activities that build Polytechnic research capacity, with the expectation that the recipient will seek new or additional sources of external funding towards the start or continuation of a long-term research initiative.
 - 6.6.3. GRF funds will not be allocated to short-term discrete projects for which the GRF allocation will account for more than 25% of the total project budget.

- 6.7. Requests for Allocation:
 - 6.7.1. Permanent academic and research staff may submit proposals to the Director, Research and Innovation. Proposals will include the following:
 - 6.7.1.1. Overview statement of the proposed activity
 - 6.7.1.2. Work plan with budget, timeline, and deliverable outcomes
 - 6.7.1.3. Outline of a plan to seek and secure sustaining project funds, including details of the funder(s) and program(s), and, the likelihood of success.
 - 6.7.2. All GRF request proposals are to be submitted by noon on the last business day of January.

- 6.8. Allocation Decisions:
 - 6.8.1. All GRF allocation decisions will be at the discretion of the President and CEO (or delegate), on the advice of the Director, Research and Innovation.
 - 6.8.2. Recommendations to allocate GRF funds shall be based on the merit of the proposals submitted, as determined by a review panel consisting of the Director, Research and Innovation and two additional members of the Research Planning Committee.
 - 6.8.3. Proposal merit shall be judged on the following criteria:
 - feasibility of project completion within the timeline and budget proposed
 - evidence of strong likelihood for successful external funding to undertake

- a new or ongoing research initiative
 - evidence of a high probability of achieving the proposed outcomes, based on the applicant’s capacity for undertaking research
- 6.8.4. At the discretion of the President and CEO (or delegate), GRF funds may be awarded to a single proposal, or, divided amongst two or more proposals. Funds allocated may be in amounts less than those sought in the proposal(s).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve and formally support this policy.
President and CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional authority for the GRF, as required under Tri-Agency Guidelines. • Delegates authority for administration, allocation, and expense approval
Vice-President, Academic and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and formally support this policy.
Director, NWP Research and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic merit decisions • Tri-Agency reporting
Manager, Financial Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRF financial administration and reporting.

8. Exceptions to the Policy

- 8.1. No exceptions, except in cases where current or future Tri-Agency guidelines differ from NWP policy, in which case Tri-Agency guidelines will take precedence.

9. Inquiries

- 9.1. Director, NWP Research and Innovation

10. Amendments (Revision History)

- 10.1. Policy Version 1: November 2018