

# REVIEW OF UVIC RESEARCH POLICIES 2008/09

## 1. Background

In June 2008 the Vice-President Research established a working group to review the Policy on Research Overhead (3930).

In November 2008 a report was produced by the working group and it was recommended that:

*the policy be revised to reflect an indirect cost of research recovery charge on all new or renewed research funding agreements at a flat rate of 25% of the face value of the research funding agreement.*

The report also recommended that the rate should be adjusted on annual basis if appropriate. The working group hoped that setting the charge at that level would prevent sponsors from benefitting through different policies within BC universities and others across Canada. The aim is to allow the University of Victoria to recover indirect costs that are required to maintain a high quality research environment.

The Office of the Vice-President Research (OVPR) and the Office of Research Services (ORS) then commenced work on updating the existing policy and it quickly became clear that changes to the Policy on Research Overhead (3930) had implications for consistency with the External Research Grants and Contracts policy (1210) and the Research Policy (1200). It was also evident that a set of procedures for the approval of external research funding agreements was needed.

OVPR and ORS staff revised the suite of UVic's research policies and it is now time to allow the UVic community to read and comment on them. An outline of the key changes that have been made to the policies, and the context within which they were made, as well as some explanatory information about indirect costs are provided below.

## 2. Context

The remarkable decade-long growth in research success at UVic has brought with it the need for significant investment in creating a supportive research environment. With the exception of the federal program that covers a portion of these indirect costs for Tri-Council funded research, the University has had little ability to meet these costs except through reallocating operating budgets from other areas of the University. The inadequacy of the current overhead policy is best demonstrated by the fact that, despite a ten-fold increase in contract research over the past eight years, the indirect funding it has generated annually in absolute dollars has remained relatively static.

The policy review was conducted at a time when research universities are under significant financial pressure and moving toward a fair and more consistent approach to recover the true indirect costs for supporting all forms of externally funded research. The AUCC estimates the indirect costs of supporting an environment for all externally funded research, collectively termed a "research funding agreement", is 40% of the direct costs of conducting the research. This level of indirect cost charge is consistent with those charged in other jurisdictions such as the US, EU, UK and Australia.

### 3. Key Changes and Features

#### 3.1. *Research Policy*

- Updating of the definition of research
- Change in delegation of by Board of Governors – from the President to the Vice-President Research
- Updating of format and wording to synchronize with review of other research policies and new policy template

#### 3.2. *Indirect Costs of Research policy (3930)*

- Change of title from “Overhead” policy to “Indirect Costs of Research” policy, in accordance with the federal government’s Tri-Council program to cover the indirect costs of research
- Introduction of wording to allow recovery of the indirect costs of research at a flat minimum rate of the face value of the research funding agreement
- Changes to the principles for distribution of the indirect costs recovered by the University
- Inclusion of the Vice-President’s authority (under delegation from the Board of Governors) to adjust the flat minimum rate
- Updating of format and wording to synchronize with review of other research policies and new policy template
- Development of a indirect cost rates schedule for funders

#### 3.3. *External Research Funding Agreements policy (1210)*

- Change of title from “External Research Grants and Contracts” policy to “External Research Funding Agreements” policy, in accordance with terms used by the AUCC
- Changes to the section on *Grant or Contract Overruns* to reflect that the PI is responsible for the sound management of the funds
- Updating of format and wording to synchronize with review of other research policies and new policy template

#### 3.4. *NEW! – Procedures for the Approval of External Research Funding Agreements*

- A clear outline on the approval of applications and proposals,
- How to obtain the correct signatures and what those signatures mean
- How and when to build indirect costs into your application or proposal
- The indirect rate for UVic
- Exceptions to the indirect costs rate and procedures for determining those rates
- Allocation and distribution of indirect costs
- Development of enhanced Research Application Summary Forms for grants and contracts

#### 3.5. *NEW! - External Research Funding Toolkit*

The Office of Research Services is developing an External Research Funding Toolkit for researchers which will include:

- references to all the relevant UVic policies and procedures
- a list of important and useful forms and information on how to complete them
- contracts templates
- ORS, Research Accounting and Grants Facilitation functions and contacts

## **4. Consultation Process**

### **4.1. Working Group on Research Overhead**

Consultation commenced in 2008 with the establishment of the working group whose membership is listed below:

- Howard Brunt (Vice-President Research and Chair)
- Rachael Scarth (Director, Office of Research Services)
- Cecilia Freeman-Ward (Executive Assistant to the VPR)
- Peter Keller (Dean, Social Sciences)
- Tom Fyles (Science)
- Afzal Suleman (Engineering)
- Mary Anne Waldron (AVP, Legal Affairs and Provost's delegate)
- Kristi Simpson (AVP, Finance and Operations and VPFO's delegate)
- Tim Stockwell (Director, CARBC)
- Brent Sternig (Director, IDC)

The working group consulted with Deans, Research Centre Directors, Research Advisory Committee, and other University members and surveyed other universities about their policies and process in order to prepare the report.

### **4.2. Committees**

Over the past year previous versions of new draft Indirect Costs of Research policy have been presented to the Executive Committee, Research Advisory Committee, Council of Centre Directors and Deans' Council for discussion.

### **4.3. Vice-President Research Website**

The updated policies and new procedures are now online and accessible by the University community for review and comment <http://www.research.uvic.ca/VPRE/index.htm>. Comments should be sent to Sally Eshuys, Executive Assistant to the Vice-President Research, [vprea@uvic.ca](mailto:vprea@uvic.ca). The documents will be online until early September 2009.

### **4.4. Open Forum**

In early September 2009 an open forum will be held to allow discussion of the revised policies and new procedures. The Vice-President Research will make a presentation about the revisions and encourage discussion of issues and concerns.

### **4.5. Feedback**

University members are invited to submit comments about the revised policies and procedures to the Office of the Vice-President Research, via email to Sally Eshuys, [vprea@uvic.ca](mailto:vprea@uvic.ca).

## **5. Approval Process and Implementation Date**

After the broader, university-wide consultation process the suite of research policies and procedures will be revised and brought back to the Research Advisory Committee, Council of Centre Directors and Deans' Council for endorsement before being submitted to the Board of Governors for approval in 25

November 2009. It is hoped that the revised policies and new procedures will become effective on 1 January 2010.