

UMass Lowell Research Investment Funds Guidelines

1. Statement

Research Investment Funds (RIF) are institutional funds distributed to Principal Investigators (PIs), departments, centers, and colleges based on externally sponsored funds expenditures.

2. Purpose

The purpose of RIF is to stimulate further growth in UMass Lowell's research, development, and innovation activities, leading to long-term sustainability and expansion of the University's research enterprise.

3. Scope

These guidelines apply to all PIs, faculty, staff, departments, centers, and colleges at UMass Lowell who receive or manage RIF accounts.

4. Definitions

Research Investment Funds: Institutional funds calculated on a percentage basis and distributed based on modified total direct costs of sponsored projects.

Principal Investigator: The individual primarily responsible for the design, conduct, and reporting of a research project.

Emeritus Faculty: Retired faculty who have been granted emeritus status by the University.

5. Procedures and Use of RIF

5.1 Allowable Uses of PI, Department, Center, and College RIF

RIF expenditures must directly support research, research development, scholarship, and innovation. Examples include:

- Purchase of research supplies, equipment, software, and maintenance.
- Books and educational materials related to research and scholarship.
- Travel necessary for research purposes, including presenting scholarly work (e.g. data, abstracts) at professional meetings.
- Employment of students, administrative assistants, technical staff (i.e. research scientists, postdocs), consultants with justifiable expertise, or other staff to support research activities.
- Activities that advance invention, discovery, team proposal or center development, or enhance research visibility.

5.2 Restrictions on Use of RIF

No Personal Compensation: RIF fund managers may not use RIF funds to pay themselves. This includes but is not limited to summer salary, additional compensation, etc.

Course Buyouts: RIF may be used for a course buyout only in accordance with the PI

Research Investment Funds Course Buyouts Procedures, when justified by exceptional research and development opportunities.

Unallowable Expenses: Prohibited expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Travel or equipment unrelated to research/scholarship/innovation.
- Donations to external entities.
- Expenses not otherwise permitted under University policies and guidelines.

5.3 Eligibility and Retention of Funds

Active Faculty: RIF may only be spent while the PI is employed at UMass Lowell. As institutional funds, RIF cannot be transferred to another institution or entity if the PI departs the University.

Emeritus Faculty: Emeritus faculty may retain use of RIF funds only if they remain actively engaged in research and innovation (e.g., serving as a significant contributor or key personnel on an active grant or contract).

5.4 Financial Management

RIF balances must be spent as accrued; advance spending is prohibited.

Deficit spending is not allowed for PI, Department, Center and College RIF:

Accounts with deficit balances will be frozen until deficit is cleared. If a Bank Card is linked to the account, it will be deactivated until the account returns to a positive balance.

PI/Department/Center deficits over 90 days or at June 30th will be automatically cleared by the Controller's Office using the following hierarchy within the respective college:

- PI Unrestricted Funds (e.g., Residual Balance Account)
- Department/Center RIF
- College RIF

Terminated PI RIF surplus balances will be transferred using the following hierarchy:

- Negative and inactive RIF accounts in the respective department
- Negative and inactive RIF accounts in the respective college
- Split 50/50 between the college and VCRI

5.5 Application to Units

All provisions of these guidelines apply equally to PI, department, center, and college RIF accounts.

6. Responsibilities

Principal Investigators, Departments, Centers, and Colleges: Ensure compliance with allowable uses, restrictions, and financial management requirements of RIF. Monitor RIF accounts and support compliance.

The Controller's Office is responsible for ensuring that expenses charged to RIF are made in accordance with the RIF Guidelines, University policies and procedures.

7. Guidelines Ownership

Vice Chancellor for Research & Innovation/Controller's Office

Approval Authority: VCRI; Controller

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