

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Guidelines

Background

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences recognizes the importance of external funds to support research, scholarship and creative works. As careful stewards of external funds, the college follows university policies related to sponsored projects, including the recovery and investment of Facilities and Administrative (F&A) funds – also known as indirects.

A university level review of F&A policy in Fiscal Year 2018 led to policy changes that included the addition of target margins to incentivize and increase F&A recovery; and increased Principal Investigator (PI) authority to determine the percent distribution of the academic unit share based on intellectual contribution. The policy change also requires colleges to develop procedures under the revised university policy. (See GMU F&A Distribution Guidelines –<https://osp.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/FA-Distribution-Guidelines-042219.pdf>.)

A. Baseline Distribution of F&A

The Baseline Distribution of recovered indirects is 30% to E&G (Chief Financial Officer's Office up to a cap of \$3.4 million), 35% to the Provost's office, and 35% to the academic unit (CHSS).

Of the 35%¹ allocated to CHSS, the college adopted the **Standard Distribution** of recovered F&A as included in three columns on the OSP Proposal Approval Routing Form: (1) PIs/Co-PIs @ 10.5%; (2) Department/Center @ 7% (split equally between the Department and a CHSS Chartered Research Center if applicable); and College @ 17.5%. The Standard Distribution, in place for many years before 2019, was affirmed by CHSS Chairs and Directors and College Leadership in November of 2019.

B. Multiple PI Proposals

If more than one PI is involved in the proposal, the distribution of recovered F&A among PIs and units (of the 35% academic unit share) is handled via a multiplier assessed across the three columns (PIs/Co-PIs; Department/Center; College).

The multiplier was changed in the 2019 university guidelines from a percent of budgeted personnel expenses (from the May, 2006 multiunit distribution policy) to a percent of intellectual contribution.

- Intellectual contribution: The Principal Investigators (PIs) decide what the multiplier for the distribution of recovered indirect should be, based on their assessment of each person's intellectual contribution to the project, not their salary amounts. For example, in the intellectual contribution model, if four PIs agree they are equal contributors, they are each eligible for 1/4 (25%) as the multiplier.

¹ When the university's F&A negotiated rate of on-campus, research is paid by the sponsor, the baseline distribution to the academic unit is reduced to 34.3%, with 10.29% to the PI, 6.86% to the Department/Center, and 17.15% to the College.

- Administrative exception to Intellectual Contribution model: Although PIs choose the distribution percentage of recovered F&A according to intellectual contribution, the administration of the funded project resides with the home unit of the PI.
 - There may be times when the intellectual contribution model does not adequately cover the administrative costs to house the project, particularly when they involve multiple units and/or external partners. The Dean's Office may request exceptions to the intellectual contribution model on a case-by-case basis, and seek a different F&A distribution.

C. Target Margins

To incentivize increased F&A cost recovery, the 2019 university guidelines created target margins, beyond which academic units will receive a greater percentage of recovered F&A. Once CHSS's target margin for recovered F&A is reached (\$1,692,437 as of FY17), the distribution of recovered indirects is 80% to the academic unit and 20% to the Vice President for Research. The distribution at the 80% rate occurs after fiscal year end. The Standard Distribution to CHSS units is the same. When multiple colleges and PIs are involved, review and agreement of distribution of academic units recovered F&A occurs at the proposal stage.

D. Reinvestment of Recovered F&A

College of Humanities and Social Sciences Investments

The college invests funds from recovered F&A, E&G and philanthropy to support research, scholarship and creative works in order to advance the college's intellectual capital and capacity.

The college routinely invests recovered F&A in research support, such as:

- Faculty Research and Development Awards – short-term (12-month) research awards
- Research Center Space (off-campus rental costs at Commerce Building, Chain Bridge Road Townhouses, and Democracy Lane)
- Research Spending Credits (PI indirect support) are funds transferred to PIs when they exceed a level of effort above the cost of a buyout
- Parental Leave Support for personnel on sponsored projects (e.g. "soft money") required under new university policy was extended to all employees and is not covered by E&G
- Partial funding for institutional membership in Virginia Sea Grant
- Occasional pilot research funding
- As of FY20, the college began covering partial support (0.25 FTE/\$4,000 stipend) for graduate students who receive externally funded graduate fellowships (e.g. NIH F31, NSF GRFP)
- As of FY19, the college began returning 10% of academic year instructional faculty salary that is charged to grants as a research incentive for academic departments

The college routinely invests F&A, E&G and private funds in support of research, scholarship and creative works, such as:

- Start-Up Faculty Support
- Academic Year support to faculty over the salary cap, with college cost share for course buyouts

- Fellowship Top Offs (when prestigious full-time fellowships do not cover the full academic year salary, such as those awarded by the Carnegie Endowment, Woodrow Wilson Center, ACLS, NEH, Guggenheim, Fulbright, etc.)
- Junior Faculty Awards in the Humanities and Social Sciences (to supplement donor support)
- Support for Research Centers
- Additional Faculty Study Leaves for Instructional Tenured Faculty to augment Provost funding
- Cost share and grant matches (cash, GRA support, instrumentation)
- Financial support for Provost Initiatives that seek college support (e.g. Transdisciplinary Centers, Institutes, etc.)
- Institutional Memberships, e.g. National Humanities Alliance, American Council of Learned Societies, etc.

Unit Level and PI Investments

Use of recovered F&A at the unit level is part of an “all funds model” whereby chairs engage in planning about the use of all funds which include: E&G (university/state support), private philanthropic support, sponsored research, and recovered indirects. In terms of mapping out the appropriate uses of recovered F&A funds, Department Chairs provide leadership and share information to **encourage transparency and appropriateness** of the use of these funds, similar to what is happening at the college level. In addition, Department Chairs provide guidance to individual faculty who have successfully attracted external funding and have received F&A funds so that the use of recovered F&A is appropriate.