

Divisional Grant Policy

As of January 2020

Purpose

Faculty in the Social Sciences Division (SSD) at the University of Chicago have contributed to some of the world's greatest discoveries, advancements, and bodies of knowledge. In order to continue our leadership in social scientific research, the Division must recruit and retain the most promising faculty and provide that faculty with many forms of support to facilitate and enhance their research leadership. Currently, the Division maintains one of the most generous faculty Research Leave policies in higher education, provides faculty members with start-up funding to pilot new research initiatives and bridge funding to sustain research through down-turns in external support, and sustains a strong Divisional culture of inquiry and debate to test and refine the best ideas – achieved in part through our investments in sustaining top graduate programs and myriad workshops, conferences, seminars, and laboratory and other research infrastructures.

The Social Science Divisional grant policy is designed to provide faculty with the freedom and flexibility to pursue lines of inquiry wherever they may lead, to sustain an institutional environment capable of catalyzing and advancing field-defining research, and to balance the pursuit of faculty research opportunities with other responsibilities (teaching, student advising and mentorship, and departmental service), while at the same time ensuring compliance with University and governmental regulations.

In cases where research is supported by extramural funding, the Division's policies and practices must also provide strong pre-award and post-award support, proper institutional oversight, and align the facilities and administrative (indirect) cost allowance to the full scope of the Division's considerable research investments.

Policy

Any grant proposal on which a faculty member with primary academic appointment in the Social Sciences Division serves as Principal Investigator must be submitted through the Social Sciences Division.

Elaborations

Responsibility for setting the course of research at the University of Chicago is [vested with the faculty](#). Full time, salaried members of the faculty are eligible to serve as principal investigator (PI) on proposals submitted to outside funding agencies in support of research, training, or other sponsored activities. On sponsored awards, in addition to directing the project's research activities and overseeing the scientific integrity of the project, the PI also bears responsibility for financial oversight and regulatory compliance (for example, authorizing spending of funds, addressing potential conflicts of interest or allegations of academic fraud, ensuring proper access controls for use of restricted data, and ensuring that research activities with human and animal subjects meet standards of ethical treatment, to name a few). In order for the Social Sciences Division and the University to support the PI across the range of roles and responsibilities, and to provide strong facilities and administrative support, faculty members must conduct their sponsored research activities primarily within the Division.

The Social Sciences Division anticipates that faculty members conduct much of their research activity during the summer quarter (July-September); grant-funded summer research may include up to 2.5 months' additional compensation from grant funds, commensurate with the effort committed (up to 3 months with prior approval from the dean). All faculty members also have discretion to dedicate effort toward their research program during the 9-month academic year (October-June). It is difficult, however, to segregate grant-funded research during the academic year from the PI's other areas of research, and unless required by the funding agency, SSD will not approve [voluntary cost-sharing](#).

During the 9-month academic year (October-June), SSD expects a faculty member's extramurally-funded research activities will be managed in balance with departmental and other University responsibilities. When allowable

in accordance with the sponsor's policies, a PI may budget up to three months of her/his base academic year salary and benefits on the grant; in such cases, the Division will provide the PI with new discretionary research funds in an amount equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the academic-year salary relief provided by the grant.

When a PI, in consultation with his/her chair, determines that a worthwhile research agenda demands more effort than can be managed in balance with full teaching responsibilities, the department chair may submit a request to the Dean for the PI to buyout a limited amount of teaching responsibilities using grant funds. Such requests are reviewed by the Dean of the Social Sciences Division and the Master of the Social Science Collegiate Division. The request must describe measures the faculty member will take to maintain advising responsibilities to his/her students, as well as measures the department will take to meet its curricular and governance needs. Generally, course buyouts are limited to one per year, although in select cases approval may be granted for two course buyouts in a single academic year. The cost for course buyouts are as follows: 12.5% base salary/benefits for a one-course buyout, and 37.5% base salary/benefits for a two-course buyout (for faculty on a three-course teaching plan, the cost of course buyouts is 16.7% salary/benefits for a one-course buyout and 49.7% salary/benefits for a two-course buyout). *(NB: academic-year salary buyout and course buyout are not mutually-exclusive, they may be combined; however, they are discrete – grant funds used for course buyout are not eligible for 50% return of salary relief.)*

Research funded by non-University sponsors typically includes an allowance for Facilities and Administrative costs (frequently referred to as "Indirect costs", or IDCs), costs that are not directly attributable to a specific sponsored research project but are essential for research and training (ex. costs associated with building operations, utilities, and administrative services). Indirect costs are calculated as a percent of a project's total direct costs according to [rates negotiated by University Research Administration](#). The Social Sciences Division does not share or return any portion of IDCs to investigators except in very rare exceptions when an enduring large-scale research enterprise requires specialized facilities and/or administrative support.

When a research project led by a faculty member with primary academic appointment in SSD benefits from facilities and/or administrative resources outside the Division, or is co-led with investigators in another Division/School or at another university or research institution (including grants with co-PIs at multiple institutions), arrangements must be made to identify the responsibilities of each institutional partner and ensure an equitable assignment of IDC revenue. These arrangements should be completed in advance of grant application, however, in the interest of meeting application deadlines on short-notice opportunities, an IDC-sharing agreement may also be negotiated following receipt of a grant award notice (note: all IDC-sharing arrangements must be agreed to by all parties before spending begins on a grant-funded project). In certain cases, the depth and frequency of SSD collaboration with other University and external partners is sufficient to merit negotiation of blanket IDC-sharing agreements; SSD currently has standing agreements governing SSD faculty members' sponsored research activities with [NORC](#) and with [Urban Labs](#).

Faculty members with joint appointments that cross Divisional lines should negotiate with their cognizant Deans prior to submitting any proposal for sponsored research, so that responsibility for facilities and administrative support and assignment of IDCs may be agreed to in advance.

Faculty members also have opportunities to participate in academic research primarily directed by an organization other than the University of Chicago, and/or to participate in outside professional and commercial activities (compensated or uncompensated). In such cases, when the faculty member is providing limited subject matter expertise, no other University resources are involved in the activity, and the engagement is short-term (i.e. a single summer appointment, or other engagements that can be met within the allowable limits under the University's [conflict of commitment policy](#)), the faculty member may enter into an independent consulting agreement directly with the sponsor (note: faculty members are [required to disclose](#) all consulting activities before work begins). If the work exceeds the allowable consulting days, the work may proceed under an agreement such as an Inter-institutional Personnel Agreement or Salary Reimbursement. Whenever the contributions of an SSD faculty member amount to intellectual leadership beyond limited subject matter expertise, or any time other University resources are involved (laboratories or other facilities, technicians, data management, student research assistance, administrative support, etc.), an official contractual agreement must be filed between the funding party and the University.

Fellowships

Fellowships are awarded to faculty based on career achievements and scholarly promise for the purpose of enabling the advancement of a research agenda (broadly defined), typically in the form of a sustained period of research free from other distractions and often associated with a residency requirement or participation in a research community

elsewhere from the University of Chicago. Unlike research grants, acceptance of a fellowship generally requires that the recipient take a leave of absence under the Division's [Research Leave](#) policy. Faculty should discuss eligibility and terms with the dean's office prior to fellowship applications if there is doubt about the leave of absence requirement.

Transition Period

Effective beginning January 1, 2016, all new grant proposals submitted by faculty members with primary academic appointment in the Social Sciences Division shall be submitted through the Social Sciences Division per the above guidelines. Grants currently awarded to an SSD faculty PI through an institution other than the University of Chicago may continue under current institutional sponsorship if the project period will end on or before summer 2017; if the project period will extend beyond summer 2017, the PI should begin as soon as possible making arrangements to transfer institutional sponsorship to the University of Chicago SSD no later than the start of the 2016-17 academic year.