| **Directive / Category** | **Questions** | **Answers** |
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| **Employment and Compensation** | * In reference to "International Researchers" - regarding employment and compensation... can you give an example of the context in which you were using this term?

For example, an RA hired to work in the lab? Grad Students?  | * Definition from TAGFA: “International Researcher is a researcher whose primary place of employment is outside of Canada”.
* The individual would have the same qualifications as a Grantee; it ***would not*** be a research assistant or a graduate student.
 |
| **Employment and Compensation** | * How does one know an individual is expected to work for free?
 | * The named collaborator on a grant is identified on the award letter. The PI can confirm if the individual is a named collaborator.
 |
| **Employment and Compensation** | * Will Department Managers have access to information like who are the listed collaborators on the grant documentation?
 | * The copy of the award letter will list the named collaborators, and co-applicants on the grant. The PI will have this information, or you can ask ors@sfu.ca for a copy of the Award Letter if you cannot locate it.
 |
| **Travel and Travel-Related** | * “Grantee flies to L.A. to discuss research results with an out of town member of the project team” - is supporting documentation required for this?
 | * The requirement for supporting documentation ***does not*** change.
* This is also an **SFU policy** requirement, as all expenses charged to a University administered account need to have a verifiable audit trail.
 |
| **Travel and Travel-Related** | * Are recruiting related costs such as travel/hospitality for grad student or research personnel eligible?
 | * The eligibility of recruiting costs such as travel or hospitality are assessed using the 4 Principles, applicable Directive, SFU Policies and any applicable Program Literature. The Principle to keep in mind for Hospitality is “Effective and Economical”. You would assess hospitality expense as “does the expense achieve the intended outcome with due regard for minimizing cost by avoiding unnecessary expense”.
* Question to be asked is “could the assessment of the candidate been achieved in a meeting at the office or could it only have been achieved at a restaurant over dinner?”
 |
| **Travel and Travel-Related** | Do we still collect all boarding passes as supporting documents for travel? | * Supporting documentation for proof of travel is required. If boarding passes were not collected, then other documents such as a hotel invoice and airline travel ticket itinerary/payment information, or image of boarding pass from traveler’s phone would need to be attached to the claim.
* If there were no boarding passes provided, then the traveler would also have to provide a statement to that effect.
 |
| **Travel and Travel-Related** | Can an individual claim mileage when using a friend or other family member’s vehicle? | * In the same context that rental vehicles may be used to save time and reduce costs (not as a matter of personal convenience), the use of someone’s car can be considered more economical than rental.
* The lender or owner of the vehicle, but not the user, can claim the mileage costs. The claimant, or PI in this case, needs to remember that expenses claimed for reimbursement are to cover their own out of pocket expenses not others.
 |
| **Travel and Travel-Related** | Can one claim for airport hotels for early flights out of YVR? | * SFU Policy and Procedure AD 3.02 Business and Travel Expenses section 4.2 would apply:

“Lower Mainland accommodation within a 32 km radius of the employees’ usual place of work is not reimbursable, ***unless approved*** by the President, a Vice-President, or an Associate Vice President, and (in the case of externally funded projects) the external sponsor. |
| **Hospitality** | * Is there a guideline about an indicative maximum or cap for hospitality costs within research grants?
 | * SFU Policy and Procedure AD 3.02 Business and Travel Expenses specifies the maximum normal amount for hosting expenses. ***In addition,*** you would have to consider the principle of effective and economical use of research funds together with the hospitality directive.
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| **Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives** | * Do honoraria also require Research Ethics Board (REB) approval?
 | * **This depends**. Many individuals use the term “honoraria” for payments to individuals as incentive payments. Honoraria payments are meant to be one-time payments. If the question pertains to using honoraria cash payments as incentive to participate or having participated in a research study ***then yes, they would require REB approval.***
 |
| **Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives** | * Is it better to give a gift card or money to participants in research?
 | * There is no right or wrong answer here, as both type of payment and value of payment to research study participants, as incentives, require approval from the Research Ethics Board.
 |
| **Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives** | * Can “An honorarium for a local artist invited to prepare a piece of artwork for display at a conference be considered eligible?
 | * The key word here is display. The principle of direct cost of research would need to be satisfied. The question is: “How does a piece of artwork on display at a conference benefit the research program directly?”
 |
| **Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives** | * Do we need proof of Ethics approval for gifts and incentives to participants in research?
 | * As long as the PI makes the statement that they have the REB approval that is sufficient. The REB number can be tracked if needed.
 |
| **General questions** | * Are the specific line item budgets from the proposal/award require to be strictly followed?
 | * Any expenditure charged to a project is required to go through eligibility review. (Ideally, the researcher uses the 4 principles and adheres to the sponsor’s specifications before deciding to make the expense to avoid delays later). There are certain funding programs that require budget spending according to approved line items. These programs require prior approval if the grantee needs to deviate from a line item.
* There is usually a 20% deviation factor, so anything greater than 20% will require prior approval for these programs.
* However, operating type of projects such as NSERC Discovery Grants or SSHRC Insight Grants do not have this requirement. As long as the expenditure is for the broad purpose the funds were awarded, approval to deviate from the original budget is not required.
 |
| **General questions** | * Is the 20 % budget deviation monitored?
 | * Projects with line item spending constrains also have financial reporting requirements that track variances quarterly or semi-annually.
* Grantees are aware of the requirement they generally allocate their expenditures accordingly. These sponsors need to be formally contacted to approve any variance over 20% before the expense is incurred.
 |
| **General questions** | * How do Department approvers access Funding Opportunity/Program Literature?
 | * The Tri-Agency website has information on their specific programs that you can access online.
* You can also contact ors@sfu.ca to get assistance with program specific requirements.
 |
| **General questions** | * Will Department Managers have access to ethics documentation required to make decisions on expense eligibility?
 | * With regards to the ethics approval, as long as the PI makes the statement that they have the REB approval that is sufficient.
* The REB application number is tracked if needed.
* Other information will be in the form of Policies, Procedures and Funding Opportunity Literature.
 |
| **General questions** | * Has anything changed with regard to the delegate authority?
 | * The grantee can delegate authority to someone who is working directly with the grantee on the research project, and has sufficient skills and knowledge to exercise the role effectively.
 |
| **General questions** | * When one says ***“appropriateness”*** does that also include justification to the research grant and budget?
 | * Yes
* Justification provides information to determine if the Principles are satisfied. For example, travel is an eligible expense; however is the purpose of the travel eligible?
* This is where justification or additional information to assess the purpose of travel is required, as well as the cost of travel in relation to the economical aspect of budget.
 |
| **General questions** | * Has there been any communication to the community regarding to the change with respect to liaising directly with Tri-Agency?
 | * PI’s were informed about the use of Grant Amendment Form and the requirement that it is to be submitted to ORS, not directly to the Tri Agency effective April 1, 2020 in a letter from the VPR to PI’s on March 17, and they were informed that the Tri Agency will no longer answer questions regarding eligibility.
* Questions should be directed to tagfa@sfu.ca and will be answered within 48 hours.
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| **General questions** | * What role will SFU Research Accounting play in the process of determining eligible costs going forward?
 | * Research Accounting will continue to be part of the consulting body and advise accordingly; however, the approval decision continues to be at the Faculty level.
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| **General questions** | * Is a faculty member who retires but continues their research under emeritus status, allowed to take grant-purchased equipment home, and whether the University would still be responsible for maintaining it, replacing it when damaged, or insuring it. ?
 | * Any equipment that is purchased with Tri-Agency funds, or any other funds administered by SFU, belongs to the Institution in this case SFU, unless the external sponsor indicates otherwise.
* SFU owns the equipment and is responsible to insure it, maintain it and responsible for its inventory.
* If an individual grantee, emeritus or otherwise, takes equipment home, it would have to be approved by the Department Chair/School Director, and the Department/School would be responsible for the equipment.
* Refer to **Procurement policy/process** regarding surplus equipment and disposal
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