



## CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) Guidelines and Institutional Allocation Plan

**Category:** Research;

**Jurisdiction:** Vice President, Research and Innovation;

**Approval Authority:** Executive Team;

**Established on:** February 21, 2012;

**Amendments:** May 11, 2021.

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Lakehead University receives an Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) allocation from the CFI that contributes to the incremental operating and maintenance costs associated with eligible projects funded by the CFI to maximize the efficient utilization of research infrastructure and to ensure the infrastructure is operational and ready for research. All CFI projects approved after July 1, 2001, are eligible to receive IOF, with the exception of projects funded under the following programs: Canada Research Chairs Infrastructure Fund (2001 – 2006), the International funds (2002-2007) and Exceptional Opportunities Fund - COVID-19. Eligible projects generate an IOF allocation to the institution of 30 percent of the CFI amount approved at award finalization. Each institution is responsible for deciding how best to distribute the IOF allocation among its eligible projects.

## Guiding Principles

Lakehead University has been given the responsibility and authority by CFI to allocate the IOF funds among its eligible finalized projects admissible under the IOF in accordance with its Institutional Allocation Plan. Lakehead University will distribute its IOF allocation based on actual operating and maintenance needs, as opposed to allocating the exact amount to the project that generated it. The IOF gives institutions maximum flexibility to support projects with different needs and scope, while ensuring accountability.

If the CFI equipment and infrastructure costs (i.e., renovations) are located in a centrally managed facility that receives operating funds from the University (i.e., Technology Services Centre, the Lakehead University Instrumentation Laboratory, the Lakehead University Paleo-DNA Laboratory, Biology Aquatics Facility, Lakehead University Animal Care Facility, the Biorefining Research Institute, etc.) the IOF grant application will be initiated and submitted by the Manager/Director of that centrally managed facility in cooperation with the CFI grant Project Leader. In such instances, the lead signing authority on the IOF grant account will be given to the Manager/Director of the centrally managed facility. The actual costs of operating and maintaining the infrastructure in a centralized facility must be included in the IOF application in order to gain approval from the Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI).

Based on need and eligible CFI IOF expenditures (refer to the CFI IOF website for eligible costs: <https://www.innovation.ca/awards/policy-and-program-guide-and-supplemental-information>) and at the discretion of the VPRI, Project Leaders and/or Managers/Directors of centrally managed facilities may be awarded up to 80% of the IOF allocation generated by their project. In the case where only part of the infrastructure is located in a centrally managed facility, the IOF will be prorated based on the value of the research infrastructure (equipment and renovations) located in the participating CFI project laboratories and central facilities. The remaining 20% IOF funds will remain in the University's IOF Reserve Fund to address future operational and maintenance needs of eligible infrastructure projects.

Prior to requesting funding from the IOF, each Project Leader/Manager/Director of centrally managed facilities (if applicable), in cooperation with their Dean/Department Chair is expected to:

- identify synergies between CFI-funded projects and submit joint proposals (i.e., hiring of shared technicians), whenever possible, for more efficient use of the IOF funding and to avoid any inappropriate duplication of expenses;
- attempt to identify operating funding from other sources prior to requesting funding from the IOF.

The CFI IOF grant is a one-time allocation and applications are to be submitted once within the first five years after the CFI award has been finalized. It is recommended that Project Leaders and/or Managers/Directors of centrally managed facilities apply for the IOF soon after the finalization of the CFI award (effective date of CFI contract). If an application is not submitted within five years following the award finalization of a CFI Award, the entire amount of the project's IOF funds will remain in the University IOF Reserve fund. Once a CFI IOF grant has been approved by the VPRI, there is no maximum number of years for which IOF can be claimed, as long as the infrastructure is still being used for research purposes during the period claimed.

The VPRI has the discretion to consider and approve applications for the CFI IOF, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean. Lakehead University's Office of Research Services (ORS) and Office of Financial Services (OFS) will administer the IOF in accordance with the CFI Policy and Program Guide and CFI Award Agreements.

### **IOF Reserve Fund**

The final decision regarding the process and allocation of the IOF Reserve Fund will be made by the VPRI once sufficient funds have accumulated in the fund. Applications to the IOF Reserve Fund will only be considered in special circumstances (i.e., emergency equipment repairs) once a project's IOF allocation has been completely expended and if a strong rationale for additional funding, is made by the Project Leader or Manager/Director of the centrally managed facility.

## Inter-Institutional Projects

In the case of inter-institutional projects, funds will be allocated in accordance with Lakehead University's CFI IOF policy. This allocation will be included as part of the required inter-institutional agreement at the time of CFI application.

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**Review Period:** 5 years;

**Next Review Period:** 2025-2026;

**Related Policies and Procedures:** CFI IOF Procedures (attached);

**Policy Superseded by this Policy:** None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002; Phone: 807-343-8010 ext. 7929 or Email: [univsec@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:univsec@lakeheadu.ca).

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## Procedures

**Approval Authority:** Vice President, Research and Innovation;

**Established on:** February 21, 2012;

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### 1. IOF Application Procedures and Decision-Making Process

The following procedure will be followed when requesting funds from Lakehead University's IOF:

- 1.1 The Office of Research Services (ORS) will send each eligible CFI Project Leader and/or Manager/Director of the centrally managed facility (if applicable) an invitation to submit a CFI IOF application form **by March 1 each year**. The CFI IOF *application form* will indicate the amounts required for operations and maintenance on an annual basis and it is recommended that a 5 year budget is initially requested, ensuring that the 1<sup>st</sup> year April 1 to March 31 - reflects the expected funds needed in the upcoming year. This form must also be accompanied by a one-page document with a short description justifying proposed expenditures to be claimed under the IOF. If the operations and maintenance plan require funds from the IOF to support personnel costs related to operating and maintaining the CFI infrastructure, a job description must be included in the budget justification. Personnel hired through the IOF must submit timecards to account for the time spent supporting the operations and maintenance of the CFI facility. Acceptance of the CFI IOF Application terms and conditions must be confirmed by the Project Leader and/or Manager/Director of the centrally managed facility, Department Chair and Faculty Dean prior to release of the first instalment of the IOF.
- 1.2. Admissible costs for the IOF are the operating and maintenance costs directly related to the admissible infrastructure projects that are needed to ensure the infrastructure is

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in a 'state of readiness' to support the proposed program of research. The CFI assumes that any costs incurred directly as a result of acquiring the CFI-funded infrastructure are, by definition, incremental in nature: that is, they are additional costs incurred directly as a result of the acquisition of the infrastructure. Only the proportion of operation and maintenance costs associated with the research portion of the infrastructure is admissible. Budgets should be in accordance with eligible operating/maintenance costs as defined by CFI. Examples of eligible and ineligible costs under the IOF program can be found in the CFI's Policy and Program Guide available here: <https://www.innovation.ca/awards/policy-and-program-guide-and-supplemental-information>.

## **2.0 IOF Annual Report on Expenditures and Request for Next Instalment**

- 2.1 CFI payments are made based on the annual forecast provided as part of annual financial reporting. Annually, the CFI Project Leader and/or Manager/Director of centrally managed facilities will be required to submit an updated annual expenditure report and a budget (forecasted cash flow) using the form titled, 'CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund Annual Report on Expenditures and Request for Next Instalment' by May 31st to the Office of Financial Services (OFS) who will review proposed expenditures for continued eligibility. Please note that if the IOF funds are utilized to support personnel costs, a Certification of Salary of IOF Technicians and Professionals form must be certified and submitted with the IOF Annual Report on Expenditures and Request for Next Instalment.
- 2.2 The IOF Annual Report and Request for Next Instalment will be reviewed for changes against the original CFI IOF plan prior to the OFS releasing the next IOF instalment to the Project Leader and/or Manager/Director, centrally managed facility. Any changes to the CFI IOF plan must be approved by the VPRI.
- 2.3 The OFS will incorporate all Project Annual Reports into the University's annual financial report to CFI for the IOF program. Please note that IOF instalments will not be transferred to the Project Leader's and/or Manager/Director centrally managed facility's IOF account for the subsequent year until completed and fully signed reports are received.