



# Policy for Transfer/Disposal of Research Equipment

**Category:** Research;

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

**Approval Authority:** Executive Team;

**Established on:** March 14, 2024;

**Amendments:** N/A

**Most Recent Review:** March 14, 2024

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the responsibilities of Lakehead University, and researchers regarding the ownership, use, transfer and/or disposal of equipment purchased with research funds administered by Lakehead University.

From time to time, researchers may leave Lakehead University to take up academic positions at other Canadian universities and may wish to take equipment purchased with external or internal grant funds with them. In other cases, equipment may have reached the end of its useful life and is no longer useful in supporting research activities. *The transfer or disposal of research equipment requires the written approval of the relevant Dean, and for individual items or interrelated collections of items that are combined to make up a system with a Purchase Price of more than \$50,000, the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI).* Should the provisions of this policy conflict with the relevant funding agency guidelines/agreements, the funding agency's guidelines/agreement shall take precedence.

## 2. Definitions

2.1 "Core Facility" refers to any Lakehead facility that provides centralized services (analytical services, access to specialized instruments and technology, as well as specialized expertise and skills) that are broadly available to all Lakehead faculty members. Such centralized facilities would be too expensive, complex or specialized for faculty to acquire, operate and maintain for themselves.

2.2 “Equipment” refers to any items (or interrelated collection of items that are combined to make up a system) used for an active research project or program of research at Lakehead University. Such items or systems would have a useful life of more than one year and a purchase price of \$5,000 or more.

2.3 “Disposal” refers to the transfer of the title of equipment no longer deemed to be useful for the conducting of research to a party outside Lakehead University by way of sale, trade-in or gift, or the removal of the equipment from service due to obsolescence, scrapping or dismantling.

2.4 “Funding Agency” refers to the person, agency, program or organization providing funding to support a Lakehead University research project/program.

2.5 “Principal Investigator” (or “PI”) refers to a Lakehead faculty member who has primary responsibility for the design, execution and management of a research project/program. With Canada Foundation for Innovation/Ontario Research Fund (CFI/ORF) grants, the PI is known as the “Project Leader”.

2.6 “Unit” refers to the Lakehead University Department, School, Faculty or Centre/Institute where the PI and equipment reside.

### **3. Ownership of Equipment**

3.1 Lakehead University will assume and retain ownership of equipment purchased through Funding Agency support (not the individual grantee or PI), unless transferred or disposed under the authority of the Vice-President Research and Innovation.

### **4. Transfer of Equipment Purchased with Internal and External Research Funds**

4.1 If a PI, however, decides to move to another eligible Canadian institution and also wishes to either take an unexpended equipment grant, or to move equipment purchased through grant funds to another Canadian institution (unless the Funding Agency has specified limits on transferring the equipment or doing so adversely impacts other co-investigators engaged in the research project), Lakehead University, may, in its own discretion, provide permission for such a request. The Federal granting councils encourage institutions to facilitate such transfers through the use of a letter of agreement between the institutions involved covering such areas as ownership, access, and maintenance of the equipment being transferred.

4.2 If any of the following criteria apply to the proposed Equipment transfer request, the equipment shall remain at Lakehead University:

- the equipment was received through a joint or collaborative grant application and the other members of the team will still require access to the equipment;
- the replacement (incoming faculty member) is in the same area of research and thus requires access to the equipment in question;
- other Lakehead faculty members engaged in research are dependent upon ongoing access to the equipment in question. This decision will include a consideration of the history of the equipment;
- the equipment was obtained through an Industry-University equipment grant and the industry partner will continue its financial support and in turn expect access to the equipment after the researcher leaves Lakehead University;
- if internal funds have been used to purchase the equipment, the terms of the equipment transfer will be subject to reasonable negotiation, taking into consideration the amount Lakehead University has contributed towards the cost of the equipment, the length of time the equipment has remained on campus and the availability of the equipment to the University. Normally, if the time is within two years, the University would expect to be reimbursed for its portion of the costs;
- the PI who received the equipment grant is moving to a position outside academia.

## **5. Additional Policies Regarding Equipment Purchased with CFI/ORF Funds**

5.1 Regarding the ownership of CFI/ORF-funded equipment, an institution that receives CFI equipment is expected to:

- operate, and maintain the CFI/ORF-funded research equipment;
- exercise de facto control over the equipment, including taking on the responsibility for managing access to the equipment in question;
- assume the responsibility for insuring all CFI/ORF-funded equipment items (this includes powered vehicles).

5.2 The CFI specifies that a recipient institution's specific responsibilities involving the CFI-funded equipment are to remain in place over the useful life of the equipment (the period over which the equipment continues to provide benefits to the program of research). The minimum time-period of these responsibilities as defined by the CFI is five years.

5.3 Subject to pre-approval from the CFI and the ORF, a recipient institution may decide to transfer de facto control of CFI/ORF-funded equipment to another institution that is eligible to hold the CFI/ORF-funded equipment. If a Lakehead researcher decides to relocate to another Canadian university, and wishes to take any CFI/ORF-funded equipment with them (from a project in which they were the Project Leader) to the new institution, permission must be given by the relevant Department Chair and Dean and the VPRI (for individual items or combined items forming a system with a Purchase Price of more than \$50,000). Permission is also required from the CFI and Province. No equipment transfer may take place without the required approvals in place.

5.4 If any CFI/ORF-funded equipment is deemed by Lakehead University to be beyond its useful life (i.e., it is obsolete and/or beyond repair), the CFI allows institutions to dispose of the equipment in question according to its internal policies and procedures. Approval from the Province is also required: CFI/ORF equipment cannot be disposed of within 5 years of purchase without funding agency approval.

## **6. Disposal of Equipment**

6.1 Disposals of Lakehead University equipment includes the following types of transactions:

- the transfer of title of the equipment to a party outside Lakehead University by way of sale, trade-in or gift, or
- the removal of the equipment from service due to obsolescence, scrapping or dismantling.

6.2 The purpose of Lakehead University's equipment disposal policy is to ensure that:

- there are no disposals of equipment when this equipment could still be put to good research use elsewhere within the University;
- fair value is received for disposals;
- disposals are documented and proceeds are appropriately distributed, and
- disposals comply with the requirements of external Sponsor(s).

### **6.3 Approval for Disposal of Equipment**

6.3.1 Any disposal of equipment will be subject to the approval of the Dean of the relevant Faculty for items or collections of items that are combined to make up a system with a purchase value of more than \$5,000 CDN and up to \$50,000 CDN (pre-taxes); and the VPRI for items exceeding this

value. An agreement for the disposal of research equipment should be in writing (along with relevant signatures) and sent to the Office of Research Services.

#### 6.4 Distribution of Sales Proceeds

It is the policy of Lakehead University that the disposal of research equipment, and the use of proceeds from such disposal, shall be made upon approval of the appropriate Dean, and the VPRI:

- The disposal of surplus research equipment must conform to regular University procedures.
- Proceeds from sales must be credited to an account of the academic unit responsible for the sale. Normally, the proceeds will be used for research equipment acquisition, but on occasion, the proceeds may be used for other research purposes.
- Unspent funds from disposal may be carried over at fiscal year-end.

#### 6.5 Disposal of CFI/ORF-Funded Equipment

6.5.1 Most CFI/ORF-funded equipment is retired from use informally when it is no longer needed for research purposes, non-repairable, or replaced by newer technology. In some cases, in order to conserve resources for support of critical research equipment, the University may choose to formally dispose of infrastructure so that it is no longer considered a priority for on-going support by the institution.

# Procedures: Transfer of Research Equipment to Another Canadian University or Disposal of Equipment Research Equipment Assets

## 1. Part 1: Transfer of Equipment to Another Canadian University

**1.1** Researchers relocating to another Canadian university may request authorization to transfer equipment which they are currently using in their research, to that university. To initiate the approval procedure, the faculty member who is leaving Lakehead shall complete the DESCRIPTION OF EQUIPMENT BEING TRANSFERRED chart (Schedule 1 of the Transfer of Research Equipment Agreement).

**1.2** The receiving institution must be eligible to accept the equipment item(s) as specified in the Funding Agency's terms and conditions and provide written confirmation that it will accept the equipment item(s), prior to the transfer. Confirmation from the receiving institution is to be obtained through the completion of a DESCRIPTION OF EQUIPMENT BEING TRANSFERRED chart (Schedule 1 of the Transfer of Research Equipment Agreement) and includes confirmation of:

- the researcher's appointment with the university accepting the equipment;
- that the equipment will be employed in on-going research, and that the receiving institution agrees to abide by the terms under which the funds for the equipment were originally granted.
- that the university receiving the research equipment will pay all transportation and related costs (please note that Lakehead University is not responsible for any repairs or related costs once the item leaves Lakehead University's care, custody or control).

**1.3** All of the required approvals (if applicable, including any required approvals from the CFI/ORF) will be obtained once the DESCRIPTION OF EQUIPMENT BEING TRANSFERRED chart (Schedule 1 of the Transfer of Research Equipment Agreement) is completed.

**1.4** The institution receiving the infrastructure must sign the *Transfer of Research Equipment Agreement* stating that it agrees to take ownership of the equipment in question.

## 2. Part 2: Disposal of Equipment

**2.1** Procedure for Disposal of Research Equipment:

**2.2** Where a Principal Investigator confirms they no longer desire to utilize the equipment in question for research activities, the PI will consult with the appropriate Dean (approval of the VPRI is also required for items of systems with a Purchase Price of more than \$50,000), as well as complete an *Equipment Asset Disposal Form*), so that that the equipment be disposed of if the following conditions are met:

- it is determined that there are no other Lakehead researchers currently using the equipment for research activities (the University does not wish to dispose of any research equipment that can be successfully used within the University community);
- there are no other Lakehead researchers within the Principal Investigator's academic unit who wish to use the equipment for research activities;
- there are no other Lakehead researchers within the rest of the University who wish to use the equipment for research activities, and
- ensuring that the disposal/transfer does not violate the terms of use specified in the original grant or funding contract.

**2.3** In the case of a Core Facility the Manager/Director will, if applicable, consult with the appropriate Dean (if not applicable, consult with the VPRI directly) so that they can recommend to the VPRI that the equipment be disposed of if the above listed conditions are met.

**2.4** Where the Dean (and the VPRI for items or systems with a Purchase Price of more than \$50,000) approves the disposal of the equipment, the Principal Investigator will ensure the equipment is disposed of by quote, auction, or other method as approved by the Financial Services Procurement Office.

### **3. Disposal of CFI/ORF Equipment**

For CFI/ORF funded equipment that is deemed to be beyond its useful life, the CFI/ORF Equipment disposal process can be initiated by the Project Leader, a Department, a Faculty, a Core Facility, or the VPRI through the creation of an *Equipment Asset Disposal Form*. Suppose the disposal takes place prior to five years from the date of acquisition or implementation of the Equipment or facility. In that case, it is subject to approval by CFI (and if applicable, by the Province).

**3.1** The Project Leader (or Manager/Director of the Core Facility) responsible for the equipment prepares a brief overview of the situation addressing the following:

- CFI Project number and budget line item or name of the equipment;
- Date of acquisition of the CFI/ORF-funded equipment or implementation of the facility;

- Impact on the research project/program as approved by CFI/Province (again, if decommissioning of the equipment is required within less than 5 years from the date of acquisition);
- Reason for disposal of the CFI/ORF-funded equipment– e.g. no longer required for the research; want to use for non-research purposes (teaching/clinical)
- Projected timeline and costs of disposal, and
- Proposed method of disposing of the equipment (including a detailed analysis of cost effectiveness and compliance with applicable regulations such as environmental, health, and safety).

**3.2** The VPRI will review the request in coordination with the appropriate Lakehead University units, and seek CFI/Provincial approval as required.

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**Review Period:** 5 years;

**Next Review Period:** 2029-2030

**Related Policies and Procedures:** None;

**Policy Superseded by this Policy:** Disposal of Research Equipment and; Transfer of Research Equipment to Another Canadian University

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.

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