

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF COMPETITIVE R&D GRANTS (AI SINGAPORE)

Matters to resolve before proceeding with research

Approvals from Ethics Committees

1. A copy of the necessary approval(s) from the relevant board and committees (IRB, IACUC, GCP, etc.) must be sent to AI Singapore, where applicable. Failure to do so will delay the disbursement of funds.

Research Collaboration Agreements

2. The Investigators are responsible for putting in place research collaboration agreements where and when applicable.

Disbursement of funds

3. A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided in the Appendix. Only items specified in the approved budget will be funded.
4. All expenditure should be incurred before the end of the Term. The invoices for all items purchased must be dated before the end of the Term.
5. In general, prudence should be exercised for all project expenses.

EOM

6. Funding of research staff under the grant must comply with prevailing and consistently applied human resource guidelines of the employing Host/Partner Institution(s), regardless of the source of funds.
7. For manpower-related fund requisitions, update of all staff employed under the project must be provided, including those whose employment has ended.
8. All hiring Institutions (Host or Partner) and the hiring supervisor Lead Principal Investigator (Lead PI)/ Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI)/ Programme Manager (PM) shall employ or otherwise engage Research Assistants/ Research Technicians (or staff of equivalent qualifications) who are Singapore citizens and/or Singapore Permanent Residents to be deployed in the work under the Research.

- a. For the purposes of this Clause 8, the term "Research Assistants" or "Research Technicians" or staff of equivalent qualifications shall mean research technicians, or staff of equivalent qualifications who participate in the Research by performing mainly technical tasks as well as providing support functions distinct from the work carried out by the Investigators.
 - b. Whilst Research Assistants/Research Technicians may provide intellectual input to the Research, they are not required to be directly involved in the management of the Research or for providing leadership in the conception and creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems under the Research.
 - c. At the point of entry, Research Assistants/Research Technicians will typically not be required to possess PhD qualifications. For clarification, "Research Assistants" will not include nurses and other hospital workers whom may assist in the Research.
9. In the event the hiring supervisor Lead PI/Co-PIs/PM is unable to comply with Clause 8 above, nationality waiver requests with proper justification must be submitted and approval obtained prior to employing/engaging candidates that do not meet this criteria.
 10. For Research Fellows, the Institutions shall use reasonable efforts to employ or otherwise engage Singapore citizens or Singapore permanent residents unless the required expertise is not available or the skill of any foreign person is necessary for the performance of the Research.

Equipment and Other Operating Expenses (OOE)

11. Only items specified and approved in the Letter of Award will be funded.
12. All items claimed must comply with the Institution's internal procurement processes, guidelines and policies.
13. AI Singapore reserves the right to reject variation requests made retrospectively for equipment/OOE items not listed in the Letter of Award.

Overseas Travel Related Expenses

14. It is the responsibility of the Lead PI/Co-PIs to ensure that all travel expenses are in line with the Institutions' consistently applied policy on travel, regardless of the source of funds. The Host Institution and Partner Institutions are to ensure that any travel undertaken is in relation to the grant only and for no other purpose.

Indirect Costs

15. Indirect costs in research are those costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored research project, but contribute to the ability of the Institutions to support such research projects (e.g. providing research space, research administration and utilities, and not through the actual performance of activities under the sponsored projects).
16. AI Singapore does not directly manage indirect cost funding. PIs should refer to their Host Institutions for their policy of managing indirect cost funding.

Performance Bonus

17. Claims for staff performance bonus should be submitted within 4 months following the end of the Term. For Host Institutions that practise accrual of performance bonus according to its finance policy, balance funds should either be returned or claimed within 4 months if the pay-out comes after the end of the Term.

Requests for variations to the awarded grant

18. AI Singapore reserves the right to reject any claims that have resulted from project changes without prior approval from AI Singapore (in specific circumstances as stated in these guidelines).
19. Request for any variation (except for Grant Extension) should be made before the last 3 months of the original end of the Term. Retrospective variation requests will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification for submission of a late variation request.

Virement between Votes

20. AI Singapore delegates the approval authority for the virement of funds between votes to the Host Institution, subject to a cumulative amount not exceeding 10% of the original total project direct cost value. The Host Institution must inform AI Singapore of such virements. For virements cumulatively above 10%, a change request with proper justification must be submitted for approval.
21. Any virement into the EOM and Research Scholarship votes would require AI Singapore's approval, even if the cumulative amount is below 10% of the original total project direct cost value.

22. Inter-institutional virements, where applicable, require AI Singapore's approval and acknowledgement from the director of research (or equivalent) for all Institutions involved.
23. Virement of funds into the Overseas Travel vote is not allowed. Overspending will not be reimbursed.
24. Variation from Research Scholarship vote to other budget category is not allowed, regardless of variation amount.

EOM

25. AI Singapore delegates the approval authority for manpower changes (i.e. increase/decrease in headcount, change in designation or scheme of projected hires, change in time commitment to the grant) to the Host Institution, provided there is no change to the EOM budget. The Host Institution shall provide a cumulative list of manpower changes approved with its half-yearly funds requisition to AI Singapore. Failure to do so will delay the disbursement of funds.
26. Any virement into the EOM vote will require AI Singapore's approval.

Grant Extension

27. Applicable to AI Singapore Research Programme and Grand Challenges Funding Scheme:
 - a. Request for grant extension should be made before the last 6 months of the original end of the Term. The PI must ensure sufficient funds in each vote to support the extension request. Any variation requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.
 - b. A one-off project extension should not be more than a total of 6 months. An extension beyond 6 months will require compelling justification. No additional funds should be given for any extensions.
28. Applicable to AI Singapore 100 Experiments Programme:
 - a. Request for grant extension should be made before the last 3 months of the original end of the Term. The PI must ensure sufficient funds in each vote to support the extension request. Any variation requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.
 - b. A one-off project extension should not be more than 50% of the original Term.

An extension beyond 50% of the original Term will require compelling justification. No additional funds should be given for any extensions.

Change in Lead PI/ Co-PIs/ Collaborators/ Visiting Professors/Experts

29. Request for a change in the Lead PI/Co-PIs must be made to AI Singapore and be endorsed by the relevant institutional authority / director of research (or equivalent) of the existing and new Host Institutions (if applicable). The new PI/Co-PIs must be an expert in that area and possess the necessary expertise to continue with the research work.
30. AI Singapore delegates the approval authority for replacement of Visiting Professor/Expert to the Lead PI, provided there is no change to the approved Visiting Professor/Expert budget. The new Visiting Professor/Expert must possess the required expertise and his/her contribution to the project must be clearly defined. The Lead PI shall notify the Host Institution and AI Singapore of the change prior to the Visiting Professor/Expert's visit.

Audit and Progress Reports

Yearly Financial Audit Report

31. The Host Institution is required to submit a Yearly Financial Audit Report of the preceding financial year ending 31 March, by 15 July of each year.
32. The Yearly Financial Audit Report must be prepared by each Institution's external auditors and certified by the chief financial officer (or an authorised nominee).
33. The Yearly Financial Audit Report should confirm that the Host Institution's requisitions are made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the programme, and all applicable guidelines and policies of AI Singapore.

Yearly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Audit Report

34. The Host Institution is required to submit a Yearly KPIs Audit Report of the preceding financial year ending 31 March, by 15 July of each year.
35. The Yearly KPIs Audit Report must be prepared by each Institution's external auditors and certified by the director of research (or an authorised nominee).
36. The Yearly KPIs Audit Report should confirm that the Host Institution's report represents a true and fair view of the matters contained therein and shall have been prepared on a consistent basis.

Final Audit Reports

37. The Host Institution shall submit a Final Financial Audit Report and a Final KPIs Audit Report to AI Singapore within 4 months following the end of the Term.

Yearly Progress Report

38. The Host Institution is required to submit a Yearly Progress Report within 1 month from the end of the Financial Year (FY), i.e. by 30 April. The requirement to submit a Yearly Progress Report is waived if the project start date is less than 3 months from the end of the FY.
39. Investigators may be required to give additional information about the progress of any grant if the information submitted is deemed to be inadequate.

Final Progress Report

40. The Host Institution is required to submit a Final Progress Report within 2 months following the end of the Term.

Final Statement of Account

41. The Host Institution is required to submit a Final Statement of Account within 4 months following the end of the Term.

Debarring of Investigators

42. Investigators who fail to submit the Final Progress Report and/or Final Statement of Account within the stipulated timelines at paragraphs 40 and 41 will be debarred.
43. Debarred Investigators will not be eligible to submit new grant applications under the AI Singapore Programme for a minimum of 1 year starting from the end of the respective deadlines. The period of ineligibility will continue until the Final Progress Report and/or Final Statement of Account are submitted to AI Singapore.

Appendix: Non-Fundable Direct Costs

1. EOM Related Expenses

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>The general principle is that grants should support EOM costs and related benefits (as per employment contract) as long as it is in line with the consistently applied Host Institution's HR policies.</p> <p>This will extend to Host Institution policies that govern staff recruitment and related costs (e.g. costs associated with the onboarding of staff, staff insurance, overtime claims, staff relocation, employment benefits, employment levy, employment pass, pre- examination medical check-up and housing allowance.)</p> <p>All Manpower related costs that fall under Other Operating Costs (OOE) should be accurately reflected in the Budget.</p> <p>Fractional charging for staff costs based on time commitment to the project must be practised.</p>
Principal Investigators / Co-Principal Investigators / Programme Managers EOM cost	Not allowable.
Unconsumed leave	Provision for unconsumed leave is not allowable.
Student Assistants / Interns	<p>Not allowable for students who are recipients of existing awards (or stipends) or students who are not residents of Singapore.</p> <p>Only full-time students enrolled in local institutes of higher learning qualify to be supported as a student assistant/intern.</p>

2. Equipment Related Expenses

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>No purchase of equipment is allowed unless specifically provided for in the grant approved by AI Singapore.</p> <p>The procurement of such equipment must be made according to the formal established and consistently applied policies of the Host Institution.</p> <p>The invoices for all claims must be dated before the end of the Term.</p>
Cost of capital works, general infrastructure, general purpose IT and communication equipment, office equipment, and furniture and fittings	<p>Not allowable under direct costs, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore.</p> <p>Examples of such costs are computers, PDAs, mobile phones, photocopier machines, workstations, printers, etc.</p>

3. OOE Related Expenses

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	Not allowable for expenses that are <u>not directly related</u> to the Research. All procurement of such items must be made according to the formal established and consistently applied policies of the Host Institution.
Visiting Professors/Experts	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore. The visiting professor must be identified and his/her contribution to the project must be clearly defined and described in the proposal.
Audit fees	Not allowable. This includes both internal and external audit fees.
Fines and Penalties	Not allowable.
Legal Fees	Not allowable.
Overhead Expenses	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore based on the nature of the research. This includes salaries of administrative staff, rental, utilities, facilities management, telephone charges, internet charges, etc.
Patent Application	Not allowable. This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost.
Professional Membership Fees	Not allowable. This applies to PI and Co-Principal Investigators as well as all research staff funded from the grant.
Software	Not allowable under direct cost unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore.
Professional fees (including fees to consultants)	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore.
Staff retreat	Not allowed.

4. Overseas Travel Related Expenses

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore.</p> <p>Conference participation should be directly relevant to the research area outlined in the project and necessary to accomplish project objectives.</p> <p>All travel must align to the existing and consistently applied institutions' travel policies regardless of the source of funds.</p>

5. Research Scholarship

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by AI Singapore.</p> <p>Postgraduate stipend must align with the prevailing rates set by the Ministry of Education. Postgraduate stipend and tuition support will not attract indirect costs.</p>
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	Not allowable.