

Sept. 30, 2020

1. Is participation in the Faculty Research Incentive Plan (FRIP) mandatory?

No. Faculty members apply to participate each fiscal year by the posted due date. If a faculty member does not choose to participate, the faculty member's college and/or department policies related to salary savings remain in effect. The existing policies may need to be met before participating in the FRIP.

2. Is there a minimum or maximum amount for the incentive payment?

The minimum amount for receiving an incentive payment is \$100; amounts less than \$100 will remain in the department or college budget.

There is no maximum amount based on the salary level of the faculty member. The maximum amount is limited by the percentage of salary that the faculty member can support on sponsored research funds and the formula for determining the payment detailed in the Procedures document, and is capped at 50% of the faculty member's base salary. Exceptions to the cap will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. When and how will incentive payments be made?

Incentive payments will be processed using a P-14A form and will be a one-time payment. The payment will be processed after the 90-day fiscal year close-out period ends on September 30. Payments will be made from university funds. Funding from an external sponsor (grants or contracts) cannot be used for research incentive payments.

4. What are examples of competitive and non-competitive research funds?

Competitive research funds are those awarded by an agency or organization usually in response to a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) from federal agencies (see [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)). FOAs usually involve a competition for funds. FOAs may be known as program announcements, requests for applications, notices of funding availability, solicitations, or other names depending on the agency and type of program. FOAs can be found at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts.

Other research funding may be awarded through the Office of Sponsored Programs from foundations, institutions, organizations, business/industry, or other entities. These research funds may be used to support academic year research efforts and may be included in the calculation of salary savings.

Funds awarded through earmarks, noncompetitive grants (e.g., HATCH), or donations to the Virginia Tech Foundation are not included in this plan. The Vice President for Research and Innovation makes the final determination when there is a question about noncompetitive funds.

5. Are PIs and Co-PIs allowed to shift research funding on existing grants and contracts to cover larger percentages of their salaries and thus qualify for an incentive payment?

Current grants and contracts have budgets and justifications for the effort attributed to the PI/Co-PI. The expectation is that the effort will remain the same. If greater PI/Co-PI effort is needed, faculty members should consult with the department head to discuss the increased need and the implications for other personnel funded on grants and contracts (e.g., graduate research assistants, postdoctoral associates, and other research staff). PIs/Co-PIs are unlikely to shift funding to their salaries if such

a shift would reduce the overall efforts justified for the grant, as this would threaten the success of the research. Department heads must approve these funding changes and should discuss each situation individually. The intention of the FRIP is to increase overall research funding, not to shift current funding for other personnel to the salaries and efforts of PIs or Co-PIs.

All salary charges considered in the calculation of the incentive program must have been previously certified through the PARS process.

6. How will this incentive plan be integrated with existing department, college, or institute programs?

The FRIP is designed to provide a one-time annual salary payment, which is not part of any existing college, department, or institute plan. The new plan is structured to accommodate any existing salary recovery plans by including the 10% threshold in the calculation of the incentive payment. Faculty members with primary appointments in research institutes are not expected to participate in the FRIP, as their primary assignment is to pursue funded research grants and contracts. Likewise, faculty members on restricted appointments are not eligible to participate. There may be department or institute policies that supersede the FRIP. If there are perceived conflicts between existing salary recovery plans and the FRIP, the Vice President for Research and Innovation should be consulted.

7. Will information sessions for faculty or staff members be offered?

The Vice President for Research and Innovation can be available to attend a departmental faculty meeting; staff members involved with monitoring of research funding should be invited to attend these meetings. Additional educational opportunities may be offered during the academic year.

8. What would be reasons for disapproving a research incentive payment?

The most likely reason would be when departments and colleges include noncompetitive research funding in the year-end calculation of AY salary savings. However, as this is a new plan, there may be other examples that have not currently been anticipated.

9. Will a form be provided to department administrators for requesting payment of research incentive payments?

Yes, a form will be posted each year for making these requests.