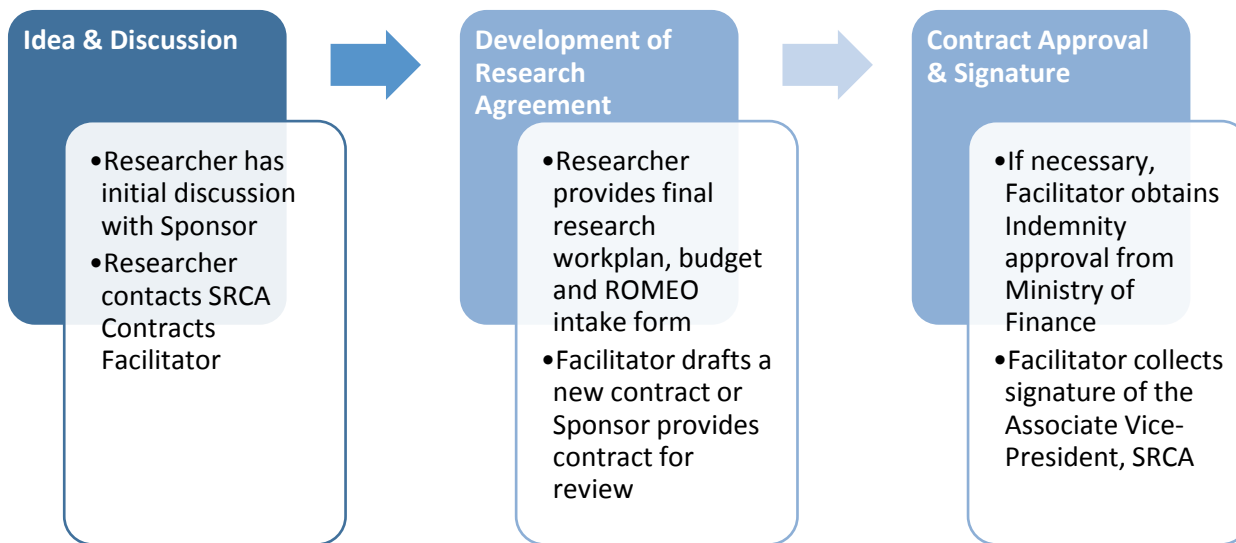


Research Contract Negotiation and Approval Process



1) Idea and discussion stage: The Researcher has initial discussions with the Sponsor related to the scope of the research and notifies the [Contracts Facilitator](#).

The Facilitator will:

- Ensure the Researcher is [eligible to hold a research grant or contract](#) at VIU. If you are not a regular/on-going Faculty member you may need to apply to be eligible to hold a research contract;
- Where applicable, consult with the [VIU Foundation](#) to coordinate multiple VIU proposals to the same Sponsor;
- Explain VIU's [overhead/indirect cost guideline](#) (see below);
- Provide advice on budgeting for [research personnel](#);
- Advise on issues such as intellectual property, publication and confidentiality;
- Assist with a formal application, if required. Any formal application (such as for a contract tendering process) must be submitted in [ROMEEO](#), together with a completed ROMEEO External Grant and Contract Intake Form, one week prior to submission to the Sponsor for approval by your Dean and the Associate Vice-President, Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity (SRCA).

2) Development of Research Agreement: If not previously included in a formal application, the Researcher provides a final research workplan, budget and External Grant and Contract Intake Form in [ROMEEO](#).

All research contracts require a completed External Grant and Contract Intake Form in [ROMEEO](#). This document records institutional commitments (cash and in-kind), ethics certifications required, and indirect costs (overhead) recovery made at the time of the application submission. Researchers are responsible for submitting the intake form in [ROMEEO](#) for the approval of their Dean and possibly other approvals as necessary. VIU has an overhead/indirect cost guideline of 25% of total project costs (i.e. over and above the full expenses of the contract). In cases when a Sponsor's policy is not congruent with VIU's, the Researcher can request to waive payment of these costs by completing the Indirect Cost section of the intake form in [ROMEEO](#). The Facilitator can answer your questions.

The Facilitator will:

- Identify the appropriate type of contract;
- Assist in negotiating the contract. The Researcher must be available to participate in the negotiations with the Sponsor.

3) Contract approval and signature:

Once the terms are finalized, the contract must be signed by authorized signatories from both VIU and the Sponsors. The authorized signatory for VIU is the President or their designate (for most research contracts, the Associate Vice-President, SRCA). All internal authorizations must be in place in [ROMEO](#) before the authorized signatory signs the contract.

The [Contracts Facilitator](#) is responsible for obtaining signatures from the Associate Vice President, SRCA.

The Ministry of Advanced Education requires VIU to have all indemnity and insurance clauses reviewed by Risk Management staff at the Ministry of Finance before anyone at VIU can sign the contract. This review can take up to two weeks and is initiated by the Facilitator with the assistance of the Office of Vice-President, Administration & Finance.

Once the Facilitator receives the fully signed copy of the contract the Researcher will get a copy of the contract.

After Contract Signature



4) Cost centre paperwork: All research contracts will be assigned a cost centre. An orientation for new contract holders can be set up to walk them through the cost centre process and other procedures needed to undertake the research.

Cost centre paperwork is prepared by the SRCA Office and forwarded via e-mail to the Researcher with instructions for completion. The respective Dean and Secretary will be copied on the e-mail. The cost centre forms need to be completed by the Researcher, signed by the Dean and returned to the SRCA Office as soon as possible. A cost centre package consists of 1) cost centre request form; 2) contract; 3) ethics certifications (if applicable); 4) budget cashflow form; and 5) signing authority forms.

5) Verification of ethics certifications (human, animal, biohazards): Upon receipt, the SRCA Office reviews the cost centre package for completeness and ensures that any ethical ([human/animal/biosafety](#)) certifications required are in place. The cost centre paperwork is then forwarded to Finance. Cost centre paperwork is only forwarded to Finance for activation once all certifications are in place.

6) Finance opens cost centre and sets signing authorities: Finance will activate the cost centre and funds will be available (if received) for the Researcher's use.

7) Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity Office uploads relevant governance documents to FRS: Once the cost centre is active, governance documents, including the contract, Institutional Signature Sheet, certification documentation, and web links to the Sponsor guidelines for financial management will be uploaded to the cost centre and available to anyone with signing or viewing access. If a reporting template is provided by the agency, this will also be uploaded for easy access. Note that access to the funds in the cost centre will be suspended if appropriate certifications, including renewals if required, are not obtained.

8) Cost centre orientation: Once the cost centre is open and governance documents uploaded, SRCA Office staff contact the Researcher(s) and applicable personnel to review the cost centre, signing authorities, guidelines for eligible expenditures, ethics renewals, etc. An in-depth Financial Records System (FRS) orientation can be arranged if required.



9) Subcontract(s): Where another institution is receiving funds under the contract, equipment or materials purchased reside at another institution, work is conducted at another institution, or a person who is responsible for information necessary to complete reporting resides at another institution, a subcontract may be required. The [Contracts Facilitator](#) assists in developing subcontracts.

10) Hiring Personnel: Researchers need to follow VIU guidelines for hiring students and (if applicable) hiring within VIU's affiliations (ADMIN, CUPE, BCGEU, VIUFA). For detailed information on the hiring process for research-related activities and suggested pay ranges, see the [Research Personnel](#) webpage.

To advertise VIU undergraduate and master's student positions, including Work-Op funded positions, Researchers should contact the [Centre for Experiential Learning \(CEL\)](#) by emailing cel@viu.ca. To access a broader pool of applicants or to recruit a doctoral student or postdoctoral fellow, forward the job duties, required and preferred qualifications, and pay rate to recruit@viu.ca. A template will be created for the position which will enable it to be advertised on the VIU [Employment Postings](#) webpage. After selecting a candidate, the Researcher should review the [Research Employment Matrix](#) to determine how to pay the employee/student and initiate payment or appointment. In most instances, Researchers will use the [Research Employment Payment Request Form](#) to arrange for the appointment. For questions on research employment or awards, please contact the [Research Services Manager](#) in the SRCA Office.

An alternative to employment is engaging independent contractor(s). The Facilitator can assist with a service agreement.

11) Purchases: It is the responsibility of the Researcher (or delegate) to authorize **all** purchases, including purchase orders, expense claims, cheque requests, and Pcards. To check the eligibility of a purchase, follow the guidelines set out in the contract. Prior authorization from the Sponsor is required for deviations from the project objectives and budget. All expenses should be direct-charged to the project cost centre, not charged elsewhere and transferred in later. Anyone can initiate a **Purchase Order** in FRS, but only approved signatories may authorize a purchase. For purchases that exceed the Researcher's signing authority, move up the chain of command. For questions, contact [Procurement and Contract Services](#).

11) Invoicing: The Researcher, with the assistance from Faculty personnel, is responsible for preparing invoices. All invoices are subject to review by **Finance** before submission to the Sponsor.

12) Reporting and Deliverables: The SRCA Office tracks reporting requirements and other contract deliverables, and e-mails the Researcher automatic reminders when narrative reports/deliverables are due. Researchers must deliver a copy of each narrative report/deliverable to SRCA to be retained on file. The Researcher, with the assistance from Faculty personnel, is responsible for completing financial reports for all contracts. All financial reports are subject to review by **Finance** before submission to the Sponsor. Where applicable, the Researcher must keep the necessary information (e.g. timesheets) on file for a possible audit by the Sponsor.

13) Fiscal Year End: Before March 31, the SRCA Office consults the terms of the contract and advises Finance on year-end management of research-related cost centres, including closure or deferment to the next fiscal year.

14) Need a Change to an Existing Agreement? Changes to a project, such as an extended time frame or revised budget, must be in writing and signed by the parties to the contract before taking effect. Please contact the [Contracts Facilitator](#) to arrange for an amendment to be signed or to discuss terminating a contract.

15) Residual Funds: If residual funds remain after completion of the project, the SRCA Office will review the terms of the contract and advise whether the funds may be transferred to the Researcher's department or banked research account. Where 25% indirect (overhead) costs have not previously been paid, these will be deducted. Over-expenditures on research contracts are the responsibility of the Researcher.