

Wake Forest University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

START-UP FUNDS POLICY

Revised: January 19, 2022

I. SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for determining the availability and use of faculty start-up funds. Faculty start-up funds may be provided to university full-time tenured/tenure track faculty as part of their hiring package. The purpose of this policy is to ensure sound business practices, timely and accurate recording of expenses, compliance with university policies, and compliance with tax regulations under the Internal Revenue Code. Questions regarding this policy or any special cases are to be directed to the Associate Dean who oversees research policies in the Office of the Dean of the College.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Faculty start-up funds are provided to pay for expenses incurred in support of the new faculty member's research and scholarly activities as they work to establish themselves as Wake Forest scholars.

The complete package of Faculty start-up funds, with a proposed budget, must be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Dean of the College and the Office of the Provost before an offer letter is issued to a faculty candidate. Start-up funds should be spent according to the approved budget. Changes to line items in the budget exceeding \$2500 should be discussed with the chair and approved by the chair in consultation with the Dean's Office. Chairs should act as mentors, assisting junior faculty in spending start-up funds to best achieve their scholarly goals. This can be done both informally and formally when junior faculty are undergoing their annual reviews.

III. GUIDELINES

FACULTY START-UP FUNDS:

Typical costs covered by start-up funds for newly hired faculty include:

- Salaries of undergraduate and graduate students, technicians, and/or postdocs.
- New office computer if the University issued laptop is insufficient for faculty research work.
- Specialized accessories and software.
- Books, journals, electronic resources, special laboratory and office supplies.
- Designated research travel associated with start-up or transition. This would include travel to special collections, to conferences, for professional development opportunities, etc.
- Major scientific equipment and materials/supplies not already available for the faculty member's use, including computers and related equipment used for research.
- Research publication costs including open-access journal publication fees. Note that a cost-sharing arrangement exists within the university to [cover open-access fees](#) for faculty without external grant support.
- Materials or equipment for the "allied arts" professions.
- Professional memberships

If faculty start-up funds are used to finance a research/technical position, the prospective employee must be informed, in writing, that funding is temporary and that there is no commitment of employment after the funding is exhausted. Funds must be adequate to cover salary and associated fringe benefit costs (or graduate tuition as appropriate) as determined through the rates established by the University. All expenses from faculty start-up funds need to be fully documented with specific reference to the research or scholarly activity being conducted and must follow all related university policies and procedures.

Durable assets (assets or property valued at greater than \$5000 that have a useful life of more than one year, and usually not consumable) or other items purchased with faculty start-up funds are the property of WFU.

The academic unit department chair is responsible for ensuring that approvals of faculty support expenses and reimbursements are made in accordance with this Policy and that an inventory of all durable assets in the unit is maintained. If the department chair approves faculty expenses or reimbursements counter to the start-up funds policy, any expenses incurred will be drawn from the department budget or department indirect account. Chairs are encouraged to consult with the Office of the Dean of the College if they have any doubts about requests meeting policy guidelines before making any approvals.

Expenditures may be made from start-up funds within the first five academic years of the faculty member's appointment for new assistant professors. Start-up funds are to be spent out at the end of the fiscal year prior to tenure package submission in the case of any tenure clock extensions. For senior hires with start-up funds, expenditures are to be made in the first three years of appointment. During this time, unspent start-up funds carry over to the next fiscal year.

The following are examples of expenditures that are not acceptable:

- Faculty start-up funds are not considered personal compensation and may not be used to supplement a faculty member's academic year or summer salary or to cover personal expenses, such as clothing or academic regalia,
- gifts (employee and non-employee) or donations,
- food or alcohol,
- briefcases,
- flowers, coffee makers,
- furniture/furnishings, rare books, works of art,
- home office expenses,
- faculty cell phones and related equipment, non-academic streaming services, or personal website expenses,
- non-research related travel,
- any costs unrelated to faculty research or scholarly activities.

If the faculty member has announced plans to leave WFU, no expenditures will be allowed from start-up funds without the prior approval of the department chair and the Dean of the College. Any unspent start-up funds, durable assets or other items remain with the university upon departure of the faculty member. Unspent start-up funds at the time of departure will be returned to the initial funding sources at the same percentage split.

It is strongly recommended that the chair explicitly discuss budget and startup spending during annual reviews. This will signal to the junior faculty member that it is being monitored and it is a mentoring opportunity for the chair with the junior faculty member. Going forward, fourth year reappointment documents will require a statement on startup funds remaining and plans to spend down the startup account consistent with the original budget or any later budget amendments. Any requests to extend the startup timeline are to be submitted in writing by the faculty member to the department chair. If the chair endorses the request, it is to be forwarded to the Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration in the Office of the Dean of the College.

PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING FACULTY START-UP FUNDS TO NEW HIRES

- a. If faculty start-up funds will be offered to a newly hired faculty member, the hiring unit must prepare a budget that lists the costs from all sources to be included in the start-up package, with quotes included for items over \$25,000. We recognize that chairs are uniquely qualified to provide the disciplinary and professional expertise to assess reasonable needs in their areas. As such, the technical details of the start-up offer pertaining to scholarly research will be the responsibility of the Chair of the hiring Department.
- b. The hiring unit department chair will consult with the Office of the Dean of the College and the Provost and obtain approval of the start-up package before an offer letter is issued.
- c. Facilities-related costs for new faculty need to be discussed by the hiring unit in advance with the Office of the Dean of the College and approved by the Office of the Provost prior to inclusion in the offer letter. Departments who know they are likely to have facilities needs should include this information in the position request. A quote for any proposed work must be presented by the requesting department to the Dean and Provost. Such renovation planning may need to occur outside the annual capital request process to ensure the construction team has sufficient lead time.