**Purpose:**

To outline the responsibilities for University personnel who have authority to commit or spend funds from research Accounts. Principal investigators and the University are responsible to administer funds and as such have certain obligations including ensuring that:

- policies, procedures and regulations of granting agencies and sponsors are followed;
- funds are well managed and used effectively and economically;
- expectations for financial accountability and integrity are clearly communicated; and
- the University is in full compliance with terms of research grants and contracts.

This authority also allows the principal investigator (Unit Authority) to delegate spending authority to others as appropriate within the University. This policy is to be applied in conjunction with other University policies. Importantly, the University’s purchasing policy addresses the requirements for acquiring goods and services for operating and research use.

**Definitions:**

Account – a five-digit code (sometimes referred to as an organization code) used to identify a research project grant, contract or general research account (e.g. 44444 - NSERC Grant John Smith).

Claimant – the individual requesting reimbursement of expenditures paid out of pocket.

Delegate – the individual, as described in section 3 of the policy, authorized to approve commitments and expenditures on behalf of the Unit Authority.

Unit Authority – the Unit Authority for Research funds is the principal investigator or the individual responsible for the account (e.g. department head). This is the individual authorized to approve commitments and expenditures within the approved budget of an account in accordance with University policies and procedures and terms and conditions as specified by granting agencies, contractors, donors or others.

**Policy:**

1. The spending authority policy applies to all financial transactions including but not limited to:
   - Cheque requisitions
   - Graduate Student Payroll Information Profiles (GSPIP)
   - Invoices/ Credit memos
• Journal entries
• Payroll forms
• Petty cash
• Purchases of goods or services from University departments
• Purchase requisitions
• Student aid requisitions

2. The Unit Authority is responsible for committing and spending research funds in accordance with University policy and the terms and conditions specified by granting agencies, contractors, donors or other providers of research funding.

3. The Unit Authority may choose to delegate others (the “Delegate”) to sign on his/her behalf for commitments and expenditures from the Account. This delegation is limited to amounts of **$5,000 or less per transaction**. The Delegate has no power to delegate to someone else.

4. The Unit Authority is the only individual automatically authorized to approve amounts **exceeding $5,000**. Should circumstances arise where the Unit Authority is not available, the Department Chair/Head or Dean can authorize such transactions provided s/he has also been delegated spending authority on the account.

5. The Unit Authority and any Delegate shall:
   • Ensure that funds are used for the purpose for which they were received with reference to any terms or conditions specified by sponsors, contractors, donors or others and in accordance with University policies and procedures.
   • Verify receipt of goods or services.
   • Verify that goods or services have not been previously invoiced and/or paid.
   • Ensure the request for payment is accurate.
   • Assign the appropriate Account and provide authorization. A signature stamp is not acceptable.
   • Ensure there is appropriate supporting documentation to comply with public/private spending guidelines.
   • Ensure the expenditures are within the grant/contract period.
   • Where the spending authority is also the claimant for reimbursement (e.g. travel), such reimbursement must be approved by an individual at a reporting or management level above the claimant.
   • Ensure that current expenditures will not result in other significant costs and obligations to the University (e.g. maintenance, utilities, etc.)

Delegates are to direct any questions regarding Spending Authority to the Unit Authority.

6. The delegation of spending authority does not relieve the Unit Authority from accountability for compliance with policy.

7. Specimen signatures of Unit Authorities and Delegates are held for audit purposes by Financial Services with a copy in the department responsible for the research Account.

8. The University reserves the right to withdraw spending authority delegation privileges or freeze access to Accounts for non-compliance with this policy.

9. Charges for certain internal services (postage, telephone, computing, etc) are made directly to Accounts. The Unit Authority is responsible to review all charges to his/her Account and report any unauthorized charges immediately to the internal department providing the good/service.
Procedures:

1. Establishing Spending Authority
   - The Unit Authority must complete a Spending Authority form (Appendix A).
   - Only the Unit Authority can authorize, modify or revoke spending authority delegation for Accounts under his/her responsibility.

2. Delegation of Spending Authority
   - A Unit Authority may elect to delegate his/her spending authority for financial transactions to another individual on an account-by-account basis. In order to delegate spending authority for an Account, the Unit Authority must access Web For Administrators and assign delegation of spending authority. If not already on file, the delegate will be required to complete a Spending Authority form (Appendix A) and return to Financial Services.
   - Delegation of spending authority is complete only when a specimen signature is received by Financial Services.
   - Spending Authority shall only be delegated to individuals payrolled through the University.
   - If the Unit Authority changes (e.g. Account with chair as spending authority), the new Unit Authority is responsible to review delegation and make necessary changes through the use of Web For Administrators if s/he chooses to establish delegates.

An Important Note about Delegation of Spending Authority: The Unit Authority (principal investigator) should give careful consideration when choosing an individual to whom spending authority is delegated. The delegate must possess an understanding of University policy as well as guidelines pertaining to the research project in question. Suitable delegates might include a co-investigator, administrator or senior research assistant. Delegates will have access to monthly reports and account inquiries through the financial system.

3. Revoking Delegation of Spending Authority
   - The Unit Authority may revoke the delegation of spending authority, by accessing Web For Administrators.
I hereby accept responsibility as spending authority for research funds. I have an appropriate level of knowledge of the applicable University policies, and externally imposed conditions, regulations and guidelines. Specifically, I have read and understand the University’s Policy on Spending Authority for Research Funds and I agree to abide by it.

Unit Authority’s or Delegate’s Name (print FULL name)  Department

B

Dalhousie ID

Signature  Date

PLEASE FORWARD COMPLETED FORM TO FINANCIAL SERVICES AND ONE COPY TO YOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICE.