



Equipment Sharing Policy

CU-RIO-POL-9.0 – V6

Purpose

In order to facilitate collaboration and to ensure the effective utilisation of its research assets, the University requires that its staff look for opportunities to share equipment (including at other institutions) before purchasing new items. This is in line with sectoral good practice and the requirements of funding bodies.

Scope

This policy applies to all research equipment with a value of £10k or greater (excluding VAT) purchased under the auspices of the University, unless exceptions apply as detailed in the Policy Statement.

Additional criteria may apply for equipment housed at Shrivenham campus, and queries should be directed to the Service Delivery Manager (APC).

Policy Statement

To facilitate sharing, equipment should be added to the University's research asset directory, following the instructions on the [Research Assets Booking System \(RABS\) - Self-Service Portal](#).

If the new equipment is purchased using public funding sources over the value of £115k (plus VAT) then we are required to add it to the equipment data repository <http://equipment.data.ac.uk/> to facilitate potential sharing with external users. The exceptions below do not apply in this case.

All equipment should be made available for sharing, unless there are clear reasons why this is not possible. Exceptions include where:

1. There is evidence that the equipment is already fully utilised (verified by the Director of Theme).
2. Cost and/or time involved in setting up the equipment in another location or bringing it back to operational standard is prohibitive.
3. The equipment is part of a larger facility which would not be viable without it.
4. Potential users are not suitably qualified and internal expertise is not available to support utilization.
5. Expertise required to operate the equipment is not currently available.

6. Equipment is governed by a research grant, contract or terms that restricts use.
7. The equipment is deemed to be sensitive or confidential or is housed in an area of restricted access.
8. There is a conflict with a request from another user in which case the Director of Theme(s) will resolve the conflict. Where resolution cannot be agreed, the matter will be escalated to the Director of Research.

Updating the database

Information in RABS must be kept up to date by the person responsible for the equipment (usually the principal Investigator on the research grant or contract). To action removal from the equipment data repository or to make changes, you should notify a member of the RABS Support Team [Research Assets Booking System \(RABS\) - Self-Service Portalequipment@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:Research Assets Booking System (RABS) - Self-Service Portalequipment@cranfield.ac.uk).

Before equipment is disposed of, sold or otherwise leaves the ownership of the University, the person responsible should refer to the University's Financial Manual (see related documents)

Internal equipment sharing

Equipment hire should be free of charge to internal users; however they should be prepared to contribute to the costs of consumables, maintenance, technician support and set-up costs. Where they are unable to do so, agreement to the waiver of the contribution should be signed off by the relevant Director of Theme.

There are exceptions, where the equipment is a Major Research Facility and/or the activity is externally funded. In these cases, hire costs can and should be charged to assist with cost recovery, where permitted by the funder terms and conditions.

Internal equipment loan

Where equipment can be easily transported to another area of the University, an internal equipment loan agreement will specify the items of equipment included, technical support being provided, expected cost contribution and expected date of return.

Equipment shared internally will be covered by the University's insurance.

Sharing equipment externally

When equipment is being shared with an external party, prior to such usage commencing:

- appropriate charges must be agreed (in liaison with the relevant Facilities Manager) and applied, and should incorporate the cost of usage, consumables and maintenance.
- a risk assessment must be carried out, and ethical / governance issues considered;
- arrangements must be made for any requisite training for users of the equipment;
- appropriate insurance must be in place;
- appropriate contracts / agreements must be put in place (in liaison with Legal).

Requesting new equipment

Where equipment requests are included in research grant applications, funder guidelines must be adhered to. Options for sharing equipment (internally and externally) should be considered prior to purchase of any new equipment. The applicant must have checked RABS and the UK [equipment data](#) repository for suitable items before any application is submitted. Where existing equipment will be shared, consideration of any relocation costs (including loan and return), maintenance and running costs should be considered and included in the research grant application, where applicable.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Cranfield University researchers should acknowledge the contribution of others in publications where a substantial contribution to an output has happened as set out in the Policy on Authorship of Research Outputs. This extends to the use of equipment at other sites.

External users of Cranfield's equipment should also formally acknowledge the University and notify the Centre. Standard acknowledgement wording is as follows:

“The authors acknowledge the use of [insert equipment name, equipment, data ref and funder ref (if appropriate)] equipment from Cranfield University and the help of [Insert name or Research Centre] in this research.”

Monitoring Compliance

The University Research Committee are responsible for ensuring that this policy is communicated and enforced, and will regularly review data provided from RABS and Research Finance in order to monitor compliance.

Funded research equipment may be also subject to audit by the funding body.

Related documents

[Financial Manual](#) - staff

[Policy on Authorship of Research Outputs](#)

[Research Asset Booking System \(RABS\)](#)

Further guidance

Contact: researchoffice@cranfield.ac.uk

Document control

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