



**UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK**
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

University of Limerick

Research Infrastructure Policy

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Purpose.....	3
1.2	Scope	3
1.2.1	To whom does the policy apply?.....	3
1.2.2	Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?.....	3
1.3	Definitions	4
2	Context.....	5
2.1	Legal and Regulatory Context	5
3	Policy Statements	5
3.1	Principles for Research Infrastructure Management	5
	Access	5
	Management of RI.....	6
3.2	Access Charges and Financing	6
	Access Charges	6
	Financing of Access Charges	6
3.3	Acquisition Procedures and Disposal.....	6
3.4	Inter-institutional transfer	7
	Transfer of University RI to another Host Institution	7
	Transfer of RI to the University from another Host Institution	7
4	Roles and Responsibilities	7
	RI Responsible Person.....	7
	Management Responsibilities	8
5	Related Documents	8
6	Document Control	9

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Research Infrastructure (RI) at the University of Limerick, hereinafter referred to as the 'University', is essential to enable the University community to deliver on the University's Research Strategy. This policy will support the management and oversight of current, extant University research infrastructure, as well as the development of future facilities.

Research Infrastructure (RI) describes resources and services for members of the University community to conduct research and foster innovation. They can be used beyond research e.g. for education or public services and they may be single-sited, distributed, or virtual.

They include

- scientific equipment or sets of instruments
- collections, archives or scientific data
- computing systems and communication networks
- any other research and innovation infrastructure of a unique nature which is open to external users

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all Faculties, departments, school, offices, units, research centres, research institutes, and areas of work that form part of the University structure, and to all members of the University community. This policy applies to all engaged in research work at the University and/or undertaking any research activity in the University's name i.e. current and former employees and students of the University, and to all current and former Adjunct, Emeritus, and visiting personnel.

This is a University-wide policy and applies to all RI with the following exceptions:

- a) RI owned by a third party which is located at the University;
- b) RI physically located elsewhere and managed according to the rules of a third party; and
- c) Instrumentation or facilities exclusively used for teaching.

1.2.2 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The Vice President for Research is responsible for the overall oversight and management of the policy, while responsibilities around its implementation are set out below in sections 3.1 and 4; in particular, management of access and necessary training will be the responsibility of whoever is charged with managing the infrastructure in question.

1.3 Definitions

As stated above, Research Infrastructure (RI) describes resources and services for members of the University community, as well as relevant external parties (such as visiting researchers) to conduct research and foster innovation.

They can be used beyond research e.g. for education or public services and they may be single-sited, distributed, or virtual.

They include

- scientific equipment or sets of instruments
- collections, archives or scientific data
- computing systems and communication networks
- any other research and innovation infrastructure of a unique nature which is open to external users

Examples of RI include, but not limited to:

- research laboratories and equipment (i.e. those housed and managed within the Lonsdale and Analog Devices buildings, the Bernal Institute, Lero, the Tierney Building, Nexus, and elsewhere);
- collections (i.e. National Dance Archive of Ireland; UL Institutional Repository);
- datasets (i.e. Leonard Rare Book Collection)
- research databases;
- data repositories;
- biological archives (i.e. cell culture collections, biobanks);
- laboratory facilities (i.e. those housed within the Analog Devices building and elsewhere);
- enabling ICT – based infrastructures (i.e. high-capacity / high speed communication networks; highly distributed capacity and capability computing facilities; data infrastructure, networks of computing facilities and other infrastructure supported by UL ITD);
- core facilities which provide a service for the wider research community based on an assembly of techniques and know-how (i.e. service provision by technical team);
- spaces, equipment and materials necessary for the development, presentation, and capture of creative research (i.e. as located within the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance);
- space and facilities necessary for community-engaged research processes (i.e. as above);
- spaces and facilities for conducting research with human subjects (i.e. as located within the PESS building)

“Sustainability” refers to the capacity for infrastructure to remain operational and effective over its planned life-time.

Data Protection Law: means the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and all other statutory instruments, industry guidelines or codes of practice issued by the Data Protection Commission.

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

In all cases, those accessing and managing RI should refer to relevant contractual obligations where relevant, particularly in relation to RI which has been externally-funded by third parties such as Science Foundation Ireland, the Health Research Board, etc.

Further, as stated, the principles of research integrity and research ethics described in other University documents should be upheld by those managing and accessing University RI, as well as those set out in other University guidance (data management, records retention, intellectual property, collections management, etc.).

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for Research Infrastructure Management

Access

RI can be accessed and used by members of the research community of the University as well as by other stakeholders (e.g. industry partners) when appropriate and per stated guidelines drafted and maintained by units managing the relevant RI, provided that, if required, users adhere to relevant University policies (particularly in areas of Research Ethics, Research Integrity, Library Collection Development and Management, and authorship); and that any data gathered and processed is done in compliance with Data Protection Law (see Related Documentation section below).

Principles of open access and open science as established in relevant grant agreements, University policies, and elsewhere should be considered in managing and facilitating access to University infrastructure. As such, the default in managing access to RI should be to facilitate access to University resources as widely as possible, notwithstanding maintaining standards in the areas of health and safety, data management, research ethics, EDI, and open access. Where necessary and relevant, individuals seeking to access RI should be given the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate competencies, such as through the completion of mandatory training etc.

In all cases, explicit and clear guidelines and procedures regarding the accessing and use of research infrastructure should be prepared, maintained, and made available by relevant institutes, departments, units, etc. These should set clear standards and criteria to be met by those wishing to access and use infrastructure; describe processes for applying for access; appeals mechanisms based on the principles in the paragraph below; individuals wishing to access research infrastructure should be in a position to understand the criteria under which access is granted, and why access has been denied as appropriate. Such access might also be subject to a financial charge as appropriate, as described below.

In the event of a disagreement on the whether or not access to a piece of University RI should be granted, individuals concerned may review the matter with the relevant Head of Department, Institute Director, Unit Director, or Dean in the first instance with a view to resolving the matter. If the matter cannot be so resolved, individuals may appeal decisions to the next level of line management eg. If a dispute arises between an individual who wishes to access a piece of infrastructure and a Head of Department, the appeal should be heard by the relevant Faculty Dean. Deans or their Executive equivalent (i.e. other members of Executive Committee to whom appeals might be addressed) may consult with the VP for Research in adjudicating.

In all cases, individuals are free to raise grievances as relevant through the University's Grievance Procedure.

Management of RI

All RI must be managed in such a way as to ensure its sustainability in the medium to long term, dependent on the expected lifespan of the infrastructure. This can be achieved through implementing appropriate management and financial models that ensure the successful operation and maintenance of the RI beyond its initial funding phase, and the models should include the costs of maintenance contracts, repair and technical support as required and relevant.

RI is generally managed according to one of the following arrangements:

- Infrastructure managed by a single Principal Investigator (PI) and catering for the needs of a distinct research group(s) (hereinafter referred to as “**Local RI**”);
- Infrastructure managed at unit level (i.e. a Centre, Faculty, or Department) and accessed by a variety of groups and individuals (hereinafter referred to as “**Departmental RI**”).
- Infrastructure managed at an administrative/institutional level (eg. Infrastructure falling outside of the Faculty framework, such as the Glucksman Library and/or ITD resources) and accessed by a variety of groups and individuals (hereinafter referred to as “**Institutional RI**”).

3.2 Access Charges and Financing

Access Charges

The calculation and implementation of access charges must be done in consultation with the Research Finance Office to ensure the rates are in line with institutional guidelines and that the charging processes are transparent, auditable and, in the case of access by companies, compliant with EU State Aid Rules.

Financing of Access Charges

Access charges must be included in all proposals for external funding where these charges are an eligible direct cost by the funding body. These funds will subsequently contribute to the financial sustainability of the RI and can be managed at a Local RI or Departmental RI level depending on the management model used.

3.3 Acquisition Procedures and Disposal

The purchase, acquisition and disposal of RI must adhere to the University’s Procurement Policy, Signing Authority Policy, policies in relation to library and archival collections, and Disposal of Assets Policy as relevant.

Any member of staff intending to purchase any piece of equipment which may have space and/or technical support implications must first obtain approval from the relevant unit manager (Head of Department, Centre Director, etc.) to ensure:

- a) the availability of appropriate space to host the RI;
- b) to avoid duplication of instrumentation across campus; and
- c) to discuss the optimal management arrangements for the RI.

3.4 Inter-institutional transfer

Transfer of University RI to another Host Institution

The general rule is that property of the University may not accompany a faculty or staff member leaving the University or moving to another institution. Exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis as follows:

1. At no time will title to research infrastructure vested in the University be transferred directly to the terminating or departing individual.
2. Transfer of equipment may be considered when:

It is or was the specific intent of the donor or granting agency that the equipment is or was to support the work of the terminating faculty member rather than a programme of the University and that the equipment ownership should be transferred to the institution to which the faculty member is moving.

In all cases due consideration to the remaining users' needs must be exercised and due diligence to determine such need must be exercised by those managing the transfer of property.

The transfer of RI to another institution will always be subject to the terms and conditions of the funding body that provided the funds for its initial purchase. In all cases, transfer must be done in full compliance with and following the procedures set out in the University Policy for the Disposal of Assets.

Transfer of RI to the University from another Host Institution

From time to time the University maybe requested to host RI on its premises either with or without an associated transfer of ownership. In these cases the Head of the receiving Unit in the University is responsible for ensuring an appropriate agreement with the donor institution is put in place, stipulating the terms and conditions of the transfer. The Head of Unit must refer to the University's Signing Authority Policy when seeking approval for the subsequent agreement with the host institution.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

RI Responsible Person

The responsibility for the management of RI depends upon the management model selected:

- **Local RI:** The Principal Investigator (PI), who is often responsible for the acquisition of the RI, is the person responsible for the management of such.
- **Departmental RI:** The Head of Unit (School, Centre, Institute, Faculty, Unit) is responsible for the management of such.
- **Institutional RI:** The relevant head of administrative unit is responsible for the management of such.

In both models above, the day-to-day responsibility for the management of RI may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff, and this delegation documented appropriately.

Management Responsibilities

The RI Responsible Person must ensure that:

- a) any restrictions on the range of users who can access the RI are clearly defined. In all cases a collegial approach is expected and the provision of open access to the RI by staff of the University is preferable when possible;
- b) appropriate operational training is provided to the users of the infrastructure and that training records are maintained where appropriate;
- c) the RI has an associated sustainability plan, including relevant access charges where applicable and appropriate;
- d) the RI is maintained appropriately to generate results of high verifiable standards;
- e) the purchase and disposal procedures for the RI comply with existing University policies (see the 'Related Documentation' section below);
- f) usage and access records are maintained in line with the University Records Retention documents;
- g) the RI is managed in compliance with this policy, other relevant policies of the University including those referred to at the end of this document, and any regulatory requirements;
- h) that appropriate insurance is in place to cover visiting researchers and to protect the University from any liability resulting from the usage of the equipment; and
- i) that the access to and management of the RI in question are accounted for in the risk management planning of the relevant Unit.

In such cases when individually-managed infrastructure ceases to be of use to the responsible person (e.g. the PI moves to a different position within the University, the original project ends.), the responsible person must liaise with their line manager in a timely manner, to ensure that the RI is either disposed of as per University policy or that the responsibility for the management of the RI is appropriately transferred for individual or departmental use. The University reserves the right to inquire after the management of and access to Research Infrastructure, for example in situations where the potential sustainability of a piece of infrastructure is in question, or if continual issues around access come to the fore.

5 Related Documents

[Procurement Policy](#)

Signing Authority Policy

[Fixed Assets Policy](#)

[Research Integrity Policy and associated procedures](#)

Research Ethics governance statements

Authorship and Publications Guidance Note

[University Safety Statement](#)

[Glucksman Library Collection Development and Management Policy](#)

6 Document Control

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