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Appropriate Use of University Research Funds

Research funds are sometimes provided by the Provost to support a broad range of research activities by members of the Yale faculty. Such awards are not appropriate for personal or any other expenses that are not directly related to research. Some research funds are provided for specific research purposes. The list below provides examples of expenses that typically may and may not be charged to research accounts that are not designated for specific purposes. Obviously, all funds should be expended prudently, and the level of expenses should be governed by need and common sense. Grants provided by external sponsors (e.g., government agencies or private foundations) may include constraints that are more restrictive than these guidelines, and for information about particular grants, please consult the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration. Some kinds of expenditures, such as air travel, are also governed by specific University policies, including those that prohibit anything but coach travel except for reasons of health or especially long distances. It is also important to remember that equipment and furniture purchased with University funds are the property of the University.

It is not possible to list all of the items and expenses that qualify or do not qualify as research expenses. It is the purpose of the expenditure rather than the item or service that determines whether it is a legitimate research expense. Thus, items on the normally appropriate list can be included only if they are being used for research purposes. Conversely, some of the items on the normally inappropriate list could be included if it can be demonstrated that they are essential to a research project. The underlying test is whether the expense is directly relevant to the sponsored research. For all of these matters, consult the appropriate policies in the Faculty Handbook and at the [Policies & Procedures website](#).

Normally appropriate research expenses:

- Books
- Clerical and administrative help (not usually allowable on federal grants)
- Computer hardware and software
- Conference registration fees
- Office file cabinets
- Food while travelling
- Hotel costs
- Office movable bookcases
- Long distance calls
- Library fees
- Page charges for articles in scholarly journals
- Photocopy costs
- Photographs
- Professional journal subscriptions
- Meals and other local expenses for research collaborators
- Membership in professional organizations (not allowable on federal grants)
- Research assistants
- Research equipment
- Student assistants
- Transportation to conferences, libraries, or research sites

Examples of inappropriate research expenses:

- Academic robes
- Advertisement for books
- Business or first-class travel (except as allowed by University policy)
- Cell phones, Blackberries, PDAs
- Child care
- Clothing
- Club memberships
- Framing of pictures, maps as office decor
- Gifts
- Home or office furniture
- Home or office renovations
- Library fines
- Luggage
- Moving Expenses
- Network connectivity costs (locally)
- Newspapers & magazines