

# “MEIF@USM” Award Policies

*Effective February 10, 2020 for current and new projects, unless otherwise indicated*

## 1. ELIGIBILITY

The following are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) on MEIF projects:

- Regular tenured faculty
- Tenure-track faculty
- Non-tenure-track faculty (including emeritus and research faculty)
- Regular professional staff members

The following are eligible to serve as Co-Principal Investigators on MEIF projects:

- Students
- Postdoctoral appointee faculty
- Adjunct or visiting faculty who are not University employees
- Temporary employees

In such cases an eligible PI must be assigned to supervise the co-PI’s role within the project.

## 2. ELIGIBLE USES OF MEIF FUNDS

The following uses of MEIF funds are allowable.

- Administrative and Financial Personnel:** MEIF funds may be used for general administrative support in proportion to the amount of resources needed to implement the project. This can take the form of a percentage of effort or overtime (hourly staff only).
- COURSE RELEASE – REPLACEMENT COST:** Support for replacement cost to hire an adjunct (salary and the appropriate benefit rate for temporary employees) to teach the course. Such requests must have approval of the appropriate department chair and Dean. Replacement costs vary by department.
- Contracted Services:** MEIF Funds may be used to contract for services with either an independent contractor or company, however, the MEIF Program strongly encourages PIs to give preference to companies or individuals located in the State of Maine. No more than 10% of the project budget may be allocated for companies or individuals located outside of the State of Maine without a strong justification and prior MEIF Program approval.
- DIRECT COSTS:** MEIF funds support all direct cost items. Indirect cost recovery is not allowed in MEIF awards. All expenses must adhere to the University of Maine System’s Human Resources, Financial, and Procurement policies.
- EQUIPMENT:** Use of MEIF funds for equipment purchases is permissible as long as the equipment is required for the project and will be usable beyond the award period.
- GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS:** MEIF funds may be used to support stipends and tuition waivers for graduate research assistants as long as they meet the following eligibility requirement of the Office of Graduate Studies:
  - Fully matriculated in a degree program at the graduate level.

- Registered for at least six credits of coursework in the semester(s) in which they will be working (master's and CAS students), or registered for GRS 602 (masters) or GRS 701 (doctoral) and be making satisfactory progress in their program.

*Stipend Maximum Amounts are as follows:*

- Full-time (20 hours per week): \$11,250 per academic year (\$1,250 per month).
- 1/2 time (10 hours per week): \$5,625 per academic year (\$625 per month).

*Tuition Waiver Maximum Amounts are as follows:*

- MEIF-funded graduate research assistants working 10 or more hours/week can receive tuition waivers, up to a maximum of 18 credits during any academic year at the current In-State Tuition rate, in addition to their stipends at the following rates:
  - Full time (20 hrs.) – 18 credit tuition waiver per academic year.
  - 1/2 time (10 hrs.) – 9 credit tuition waiver per academic year.
- MEIF will only pay the In-State tuition rate, or an amount equal to the In-State tuition rate for Out-of-State students.
- If a student decides not to take courses throughout the summer, they may be hired as a temporary employee for that period of time.

The Graduate Assistant Job Description advertised through the Office of Graduate Studies must include a detailed budget which details all of the types of compensation provided as well as the grand total dollar value of the Graduate Assistantship. It should be integrated into the Job Description, regardless of the specific format used.

*Example:*

Total Stipend: \$11,250 (\$1,250 per month for 9 months)

Total Tuition Assistance: \$5,052 (\$421 per In-State Credit for 12 Credits)

Total Value of Graduate Assistantship: \$16,302

- g. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:** Use of MEIF funds for international travel is permissible.
- The PI must notify the Office of International Programs of proposed international travel plans for any program (credit or non-credit) which has institutional support and/or involves students traveling under the management of the University.
  - Besides overseeing student exchange, the purposes of travel may include, for example, partnership exploration and promotion of USM to potential degree students.
  - The Director of the Office of International Programs must sign off on all MEIF applications that include international travel plans as described above by signing the application cover page before submitting to the MEIF program. Applications that do not include this sign off will not be accepted for consideration for funding.
- h. OVERTIME PAY:** MEIF funds may be used to pay overtime pay to Non-Fair Labor Standards Act Exempt employees.
- i. STRATEGIC NEW HIRES OF RESEARCH FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** MEIF support for strategic hires of research faculty and professional staff is limited to three years, after which financial support must come from other sources, including but not limited to, E&G, grants and contracts, and fee for services.
- When E&G funds will support the strategic hires after three years of MEIF support, the MEIF applications must include letters from the Provost and the appropriate Dean(s) indicating their support for the positions and commitment to fund the positions with

E&G after three years. In addition, since no E&G staffing commitment is allowable without approval from the University's Position Review Committee, Human Resources must be consulted to properly classify, assign salary, and bring to Position Review for approval.

- Teaching is permissible for 100% MEIF-funded positions but the percentage effort is limited to 25% (equivalent to a 1/1 teaching load).
  - The PI must discuss hiring requests with Human Resources prior to submitting the application.
    - HR will work with the PI to determine appropriate titles, job descriptions, compensation, and search and hiring processes.
    - All applications that involve hiring will require the signature of an appropriate authorized individual at Human Resources on the application cover page before submission to the MEIF program. Applications that do not include this signature will not be accepted for consideration for funding.
- j. **SUMMER SALARY:** Summer salary for research and public service related effort for individual faculty members on a 9-month appointment is permissible; however, the salary cannot exceed two-ninths of the academic year. This is known as the “two-ninths rule” and translates to a maximum of two months of summer salary support per budget year. Requests for formal MEIF Programmatic and Financial signature approval on the documentation must be submitted to the MEIF Financial and Administrative Manager by no later than 30 days prior to the Payroll Start Date for the activity.
- k. **TEACHING OVERLOAD OR PART-TIME TEMPORARY FACULTY TEACHING AGREEMENTS:** Pay for UMS credit bearing coursework using MEIF Funds is allowed but the standards and procedures established by the University for this type of compensation must be followed. Exceptions to these standards must be approved by both MEIF and the UMS Office of Human Resources in advance. Requests for formal MEIF Programmatic and Financial signature approval on the documentation must be submitted to the MEIF Financial and Administrative Manager by no later than 30 days prior to the Payroll Start Date for the activity.
- l. **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:** Undergraduate students pay varies from \$10-\$15 per hour, depending on work complexity and student experience. Undergraduate students may work no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year and 39 hours per week during the summer semester.

*Supervision of Student Employees:*

The PI must supervise the student employee and adhere to USM's Student Employment Policies & Procedures found by visiting USM's Career and Employment Hub:

<https://usm.maine.edu/human-resources/student-employment-policies-procedures-0>

### 3. INELIGIBLE USES OF MEIF FUNDS

The following uses of MEIF funds are not allowed.

- a. **TENURE-TRACK POSITIONS:** Hiring new tenure-track faculty positions with MEIF funds is not permissible (*This policy is effective for new awards.*)

### 4. USES OF MEIF FUNDS REQUIRING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

The following uses of MEIF funds are only allowed if explicitly accounted for and justified in a project proposal and budget and approved by MEIF in advance. Additional approvals may also be required.

**ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION:** With prior approval, MEIF funds may be used to pay Fair Labor Standards Act Exempt Faculty or Staff for Additional Compensation (short term additional work), and Stipends (short or longer term additional duties) for both directorships of large MEIF projects or initiatives, as well as greatly increased duties and responsibilities that are necessary for the successful completion of the MEIF Project or Initiative.

The UMS Office of Human Resources must approve the written and budgeted plan for the individual named, at the rate desired, and according to the schedule proposed, before MEIF will grant an award of funding intended to be used to pay for such expenses. Additional Compensation or Stipends will not be paid absent such express approval.

To help ensure that any given request will be approved by HR, MEIF investigators should make sure requests follow the guidelines established by Human Resources and Payroll:

HR Operations Standard Operating Procedures:

<https://gojira.its.maine.edu/confluence/display/HumanRes/HR+Operations+Standard+Operating+Procedures>, and specifically the rules for...

0550.10 Additional Compensation:

<https://gojira.its.maine.edu/confluence/display/HumanRes/0550.10+Additional+Compensation>

Requests for formal MEIF Programmatic and Financial signature approval on the documentation must be submitted to the MEIF Financial and Administrative Manager by no later than 30 days prior to the Payroll Start Date for the activity.

## 5. OTHER AWARD POLICIES

**a. ANNUAL RENEWALS OF MULTI-YEAR AWARDS:** The MEIF Program is committed to providing appropriate assistance in helping the PIs and their teams succeed with their projects. Annual renewal is contingent on progress in achieving the project's outcomes, meeting award requirements and deliverables, and availability of MEIF funds. The Research Office will conduct six-month and annual financial and programmatic progress reviews of all investments; provide feedback for encouragement, as well as corrective actions for improvement; offer appropriate assistance, as needed; and determine the appropriate level of renewal support needed for multi-year investments. The MEIF Program Office may terminate funding for a project that consistently does not perform well, i.e. is not achieving its outcomes after implementing corrective actions.

**b. BUDGET REALLOCATION:**

A PI may reallocate funds within the following categories, however any significant changes need prior approval by the Project Liaison:

- Other Direct Costs
- Personnel categories including student support

A PI may reallocate funds from-to the following categories with the prior approval of the Project Liaison:

- Other Direct Costs to Personnel, including student support
- c. **CO-MINGLING OF FUNDS:** Program income cannot be co-mingled with MEIF funds, and, therefore, must be placed in accounts other than the Restricted, State Appropriations funded, accounts under Fund 23.
  - d. **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** The PI is responsible for the financial management of the grant. This includes managing payroll, human resources and purchasing. The PI should seek out financial management and administrative support from his/her department, college, or another college, or build adequate administrative support into their projects.
  - e. **NO-COST EXTENSIONS:** A single no-cost extension may be allowed on a case by case basis at the end of the award period; this extension may not exceed three months. The PI must submit a justification for a no-cost extension to the MEIF Program Office **60 days prior** to the end of a project's award period. Requests for no-cost extensions must meet the following three conditions: the end of the project period is approaching; there is a programmatic need to continue the research; and there are sufficient funds remaining to cover the extended effort.
  - f. **OVERSPENDING AWARD AMOUNT:** The PI and his/her department is responsible for any expenses that exceed the award amount.
  - g. **Project Update Meetings:** PIs are expected to meet at least once every 6 months with their Project Liaison during the term of the project to discuss the progress of the project as well as try to remedy any challenges they may be having. The PIs will have the opportunity during these meetings to propose changes in their budgets to address unforeseen circumstances that, if not addressed, could result in large unobligated balances by the end of the budget year. It may also be necessary for the PI to meet more frequently with MEIF Program staff to review progress and financials.
  - h. **PROPOSALS TO EXTERNAL SOURCES:** As a condition of a MEIF award, the PI is expected to prepare and submit proposals for extramural funding from federal, foundations, or other sponsors during the award period. The USM Research Office will assist the PI in identifying potential funding sources. The MEIF Program Office will work with the PI to determine the number of proposals to be submitted. The final number will be part of the award's evaluation metrics.
  - i. **REPORTS:** PIs are required to submit annual and final reports. The annual reports must be submitted no later than 45 days before the end of the current award period. The final report must be submitted no later than 45 days after the expiration of the project.
 

All MEIF reports may be subject to evaluation by an independent party. PI's should keep surveys and other sources of data which feed into their reports and performance metrics. PI's should also be prepared to explain how they arrived at certain conclusions presented in their reports.
  - j. **RETURN ON INVESTMENT:** PIs must demonstrate an effort to leverage \$5 from external sources for every \$1 invested by MEIF before the end of the award period. Depending on the project, achieving the 1:5 ratio could be accomplished annually or by the end of the award

period through grants, contracts, fees-for-services, and other sources of revenues. Additionally, grants and contracts that are awarded to partners and collaborators can be counted toward the 1:5 ratio only if the involvement of the MEIF project was critical to the award.

- k. **UNSPENT BALANCES AT THE END OF A BUDGET PERIOD:** Unspent balances at the end of a budget period will not be carried over to the next budget period unless there is strong justification for the use of all or part of the unspent balances in the subsequent budget period. The PI must submit such a request to the MEIF Program Office as part of the required annual report. The request must include a justification of why the funds were not used as planned (lack of time due to a busy teaching schedule is not an appropriate justification) and how the funds will be used in the subsequent budget period in a manner that will achieve the project's outcomes. The request will undergo internal review to determine appropriateness of the request and alignment with the project's outcomes. In the absence of such a request from the PI, unspent balances will not be carried over and will not be available to the project.

Use of unspent balances to support a new project is not permissible.

## 6. PROGRAM SUSTAINING ACCOUNTS (FUND 10)

- a. **PURPOSE:** All MEIF funding is provided with the financial sustainability of the activity in mind. All project strategies and activities supported through MEIF should include an expectation that MEIF funding will be phased out over time, or will be funded at a significantly reduced amount. It is important that the Investigators focus on sustaining their project work beyond MEIF support through a variety of methods, including grants, contracts, program income, or royalty revenue. MEIF proposes the creation of MEIF Program Sustaining Accounts, or MEIF PSAs, (Department 6156011, Fund 10, Program (TBD)), to help facilitate the receipt and use of some of these types funds.
- b. **MEIF PROGRAM SUSTAINING ACCOUNT:** Any MEIF supported program may submit a formal request for a MEIF Program Sustaining Account (MEIF PSA) to be established for its exclusive use. This request will include some guidance for how the requestor intends to use these funds going forward. The requestor must also agree to use these MEIF PSA funds to further the original activity, and not use it for other purposes.
- c. **FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT:** Like the State appropriated funds established by the Statute, the MEIF@USM Program, specifically the MEIF Coordinator, with support from the MEIF Financial & Administrative Manager, will be responsible for providing overall financial oversight of the MEIF PSAs. At the discretion of the MEIF@USM Program, day to day activities of the individual MEIF PSAs may be managed in the same manner in which the original MEIF funds were provided.
- d. **RECEIPT OF FUNDS:** Funds being deposited into an MEIF PSA must be related to a currently or previously MEIF sponsored activity, as approved by the MEIF Coordinator. If the activity isn't MEIF related, another method should be used to collect and use the funds.

Funds related to USM gift or endowment funds should be deposited with the USM Foundation in a chartfield combination that the Foundation has established for such purpose.

Funds related to USM sponsored projects, including fixed price agreements and fee for services types of arrangements, should be deposited with the Research Service Center(RSC) in a chartfield combination that the RSC has established for such purpose. PSA's can't be used to collect these funds unless the Director of the Research Service Center has granted his/her express permission to do so for the activity in question.

While some contractual commitments are more obvious than others, if an individual or organization wants an MEIF PI to sign something before starting work, or it's understood that the act of depositing any received funds executes an agreement of any type, there is a contract involved and it should be reviewed by the Research Service Center prior to execution.

Sponsorships and/or registration fees for MEIF Program sponsored events or conferences may be deposited into the PSA by affiliated staff directly according to the instructions provided by the MEIF Financial and Administrative Manager.

Any and all other types of deposits must be approved by the MEIF Financial and Administrative Manager before the deposit is made. This includes any related documentation planned on being presented to or received from client organization prior to payment.

- e. **USAGE OF FUNDS:** The MEIF PSAs will be used in any reasonable manner to continue any activity reasonably related to the continuation of the original scope of work for which the original MEIF funding was provided. The MEIF PSAs will be used in accordance with the MEIF@USM Award Policies in effect at the time of the original commitment of the expense, and consistent with Title 10, Chapter 107-C: "Maine Economic Improvement Fund," of the Maine Revised Statutes. Investigators are responsible for ensuring these funds are used in compliance with MEIF Award Policies, and University of Maine System Policies, and Maine Revised Statutes.
- f. **REPORTING:** The combination of the Fund: 10 and Department: 6156011 will ensure that all the activity of the MEIF PSAs can be queried, viewed, and reported in one consolidated report.
- g. **MEIF INVESTMENT RECOUP:** The MEIF program will recoup a portion of its original investment in the program by assessing a 5% fee on all outside revenue deposited into any of the MEIF PSAs. These funds will be used according to the MEIF Statute to further the goals of the MEIF program.