
To researchers who have applied for public research funds such as Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI)

If you have applied for KAKENHI and other public research funds for AY2024 and did not attend or submit in AY2020 or thereafter or have never attended or submitted, please attend the compliance education and submit a "pledge" promptly. The information on the compliance education video and online submission of the pledge is available on the following webpage.

https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/research/member/research_expenses/05.html/ (in Japanese/English)

Attendance at "Research Ethics Education" is also mandatory. Please make sure to take the relevant course by accessing the JSPS e-learning system (eLCoRE) (the course needs to be taken in AY2021 or thereafter).

<https://elcore.jsp.go.jp/top.aspx> (in Japanese/English)



A budget cycle management system (BCM) is scheduled to be introduced in AY2024

Ritsumeikan University has been working to prevent the misuse of research funds and ensure their proper execution in accordance with the MEXT "Guidelines for Management and Audit of Public Research Funds in Research Institutions (Implementation Standards)." In February 2021, the guidelines were revised, requiring even greater precision in the proper execution of research funds. The University also faces the challenges of (1) reducing out-of-pocket expenses, (2) identifying the source of expenditure at the ordering phase, (3) accepting based on an ordering information by a third party and check of the actual goods, and (4) reducing the number of unpaid cases by linking purchase data.

In addition, with the revision of the Electronic Books Maintenance Act (EBMA), data storage related to electronic transactions will become mandatory from January 2024 onward. Since the coexistence and storage of paper and electronic data is extremely cumbersome in business operations, it is necessary to establish a storage environment for electronic data alone as soon as possible.

In light of the above, we plan to start implementing a budget cycle management system (BCM) in April 2024, which will handle everything online from various application procedures by researchers to payment processing by administrative offices. As we respond to inevitable demands such as the proper execution of research funds and the revision of the EBMA, the procedures and rules of operation will also undergo changes. We would appreciate your understanding of the purport of the BCM and your cooperation in its implementation.



The details of the BCM will be announced through the Committee on Research Administration and other means going forward.

Cases of misconduct actually occurred in other universities

On the MEXT webpage below, the outlines of the actual cases of misconduct are disclosed.
https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kansa/houkoku/1364929.htm (in Japanese only)



There are two cases reported in the current year: the following report summarizes one of them.

Type of misconduct	Use in violation of the rules for limiting aggregate use
Year of occurrence	AY2010 – 2011
Amount of research funds improperly spent	1,714,639 yen
Number of researchers involved	1 person
Motives	<p>After a former Professor arrived at the research institute in question, he unilaterally decided that KAKENHI would be managed and used collectively in his laboratory so that those who could not obtain KAKENHI could also conduct their research, and the KAKENHI obtained by an Assistant Professor was used for the purchase of common items.</p> <p>The former Professor, in his position as head of the laboratory, initiated and operated such a system. The Assistant Professor, who was the principal investigator, initially refused, but eventually, fearing some kind of reprisal, s/he was forced to submit her/himself.</p>
Methods	<p>Common items were purchased from the KAKENHI in question and used for various researches. The items identified as misuse were reagents and research consumables, all of which were used for research in the laboratory, and could not be either resold or exchanged for cash. In the end, it was determined that there was no personal misappropriation by the former Professor as it was verified that the relevant goods were still use in the course.</p> <p>Descriptions of the use of the relevant goods were deemed reasonable. However, when common items were purchased, it was necessary to divide the expenses according to the quantity to be used in accordance with the rules for the use of KAKENHI, but this procedure was not carried out and the entire amount was spent from the relevant KAKENHI. Accordingly, it was judged that the rule was violated because the common items had been purchased regardless of the actual use of the funds.</p>
Occurrence factors	<p>At the time of the incident, the former Professor would not have been aware of the rules concerning the execution of KAKENHI, or he must intentionally have violated the rules. Even if the former Professor was unaware of the rules regarding the use of the funds, he should not be absolved of his responsibility because he should have naturally been aware of them as a researcher who applied for and was adopted for KAKENHI.</p> <p>In addition, the former Professor was the head of the laboratory, and although the Assistant Professor refuted the issue, s/he was not taken seriously, and in the end, s/he feared that her/his future activities in the laboratory would be affected somehow, which may have been a reason why s/he had no choice but to obey the former Professor.</p>

In accordance with the “Purchase of Shared Equipment under Multiple Research Funding Systems (Combined Use)” and the “September 10, 2020 Revision of the Guidelines for Fund Allocation Agencies and Competent Ministries and Agencies,” there are some cases where competitive research funding systems allow combined use. However, it is strictly required that the rationality of the use of the funds be fully explained in terms of the ratio of the amount to be borne by each subsidized operator and the rationale for the use of the funds. In addition, the same explanation must be able to be given for internal research funds, as they are subject to the same rules for their execution.

Please note that regardless of the existence of private use, any expenditure that is not directly related to the execution of the research on the relevant research project, or any documentation that is not true, would constitute misconduct.

Please refer to the “Research Fund Spending Guidebook” for the University’s policy on the proper execution of research funds and various procedures for the execution of research funds.

https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/research/member/research_expenses/re02/english.html/

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the relevant Research Office.

Please make sure to complete the procedures of the settlement of business trips and out-of-pocket expenses.

A variety of research activities must have been undertaken this summer as regulations concerning COVID-19 were gradually relaxed. Please contact the Research Office at the earliest opportunity for procedures such as business trips and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.



Conformity with the qualified invoice-based method (“Invoice System”)

With the introduction of the Invoice System in October 2023, there will be some points to bear in mind in the execution procedures. The relevant Research Office will issue a separate notice in due course regarding the points that researchers should pay attention to.



Publication of Newsletter

This Newsletter is published quarterly as part of our awareness-raising activities, and is intended to disseminate and deliver information for the proper execution of research funds on a regular basis, such as sharing of misuse cases including those that have occurred at other organizations and the factors that have led to their occurrence, as well as matters pointed out during internal audits and voucher inspections. The next issue is scheduled to be published in December 2023.

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