

PM10 Guidelines for Funding University Research

Effective date: 21 February 2026

Applies to: All universities and publicly funded research institutions

1. Purpose and scope

These guidelines describe how PM10 Laboratories Pty Ltd ("PM10") funds research at universities and similar institutions. The objectives are to:

- Support research aligned with PM10's work in occupational health, dust-related disease prevention, and related technologies.
- Ensure the large majority of PM10's contributions fund direct research activities such as personnel, equipment, experiments and field trials.
- Provide a clear policy on indirect cost (overhead/ Facilities & Administration ("F&A")) recovery for use in proposals and internal university approvals.

For all PM10-funded projects, the maximum indirect cost rate is 20% of PM10's total cash contribution. Indirect costs in excess of this rate will not be funded by PM10.

If PM10 provides support beyond the core project budget, it will do so through project linked scholarships, fellowships or other direct funding to the host department or laboratory, rather than by increasing the indirect cost rate.

These guidelines apply to grants, sponsored research agreements, collaborative projects and similar arrangements where PM10 provides funding to an eligible institution.

2. Eligible institutions and activities

PM10 considers proposals from:

- Universities and degree-granting higher-education institutions.
- University-affiliated research institutes and public research organisations.

Priority research areas include:

- Detection, monitoring and control of respirable dust, including silica, asbestos and coal dust.
- Occupational exposure monitoring technologies and real-time sensing.
- Pathophysiology, prevention and early detection of dust-related lung disease.
- Engineering controls, personal protective equipment and risk-reduction strategies in mining, tunnelling, construction and related sectors.

PM10 may fund:

- Multi-year research projects (typically one to three years).
- Prototype and device development, testing and field trials.
- Method development, algorithms and validation work.
- Pilot or proof-of-concept studies with potential commercial application.

3. Direct and indirect costs

PM10 distinguishes between:

- Direct costs: Costs that can be identified with the project, such as salaries and benefits for project staff, student support, consumables, laboratory supplies, small equipment, prototyping, project related travel, and publication or data related charges.
- Indirect costs (overheads, F&A): Costs that support research infrastructure but cannot be attributed to a single project, such as buildings, utilities, central administration, compliance, libraries and general IT and research support.

Budgets submitted to PM10 must clearly separate direct and indirect costs.

Costs that are specifically and primarily incurred to deliver the PM10-funded project are to be treated as direct costs. Indirect costs are limited to general overhead and administration that would be incurred regardless of the project.

4. Policy on indirect (overhead) costs

4.1 Binding indirect cost cap

PM10 applies the following limits on indirect cost recovery for all institutions and projects:

- The maximum indirect cost is 20% of PM10's total cash contribution to a project.
- PM10 will not pay indirect costs above this 20% level, regardless of the institution's internal or negotiated rates.

Expressed as a proportion of direct costs, this is roughly equivalent to 25% of direct costs, with at least 80% of PM10's funds supporting direct project expenditure.

The 20% rate is a maximum, not an entitlement. Where an institution's actual indirect cost rate is lower than 20%, that lower rate must be used in the budget.

4.2 Relationship to institutional policies

PM10 recognises that many universities have negotiated F&A/indirect cost rates and internal rules that may default to higher indirect recovery. However:

- PM10's 20% indirect cost limit is a standing sponsor policy and is a condition of receiving PM10 funding.
- Any required internal exceptions or waivers to apply this cap are solely the responsibility of the institution.
- PM10 will not increase its indirect cost rate above 20% in response to institutional policies or internal approval processes.
- PM10 may request reasonable substantiation of an institution's indirect cost rate and the calculation of indirect costs included in the budget.

4.3 Sub-awards and pass through funding

Where a PM10-funded project includes sub-awards or subcontracts, PM10's 20% indirect cost cap applies separately to each institution's share of PM10 funds. Indirect costs are not to be charged on funds that are largely passed through to other organisations beyond the level reasonably attributable to managing the sub-awards.

Where PM10 specifies an amount or proportion of its funding to be paid to a named sub-awardee, the primary institution is not to charge its own indirect costs on that specified amount. That amount is to be passed through in full, with any indirect costs for that sub-awardee coming from the sub-awardee's own share within the overall 20% cap.

5. Allocation within the university

PM10 does not dictate how a university allocates funds internally between central administration and the department, school or laboratory conducting the research. However, the following conditions apply to all PM10-funded budgets:

- At least 80% of PM10's total cash contribution must be budgeted as direct costs within the department or laboratory delivering the project, including research staff salaries, higher degree student support, and project-linked scholarships or fellowships.
- The remaining share (up to 20%) may be taken as indirect costs, consistent with the cap in section 4.

Project-linked scholarships or fellowships funded under these guidelines are to be treated as direct support to the host department and are not to be subject to additional institutional indirect cost rates.

Where PM10 chooses to provide support beyond the agreed core project budget, it will ordinarily do so through additional direct funding to the department or laboratory (for example, project linked scholarships or fellowships) rather than by increasing the indirect cost rate above the 20% cap in section 4.

6. Budget and proposal requirements

Proposals submitted to PM10 must include:

1. A brief project summary and objectives.
2. A structured work plan with tasks, milestones and timelines.
3. An itemised budget that:
 - distinguishes direct and indirect costs
 - states the indirect cost rate and the base to which it is applied
 - shows personnel effort by role
 - identifies major equipment and any specialised facilities to be used
4. A short description of the institution's own indirect cost/F&A policy relevant to the proposed work, including whether an internal exception or waiver is required to apply the 20% cap.
5. Identification of any proposed sub-awards or subcontracts funded from PM10's contribution, including the proposed recipient institutions and the amounts to be allocated to each. All such sub-award and subcontract amounts are to be clearly identified as separate line items in the budget.

PM10 may request clarification or changes where budgets are unclear or where proposed indirect costs exceed these guidelines. PM10 will not approve budgets where its indirect cost cap is not met.

7. Intellectual property and licensing

Unless otherwise agreed in a written contract:

- Intellectual property created by university staff in the course of a PM10-funded project will be owned by the institution in accordance with its policies.
- PM10 will usually seek:
 - an exclusive or non-exclusive licence option in defined fields of use and territories; and/or
 - commercial terms (such as milestone payments, royalties or equity) that reflect industry practice, the value and maturity of the intellectual property, and PM10's contribution to research and development.

Indirect cost recovery on the research project does not determine licensing financial terms. Licence terms will be agreed separately through the institution's technology transfer office, taking into account factors such as patent position, market size, development and regulatory costs and PM10's overall investment.

8. Cost sharing, in-kind support and co-funding

PM10 is open to proposals that include:

- Institutional cost sharing (such as staff time, facilities or equipment access).

- Co-funding from public or philanthropic sources.
- In-kind contributions from industry partners (such as access to operational sites for field trials).

Where third-party sponsors impose their own indirect cost limits, institutions should structure budgets so that PM10's indirect cost caps in section 4 remain satisfied and PM10's funds can be separately identified.

9. Term, review and consistency

This policy:

- Is intended to operate as a standing sponsor guideline and not as a one-off, project-specific position.
- Applies in the same way to all universities and comparable research institutions, unless superseded by a later version issued by PM10.
- Will be reviewed from time to time and at least every three years, having regard to prevailing practice among major research funders and universities.

For any particular award, the version of these guidelines in effect on the date of PM10's formal funding commitment will apply.

10. Contact

Enquiries about these guidelines or specific proposals should be directed to:

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