Research Infrastructure Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The Research Infrastructure (RI) at Dundalk Institute of Technology, hereinafter referred to as the 'Institute', is of key importance in underpinning the research agenda within the Institute and enabling staff to undertake their research. The Institute possesses a range of RI which are located throughout the campus and whose long term sustainability must be assured through the development of a suitable sustainable funding model to ensure that it will remain operative and effective over its planned lifetime.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity regarding the ownership and management of RI within the Institute so as to enable its short, medium and long term sustainability.

3. DEFINITIONS

The term "Research Infrastructure" refers to the facilities, resources and related services used by the Institute's community to conduct research in their respective fields. RI may be physically located on the campus, off campus or it may also be virtual (i.e. the service is provided digitally).

Examples of RI include, but not limited to:

- singular research centres (i.e. SMRC);
- collections (i.e. historic collections);
- digital archives (i.e. library digital archives);
- research databases;
- biological archives (i.e. cell culture collections);
- integrated arrays of small research installations;
- enabling ICT – based infrastructures;
- 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).

The term "DkIT Research Infrastructure" (DkIT RI) refers to Research Infrastructure that is owned by the Institute as per the "Ownership" clause in the Policy Statement section below.

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

"Access Charges" refers to the fee charged to users for access to RI which contributes to the financial sustainability of the RI.

"Access Charge Plan" refers to the factors to be taken into consideration when calculating the access charge and they include the maintenance and operational costs of the equipment and the necessary

human technical resources. The objective of the Access Charge Plan is not to generate a profit, but to provide a contribution towards the operational and running costs of the RI.

4. SCOPE

This is a Institute wide policy and applies to all DkIT RI with the following exceptions:

a) RI owned by a third party which is located at the Institute;

b) DkIT RI physically located elsewhere and managed according to the rules of a host institution; and

c) Instrumentation or facilities exclusively used for teaching and learning purposes.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Ownership
The Institute owns the title to all research infrastructure that:

a) has been purchased with exchequer or non-exchequer funds awarded to the Institute via central funds or individual research awards; or

b) has been donated to the Institute by an external stakeholder

Ownership applies regardless of the responsibility for its management, access arrangements or the source of funding.

Funding source and means of acquisition
The investment that enabled the acquisition of the DkIT RI can be:

- Exchequer or non-exchequer funding;
- Funds allocated by the Institute;
- cash or in-kind;
- awarded to a single individual or a group of staff members or to the Institute as an institution; or
- donated to the Institute by an external stakeholder.

Location
The RI maybe located on the Institute's campus or located outside the Institute and managed according to the rules of the host institution. In such cases as the latter an appropriate agreement with the hosting institution must be put in place.

Scale
DkIT RI ranges from items of relatively low value to equipment and facilities that require sizeable investment.

Access

DkIT RI can be accessed by academic and research staff (internal and external to the Institute) as well as by other stakeholders (e.g. industry) when appropriate, provided that, if required, the users have obtained appropriate ethical approval for their activities in accordance with the most recent revision of the Helsinki Declaration of 1975; and that all data gathered, processed and/or stored is done in compliance with the latest data protection legislation in Ireland and the EU data protection directive (see Related Documentation section below).

Management of RI

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

Management Models

Institute approval for RI access by external academic / industry partners must first be approved by the Research Office. DkIT 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 local unit level (i.e. a Research Centre or School) and accessed by a variety of groups and individuals (hereinafter referred to as *"Departmental RI")*; or

Access Charges

Regardless of the management arrangements, the calculation and implementation of access charges must be done in consultation with the Research 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 external funding proposals 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 will be managed through the Research Office.

Acquisition Procedures and Disposal

The purchase, acquisition and disposal of RI must adhere to the Institute's Procurement Policy, and Fixed Assets Policy. Any member of staff intending to purchase any piece of equipment which may have space implications that may require technical support or may already exist on campus must first obtain Institute approval from the Research Office so as 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.

Transfer of Institute RI to another Host Institution

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

1. At no time will title to equipment vested in the Institute be transferred directly to the terminating staff member.

2. Transfer of equipment may be considered when:

   a) It is or was the specific intent of the donor that the equipment is or was to support the work of the terminating staff member rather than a program of the Institute and the equipment ownership should be transferred to the institution to which the staff member is moving.

   b) The equipment was purchased from funds supporting an on-going programme that the donor or granting agency will continue at the new employing institution.

In all cases due consideration to the remaining users' needs must be exercised and due diligence to determine such need must be exercised.

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 the Institute Fixed Assets Policy, and an appropriate agreement for the Transfer of Equipment must be executed in advance of the transfer. The person responsible for determining whether a piece of equipment should be transferred or not is the Head of Research.

Transfer of RI to the Institute from another Host Institution

The Institute 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 must liaise with the Head of Research to ensure appropriate written agreement with the donor institution is put in place, stipulating the terms and conditions of the transfer.

6. 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) is responsible for the management of such.

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 Institute 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 in good working order to generate results of high verifiable standards;

e) the purchase and disposal procedures for the RI comply with existing Institute policies

f) usage records are maintained;

g) the RI is managed in compliance with this policy; and

h) that appropriate insurance is in place to cover visiting researchers and to protect the Institute from any liability resulting from the usage of the equipment.

In such cases when individually managed infrastructure ceases to be of use to the responsible person the responsible person must liaise with the Head of Research in a timely manner, to ensure that the RI is either disposed or that the responsibility for the management of the RI is appropriately transferred.

7. LIABILITY

In no event shall the Institute be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, special, exemplary, or consequential damages (including but not limited to procurement of substitute goods or services, loss of use, data, or profits, or business interruption) arising in any way out of the use of this infrastructure and use of the materials provided therein, even if advised of the possibility of such damage. Access to the research infrastructure provided by the Institute is provided solely for the purposes of research, education, and scientific discovery. The use of this infrastructure for any other purpose is strictly

prohibited. The Institute of Technology does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of any data or information obtained through the use of this infrastructure. The infrastructure is provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including but not limited to the warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and non-infringement.By accessing this infrastructure, the user will acknowledge and agree to abide by all relevant laws and regulations, as well as the policies and procedures established by the Institute. The user will be responsible for ensuring that their use of the infrastructure does not violate any applicable laws (i.e. Export Control legislation) regulations, or policies.Access to this infrastructure may be revoked at any time without notice, at the discretion of the Institute.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTATION

#	DkIT Documents	Contact Unit
1.	Procurement Policy	Finance Office
2.	Fixed Asset Policy and Procedure	Finance Office
3.	Intellectual Property Policy	Technology Transfer Office

#	Other Reference Documents (External)	Web Link
4.	Declaration of Helsinki	http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/
5.	Data Protection Acts Ireland	https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Law-On-Data-Protection/m/795.htm
6.	EU Data Protection Directive	http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/
7.	National principles for access to research infrastructure	http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/09/NATIONAL-PRINCIPLES-FOR-ACCESS-TO-RESEARCH-INFRASTRUCTURE.pdf

8. CONTACTS

All queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Research Office.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at 5 year intervals.

10. VERSION CONTROL

Document Name	Research Infrastructure Policy
Version Reference	2.0
Document Owner	Research Office
Approved by	Academic Council
	Academic Council (Meeting No. 188; Motion: 188.20; Document(s): AC:DOC:188:12:01),
Date	20/06/2023