

Policy Title: Discretionary Spending Policy

Policy ID: N/A

Status: Final

Original Policy Date: N/A

Last Revised:

Oversight Executive: Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs

Applies To: All faculty with SDS discretionary funds

Publicize Policy?: Yes

Reason for Policy: The School of Data Science promotes transparency about the funding sources available to faculty and how these funds may be used.

Policy Statement:

In general, discretionary spending can be used for work-related expenses, student or staff effort coverage, computational equipment or expenses, work-related travel (per travel policy), or academic expenses.

Discretionary funds can be used to support family/companion travel expenses if their travel directly or indirectly supplements or supports work-related activities (e.g., childcare while at a conference supplied by a non-family member, travel for accompanying minor(s) when no other option exists, or arrangements for minor care while traveling out of town).

Tangible items purchased with discretionary funds are considered property of the University in accordance with [PRM-016](#). Home office furniture purchases, except for computing equipment, are generally prohibited. However, they may be approved by the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs (AD) in special circumstances (e.g., when faculty or their research personnel are 100% remote).

There are three sources of discretionary funds, and restrictions vary by source. Specifically,

A. *General discretionary funds*

1. These funds may be used for faculty effort and fringe (e.g., summer wages or colleague effort support).
2. These funds do not expire.

B. *Endowed discretionary funds*

1. These funds may be used for faculty effort and fringe (e.g., summer wages or colleague effort support).
2. These funds expire; the expiration date is specified in the appointment letter.

C. *Start-Up discretionary funds*

1. These funds cannot be used for faculty effort and fringe (e.g., summer wages or colleague effort support is not allowed).
2. Start-up funds expire five (5) years after the faculty member's start date. Up to \$15,000 of unused start-up funds will automatically be converted to *general discretionary funds*.

3. The expiration date may be extended with approval from the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs. To request an extension, faculty must write to the AD during their last year of start-up funding and justify the need for an extension.

Note: As a matter of policy, the School of Data Science wants faculty to spend their start-up funds to promote and support their research agendas. The school realizes that sometimes those funds must be extended over a longer period, and in such cases, the extension of start-up funds is generally warranted. However, the School discourages faculty from saving significant discretionary funds “for a rainy day”. In cases where large amounts of discretionary funds have not been spent, the AD will likely only approve an extension for a smaller fraction of the funds.

Procedures:

Any exceptions or clarifications to this policy must be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs and resolved with documentation *before* any funds are spent.

Next Scheduled Review: Fall 2025

Approved by Date: Reviewed by Academic Committee 10/22/24

Supersedes (previous policy date): N/A