Douglas Research Centre

Research Space Use Policy & Guidelines

Last updated: February 2024

Preamble

The Douglas Research Centre (DRC) is committed to facilitating the research and academic activities of active researchers. Space is provided to the DRC is provided at no charge by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute (an installation of the Montreal West Island Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre; MWI IUHSSC).

As such, anyone using space located at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute must follow the guidelines and policies established by the MWI IUHSSC as well as the DRC.

The DRC employs a diverse array of researchers at varying levels of career development and with distinct operational needs. The DRC strives to facilitate and support the work and development of all researchers and has updated this policy to promote good faith decision making based on ensuring sound operations and ongoing growth of the centre.

Given the limited physical spaces available within the DRC, spaces will be allocated based on the following guiding principles:

Facilitating current active research & needs:

- Space resources are allocated based on actual needs to accomplish currently active, current research activities.

Equity:

- Space resources are allocated in a logical and equitable manner based on the guidelines.

Consensus and good faith :

- Decisions will be made in good faith, with a focus on consensus striving for fair and equitable outcomes.

Ownership:

- Space is owned by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute (DMHUI) and managed by the Administration of the DRC; individual researchers, staff and students using the space must abide by the policies, guidelines established by these organizations.

Terms of use of designated research space

- Research space is assigned for use by a researcher on an annual basis. Spaces are not assigned in perpetuity.
- Space use is determined based on operational needs; space usage may be reassessed throughout the year based on operational needs and in situations of significant changes of circumstances (e.g. substantial changes in funding, misuse of space etc)
- Spaces cannot be reassigned by anyone other than the DRC Administration (e.g. in cases of departure or vacant spaces); research space allocations are determined by the established procedure (outlined in this policy)
- Researchers may not reassign spaces to other researchers.

Space Allocations:

Base Allocation:

Each regular, full (category 1 or 2 researcher) is assigned the following base space allocation *(note: associate researchers are not entitled to dedicated space)*:

- One research office for their use ("researcher or PI" office)
- One workspace for use by a staff member or student

Recruitment of new researchers:

- During the recruitment process, space will be identified for new researchers in collaboration with the Division/TBG leader, Scientific Director and the DRC Administration in accordance with the guidelines established in this policy.

Additional space allocations:

Allocations for additional space are based on actual need to conduct currently active research projects (including conducting research and academic teaching). The following guidelines will be used to allocate spaces to researchers for their use.

Guidelines for additional space allocations:

- Additional spaces will be allocated based on the following:
  - Actual needs to conduct research or student supervision. Work that can or will be conducted virtually will not be considered for physical office space. Space must be used to conduct actual work (not storage of materials) and;
  - If required (as a secondary factor if required) amount of active funding (see appendix A)

Space in DRC Facilities

- The Animal Facility User Committee and CIC User Committee may manage allocations within their respective facilities. In cases of conflict (e.g. a user is not satisfied with a decision made by the committee) they may appeal the decision to the Advisory Committee via Division/TBG leader as outlined in the conflict resolution section of this policy.

Retention of research documents, equipment and storage space

- The DRC not responsible for maintaining or storage of any personal belongings (including furniture and equipment). The DRC is not liable for any loss or damage to personal items brought onto the premises.
- Usable office spaces cannot be used for storage purposes, storage space will be made available for materials and equipment that must be retained and cannot be digitized (equipment that is beyond its usable life, or, materials that are beyond their required retention date will not be stored and will be discarded),
- Each researcher is responsible for maintaining their research files and records in accordance with REB approvals; this includes destruction of research records and samples after the designated destruction date. The DRC is not responsible for storage of research materials beyond their designated destruction date and may discard, at their discretion with validation from the Research Ethics Board (REB), of any materials that are beyond this date.

- Prior to destruction or movement of materials (data, personal materials or equipment), the DRC will make three attempts to contact the researcher responsible. Researchers have 14 working days from the date of contact to respond and make appropriate arrangements. After the third attempt to contact, if there is no response, materials will be discarded or moved at the discretion of the DRC.
- If a researcher decides to keep records, materials or equipment beyond the designated retention period, it is their responsibility to find a space for it within their designated base allocation (e.g. their office).

Amending Space Allocations - increases:

Requests for additional space will be assessed based on the following:

1. Justifiable need; the space must be needed to carry out current and active research projects or academic teaching and cannot be accommodated in existing space
2. Justification that the work must be done onsite
3. Amount of current, active research funding (not including infrastructure funding or funding that does not contribute to DRC overhead or indirect costs)

Amending Space Allocations - reductions:

In general, space allocations will not be arbitrarily reduced during the authorized use of space period unless there is an operational need to do so (including: misuse of space, recruitment of new researchers, significant new research funding requiring additional/specific space). Reductions in space allocations will be made based on the following considerations.

1. Lack of actual use (situations where the space is not being actively used)
2. Misuse (using the space for purposes other than carrying out current research training/not following the procedures and policies of the MWIHUSSC or DRC; e.g. storage of personal materials, old/broken equipment)
3. Use of spaces that have not been formally or officially attributed to the researcher (e.g. squatting)
4. Safety/security (space is not being used safely)
5. Request from the MWI UHSSC (owners of the space)
6. Reduction, loss or absence of currently active research funding (e.g. no active research funding/budgets at DRC)

General procedure:

- The DRC Administration maintains a registry of space allocations; this is the official record of space allocations.
- In April of each year, researchers will be provided a written notice confirming their space allocation for the following 12 months (space may be reallocated during the 12-month period if required as noted in section “Amending space allocations”)
- Requests for additional spaces/changes must be made via the Space Request Form found here:
- https://forms.office.com/r/2PDAgZwADU
    - Once received, the request will be assessed by the DRC administration in consultation with the Advisory Committee
    - If a proposed solution is available that does not impact other researchers, the new space will be confirmed in writing to the requestor via updated space allocation letter
    - If a proposed solution requires displacing or amending existing allocations (e.g. requires a researcher to relocate from a designated space), a mutually agreeable solution will be sought between all parties to facilitate the research needs based on the guiding principle of actual need and operational logistics.
- The new space allocation will be in effect until the March 31st /renewal period of the following year.

- The DRC Administration reserves the right to assess and audit space usage throughout the year

Conflict resolution:

- In situations where a researcher is not satisfied with the decision of the Administration & Advisory Committee with regards to space, they can appeal the decision to the DRC Executive Committee via their TBG Leader
- All space allocation decisions made by the DRC Executive Committee are final

Responsibilities:

PI responsibilities:

- Using the space allocated to them for the purposes intended (conducting research) and in a safe and responsible manner.
- Respecting policies of the DRC, Douglas Institute/Montreal West Island University Health and Social Services Centre.
- Providing honest and truthful information about their space usage and needs
- Responding and communicating in a timely manner

Advisory Committee responsibilities:

- Applying the policy within the guiding principles acting in good faith.
- Absolving themselves from decisions for which they have a clear conflict of interest.
- Finding mutually agreeable solutions wherever possible.

Executive Committees:

- Adopting and updating the space policy as required.
- Resolving conflicts that cannot be resolved via the Advisory Committee.
- Overseeing and supporting the operations of the policy and procedure.

Douglas Research Centre Administration:

- Overseeing space usage, implementation of this policy
- Maintaining documentation including space registry

Douglas Institute/Montreal West Island : Ownership

- As owners and operators of the physical spaces, the Douglas Institute had ultimate discretion with regards to space usage.

Appendix A: Active Funding Guidelines

To support decision making in situations where a consensus is not possible, and in keeping with parameters established in the previous space allocation policy, the amount of currently active funding will be used as a guideline to substantiate space allocations.

Note: "active" funding includes funding that contributes to DRC overhead through indirect costs; funding that does not provide any indirect costs is not considered as "active funding".

Active Funding Allocation Guideline: Office/dry lab spaces

Funding from	To	Additional office seats
-	$ 10,000	1 (base)
$ 10,001	$ 100,000	2
$100,001	$ 175,000	2.5
$ 175,001	$250,000	3
$250,001	$400,000	3.5
$ 400,001	$600,000	4
$ 600,001	$1 000 000	4.5
$ 1 000 001	$ 2 000 000	5.5
$ 2 000 001	--	6.5

Active Funding Allocation Guideline: Wet lab space

Funding from	To	Wet lab number of seats
_	$ 25,000	_
$ 25,001	$ 150,000	2
$ 150,001	$ 250,000	3
$ 250,001	$ 400,000	4
$ 400,001	$ 600,000	6
$ 600,001	$ 900,000	8
$ 900,001	$1,200,000	10
$1,200,001	$ 2,000,000	14