Unfunded Agreements (UFAs)

What is an “Unfunded Agreement?”

Informally, an unfunded agreement refers to a research-related agreement that does not have incoming dollars attached. U-M faculty researchers often engage in activities or collaborations that do not involve payment from Sponsors. These activities may include preliminary confidential discussions with potential research sponsors, requests for research materials from external sources, or data sharing consortiums made up of one or more scientists or institutions.

What are unfunded research activities?

Unfunded research activities are generally carried out under written contracts that set out each of the parties' expectations and specific responsibilities. Coordination of unfunded research activities can be complex, and some may require university approvals for the use of university property and space, faculty effort, students, or compliance committee approvals for protocols involving human or animal subjects.

UFAs are integrated into eRPM to allow the research community to more easily link corresponding agreements, monitor the status of UFA requests, and communicate with administrative home and central offices.

What are and who handles the different kinds of unfunded agreements?

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<th>Type of Agreement</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Handled by</th>
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| Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) | An NDA ensures that discussions are kept confidential during the time in which the interest parties determine if they should conduct or pursue future sponsored activity. These agreements are commonly referred to as non-disclosure agreements (NDA), confidentiality agreements (CDA), or proprietary information agreements (PIA). | - NDAs where only the sponsor is disclosing confidential information are typically handled by ORSP.  
- NDAs where only U-M is disclosing confidential information are typically handled by Tech Transfer.  
- Mutual NDAs where either U-M or the sponsor may disclose confidential information are typically handled by ORSP. |

| Data Use Agreements (DUAs) | A DUA is needed any time there will be a transfer of data, a dataset or software that is non-public or is otherwise subject to restrictions on its use. A DUA can generally be distinguished from an NDA | - are handled by ORSP. |
In that the data is the focus of, or a necessary component of, a research project. A DUA may or may not consist of human subject data. For further information on data sharing, please contact Alex Kanous by email at akanous@umich.edu or by phone at (734) 615-8552. Examples of DUAs include:

- Data sharing agreements
- Data license agreements
- Access agreements
- Business Associate Agreements (BAA)

### Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs)

An MTA is a type of agreement used to cover the activity of sending or receiving of physical materials to or from an outside entity. For further information about MTAs, please refer to the [Tech Transfer MTA website](#).

- are handled by Tech Transfer.

### Other Agreements

This category is a catchall for UFAs that do not fall into the above categories. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Teaming agreements
- Memoranda of understanding
- Unfunded collaboration agreements
- Facility access agreements
- Visiting researcher agreements
- Vehicle and equipment loan agreements

With the following exception, ORSP handles all other unfunded agreement types.

- Unfunded international agreements meant to formalize institutional relationships between U-M and a foreign partner (e.g., international education or affiliation agreements, student mobility programs, and visiting scholar arrangements) should be processed through the Office of the Vice Provost for Global and Engaged Education using the process described at [global.umich.edu/admin-tools/checklists-agreements](#). Unfunded international agreements that are specific to a research topic, or meant to establish a collaboration between individual faculty members or teams of investigators, should still be processed through ORSP.
How does this process work in eResearch?

The new process provides value and reduces effort and waste in a number of ways.

- **Familiar Format** - The newly designed UFA system functions much like Proposal Approval Forms (PAFs) used to route sponsored research proposals in eRPM. Each type of UFA is an electronic smart form in eRPM (similar to the PAF worksheet) that is used to obtain administrative approval for an unfunded activity.

- **Streamlined Workflow** - Research Administrators and Principal Investigators no longer need to identify a central office project representative for UFAs. The UFA system routes your agreement based on smart form input. Because the routing system is electronic, Research Administrators and Principal Investigators will no longer be responsible for looking up and designating a project representative.

- **Paperless** - The UFA system uses a smart form that eliminates the need to route paper. There will be no need to complete a material transfer form nor a need to obtain written signatures from the units or schools before submitting the request via eRPM.

- **Broader Visibility and Access** - As with PAFs, the approval status, agreement revisions and correspondence will be visible in the record. Track status of approvals, review and monitor negotiation activity, and upload communications and documents directly into the UFA file.

- **Downloadable Templates** - In an effort to better serve the research community and save them time and effort, ORSP is providing [downloadable standard agreement templates](#).