Instrument Use Policy

Sept 12, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Portable field recording equipment and field computers purchased by the PASSCAL Program are available to any research or educational institution to use for research purposes within the guidelines established in this document. The intent of these guidelines is to establish the procedures to enable investigators to request the instruments, to let them know what requirements and responsibilities are incurred in borrowing the equipment and to know when and how the decisions on instrument allocation will be made.

The efficient use of the instruments will require close cooperation among all of the parties involved. The Principal Investigator is encouraged to contact the PASSCAL Program Manager about any planned experiment during the proposal development stage in order to determine if there are any problems in operating the equipment in the environment called for in the experiment. It is also important for everyone to know of possible schedule conflicts as early as possible. Open communications will allow the development of alternative plans early in the scheduling process.

The PASSCAL instrumentation and associated services are provided, without charge, as part of the facility support developed by IRIS through funding from the Instrumentation and Facilities Program, Earth Sciences Division, National Science Foundation, with additional equipment provided through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, the Office of Nonproliferation Research & Engineering of the Department of Energy and the Office of Basic Energy Sciences of the Department of Energy. As a community resource, IRIS and NSF rely on the individual PIs to conform to a limited number of rules and conditions related to the use of PASSCAL instruments, to treat the instruments with care and respect, and to acknowledge the support that is provided. Only through your continued support and feedback will IRIS be able to develop and expand the services it provides for seismological research.

PASSCAL publishes an inventory of all of its equipment through the PASSCAL website (https://www.passcal.nmt.edu). This inventory includes all data loggers, sensors, field computers and major ancillary equipment. A description of the capabilities of the various pieces of equipment is available with the inventory as well as a copy of the current instrument schedule.

PROCEDURE FOR BORROWING INSTRUMENTS

Any research or educational institution may request the use of the equipment for experiments of scientific merit. The initial request will be submitted to the IRIS via forms on the PASSCAL website using the Instrument Request Form.

The initial request should be sent to IRIS at the time the proposal is sent to the funding agency.

Each request will as a minimum contain the following information:

1. A short description of the experiment to be conducted; including any unusual field conditions that may be encountered;
2. The location of the experiment (latitude - longitude as well as an estimate of the aerial extent);
3. Dates that the equipment will ship from and be returned to the IRIS PASSCAL Instrument Center. Include additional information on any extenuating circumstances which may make it impossible to slide the date forward or backward;
4. The types and number of pieces of equipment requested for the experiment;
5. An estimate of the amount of data to be gathered and archived;
6. A notification of any special support that may be required;
7. The name of the funding agency and status of the funding support; and
8. A mailing address, email address, phone and fax numbers for the designated contact person for this experiment.

SCHEDULING

The schedule is determined in the fall of each year for the next year. If conflicts exist, a committee of impartial members from the PASSCAL Standing Committee along with any interested representatives from the National Science Foundation will meet to make the final determinations. Only experiments with established funding will be entered into the schedule. Priorities will be set in the following order:

1. Programs funded by the Earth Sciences Division of NSF or by the Office of Nonproliferation Research & Engineering of the Department of Energy;
2. Programs funded by other divisions of NSF;
3. Programs funded by other US government agencies; and
4. Other programs.

All other conditions being equal, the highest priority will go to experiments with the earliest funding dates, then the earliest request dates. The goal of the scheduling is to optimize the use of the instruments, and accommodate as many experiments as possible. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to negotiate with the PI the exact type and number of instruments or to move the scheduled time of the experiment.

IRIS will publish the schedule for the coming year as soon as the committee recommendations are completed and approved by the President of IRIS. Once the experiment has been scheduled, the PI will be contacted to work out the details about the exact type of equipment, the ancillary equipment and the field support personnel who will be assigned to the experiment. At this point the PI will also have to start working with PASSCAL to provide information to the Data Management System about the experiment and the data delivery.

Experiments that receive funding after January 1 will be entered into the schedule so as not to interfere with previously approved experiments. Requests can be made for instruments at any time during the year, and they will be made available to users as the schedule permits. If an experiment cannot go in its allocated slot for some reason it goes to the back of the line unless:

1. The PI's in affected experiments voluntarily agree to delay or modify the experiment schedule, or
2. The applicable NSF and/or DOE Program Manager(s) decides that the delayed experiment takes priority over one of their subsequent experiments.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR COMMITMENTS

Investigators borrowing instruments will be required to meet the following conditions:

1. Copies of all data sets acquired with the instruments will be made available to the IRIS Data Management Center in accordance with the PASSCAL Data Delivery Policy. The delivery of the data is considered the equivalent of delivery of a final report.
2. The PI and key experiment personnel are required to attend an Experiment Planning Session at the PASSCAL Instrument Center. At this session they will work with the PASSCAL personnel to finalize the operational plans for the experiment and receive training on the recording instruments and the field computers. This is necessary even for repeat users, as equipment and software are being upgraded continuously.
3. Experiments should budget to pay travel expenses for personnel from the PASSCAL Instrument Center to accompany the equipment to the field to insure that the equipment is functioning properly and to provide additional in-field training to the experiment personnel. This personnel support,
which can be requested by the PI or at the discretion of PASSCAL, is intended to be short-term support to insure that the experiment can start collecting useful data in a timely manner. Experiments with very large numbers of instrument (> 100) or other special requirements should be prepared to pay for more than one person to come to the field. The final arrangements for support will be negotiated after the experiment is on the schedule.

4. The experiment will be responsible for all shipping costs and duties which may be incurred in getting the equipment to and from the field site. The PASSCAL Instrument Centers provide advice, documentation and other support in this effort. For international experiments the PI is responsible for making all shipping and customs arrangements and paying any fees involved.

5. The PI is responsible to see that the equipment is returned to the appropriate instrument center on the date specified. In the case of foreign experiments, the PI will have at least one person in country overseeing the customs and shipping efforts until the equipment has cleared customs and is in transit back to the US.

6. The investigators will be responsible for loss or damage that occurs as a result of negligence or improper handling of the equipment. IRIS will carry an insurance policy on all of the equipment but this is intended to cover major losses due to theft or accident.

7. Immediately after the fieldwork has been completed, the PI will submit a short report summarizing the field portion of the experiment. This report will contain the following:
   - A short description of the completed field experiment;
   - A list of station locations;
   - A summary of the data collected as well as any unusual events which may be included;
   - A description of problems encountered with either the hardware or the software furnished by the PASSCAL program; and
   - Recommendations for further improvement in the facility.

8. Acknowledgment - In any publications or reports resulting from the use of these instruments, please include the following statement in the acknowledgment section. You are also encouraged to acknowledge NSF and IRIS in any contacts with the news media or in general articles.

   “The instruments used in the field program were provided by the PASSCAL facility of the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS) through the PASSCAL Instrument Center at New Mexico Tech. Data collected during this experiment will be available through the IRIS Data Management Center. The facilities of the IRIS Consortium are supported by the National Science Foundation under Cooperative Agreement EAR-0552316 and by the Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration.”

9. The Principal Investigator must sign and return a PI Acknowledgement Form such as the one attached below.

Please provide IRIS with copies of any publications related to your experiment.

**IRIS COMMITMENT**

IRIS/PASSCAL will provide the following services to the experiment:

1. The equipment will be ready to ship from the instrument center on the date specified.
2. Appropriate technical support as negotiated with the PI during planning. IRIS will contract for the salaries for the support personnel, but it is up to the experiment to pay any travel costs for these personnel.
3. Maintenance on units that malfunction in the field. IRIS will attempt to repair or replace the equipment as quickly as possible.
4. Computer support in the form of a full capability field computer that will be located at the PASSCAL Instrument Center. This system, which may be in addition to the field computer provided for use during the field experiment, is to help investigators who do not have access to a field computer to
5. IRIS will provide system support to help investigators install IRIS-developed non-proprietary field computer software on the PI's own compatible systems.

This policy is effective as of September 12, 2006 and is subject to change and revision as needs dictate.

Related categories: Global PASSCAL Instrument Use Policy Policy

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