

CRC-P2: Hardware Investing Policy

Adopted on: 10/22/24

Purpose: This policy outlines the framework for investing in the research computing clusters at the University of Pittsburgh. The goal is to provide a sustainable computing environment for researchers by balancing ease-of-use with delivering a level of service that incentivizes integration into a central cluster environment.

Scope: This policy applies to all investors who use the research computing clusters at the University of Pittsburgh.

Definitions:

- **Research computing clusters:** computing hardware and supporting software that has been paid for by a university entity or in whole or part by grants or contracts in support of individual principal investigators but is centrally located and maintained and available to other university approved users. Formal ownership of the computing hardware will not be affected by incorporation in central computing clusters.
- **Service Unit:** One service unit equals one CPU core hour or the equivalent GPU card time.

Policy:

- **Ownership:** Investigators can become investors by contributing funds towards capital equipment for computational resources through grants, startup or departmental funds, and/or other funding sources. These resources are integrated into the central cluster and made available to the broader community.
- **Allocation:** Investors receive an allocation of service units equivalent to 100% of the purchased hardware's computational resources over a 5-year period. This allocation is available for 7 years and lost if unused. Service units can be applied to all research computing clusters.
- **Access:** General access is available to the university community on a first-come, first-served basis. Investors' jobs receive higher priority.
- **Subsidies:** The University provides subsidies to keep costs affordable for researchers and to incentivize the use of a centrally managed research computing and data environment. These subsidies cover the costs of supporting infrastructure, power and cooling, data center space, system support, security monitoring, and hardware and software updates.

- **Hardware Acquisition:** The Center for Research Computing (CRC) will consult and provide hardware purchase recommendations based on owners' needs, budget, and compatibility with CRC's ecosystem. The CRC will order, install, and configure purchased equipment within one month of delivery to the Pitt datacenter.
- **Hardware Lifecycle:** Nodes are purchased with a 5-year warranty and will remain in production for 5 years. After 5 years, the hardware will be repurposed or sent to university surplus.
- **Support:** The CRC team will respond to hardware and software issues within 1 business day. Requests for support are submitted through the CRC ticketing system. Resolution times may vary depending on the complexity of the issue and other factors.

Contact Information: For inquiries or to express interest in investing in the research computing clusters at the University of Pittsburgh, please contact the Center for Research Computing (CRC) by emailing crchd@pitt.edu.