

# Research Grant Handbook

Research Administration Procedures

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## Introduction

Research can be defined as original investigation, undertaken to gain new knowledge and understanding, which may be directed towards a specific aim or objective. A full definition is included in Appendix 1.

The term ‘Research Grant’ is usually restricted to research projects funded by the UK Research Councils, Charities and the Higher Education Funding Councils. All other externally financed research projects are classified as ‘Research Contracts’. In this document research grants and contracts will be collectively referred to as research projects.

## Research Services

Research Services (informally known as RSO) is part of the Division of Research and Enterprise Services and is managed by the Head of Research Services. RSO provides advice and guidance service in support of externally-funded research projects. Support includes:-

<p><u>Pre-award support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bid development</li> <li>- Funding opportunities</li> <li>- Costing support</li> <li>- Advice and training on funders, schemes etc.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Post-award support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Claims/invoicing</li> <li>- Advice on funders’ T &amp; C</li> <li>- Monitoring budgets and expenditure</li> <li>- Audits</li> </ul>	<p><u>Research Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pathways to impact</li> <li>- Impact case studies</li> <li>- Recording impact</li> <li>- Advice and training</li> </ul>
<p><u>Research Contracts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Risk management</li> <li>- Negotiation</li> <li>- Drafting</li> <li>- Advice</li> </ul>	<p><u>Research Integrity, Governance and Ethics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethics committees</li> <li>- Advice and training</li> <li>- Misconduct investigation</li> <li>- Approval process</li> <li>- Sponsorship</li> </ul>	<p><u>Research Information and Systems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pure (research information)</li> <li>- ACP (costing tool)</li> <li>- ResearchFish (outcomes)</li> <li>- Internal communications</li> <li>- Advice and training</li> </ul>

RSO also provides support for the Research Excellence Framework (or equivalent) and facilitates the work of both the University Research Committee and the University’s Research Ethics Committees.

## Proposal Development

All new proposals for externally funded research, regardless of value or funder, must be fully approved internally through the [ACP costing system](#) prior to submission to the funder. This requirement includes outline proposals and proposals submitted to the funder by another institution or organisation. The approval process at Lancaster has been set up specifically so that research proposals can be checked and reviewed to ensure that only high quality applications, which stand the best chance of success, are submitted by the university.

The university uses the Agresso ACP module as both a costing tool and for electronic approvals. Costings are prepared by RSO and Principal Investigators (PI) should automatically have access to the system to view costings once RSO have created them. ACP automatically distributes proposals for approval depending on the total amount of funding requested, current authorisation levels are shown in Appendix 2. Enquires about APC access should be directed to: [rso-submissions@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:rso-submissions@lancaster.ac.uk).

Information on ACP and user guides are available on the [RSO website](#). It is recommended that Principal Investigators request one-to-one training on ACP from Research Services.

PIs should [engage with colleagues in RSO](#) as early as possible in the application process so that a timetable can be agreed to support the application up to the funder deadline. Application and costing requests will be triaged by RSO to ensure project information is captured on systems for reporting and to ensure deadlines are met. Once a project has been fully costed in ACP the project should be reviewed, the case for support/proposal document uploaded and the governance checklist completed by the PI before the proposal is sent to the Head of Department (HoD) for approval.

The HoD reviews the proposal and completes the HoD checklist (in ACP) and the proposal moves up to the Dean of Faculty for the next stage of approvals, if appropriate as defined in Appendix 2.

In parallel with departmental and faculty approvals the PI should liaise with RSO to ensure that the funder's forms are completed correctly and in accordance with the funder's call specification. This may be in paper or electronic format. Once the proposal has been approved by the Dean and checked and validated by RSO, final institutional approval is sought from either the Director of Finance or the Vice Chancellor (if applicable).

It should be noted that a costing in ACP cannot be approved without reference to the actual proposal. ACP must be completed and it is then reviewed alongside the funder's proposal form which includes the budget being requested for the project as well any other accompanying documents e.g. letters of support, justification of resources, impact statement, data management plan, case for support. These documents can be uploaded to the ACP record.

Staff at Lancaster University have access to thousands of funding opportunities via the university's subscription to [RESEARCHconnect](#). This is a dedicated research funding facility, offering the latest calls from the UK, EU and international research funding landscapes.

Training for researchers on bid development is provided by Research Services in collaboration with colleagues across the university. Please contact your departmental [Research Development Officer](#) for more information.

Specialist advice, guidance and an approvals committee is in place for clinical research.

### Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to ensure that their application is fully approved before it is submitted to the funder. This includes all necessary documents uploaded to ACP and available to the relevant approvers in a timely manner to allow them to be reviewed alongside the costing. It is important that RSO has the full application, including justification of resources, case for support, letters of support, impact statements etc. to allow the application to be checked for errors and for ACP to be verified against the application to the funder.

It is especially important that there is time to allow for any amendments that may be required during the approval/review process. This may include referring the funder's forms back to the PI for amendment so it is essential that sufficient time is allowed for this to happen.

It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that the research will be conducted in line with the university ethics code of practice and that the ACP governance checklist is completed so that it can be reviewed by their HoD.

### Responsibilities of Approvers

Within the hierarchy of approvals, different authorisers will be looking at proposals from different perspectives. What follows are some broad guidelines (not exhaustive) that are intended to help focus the issues around authorisation for submission to the funder.

***The university needs to be aware of the full economic cost (fEC) and recovery rate to ensure that there is a balanced portfolio of projects undertaken in a sustainable manner. However, the fEC and the recovery rate of any research project is only one element of the project that is considered at the approval stage. Any one project will have a number of non-financial benefits to the university, for example, the project is important to the department's research strategy, the funder or scheme may be particularly prestigious, there may be an advantageous collaboration or the project may lead to further research.***

An Approvers Report is available in ACP which summarises the project costs and provides information to Approvers on the overall recovery rate, the proportion of directly incurred costs to income received and the estates and indirect costs due to the department.

**Head of Department** approves the proposal to confirm:

- They are satisfied with the quality of the proposal
- The proposal is consistent with the departmental research strategy
- The project can be delivered within available departmental resources or that the need for additional resources has been raised and agreed by the Dean
- Any institutional commitment within departmental control is fully agreed
- The ethical risk has been assessed by the PI (on the governance tab of ACP) and is appropriate to the project

The **Dean** approves the proposal to confirm:

- That the proposal is consistent with the faculty research strategy
- That the project can be delivered within available faculty resources or that the need for additional resources has been discussed and agreed by UPRG or other appropriate group
- That any institutional commitment within faculty control is fully agreed

**RSO** approves the proposal to confirm:

- The proposal is in line with the funder's terms and conditions and that the proposal forms are completed correctly
- Agreement of institutional match funding is recorded and evidenced (in emails etc.) for future reference and institutional information given in the proposal is correct
- All resources identified in the case for support/proposal are included in the costs on ACP
- Costs deemed ineligible by the funder are not included in the proposal price (even though they may be a part of the project costs on ACP)
- The costs included in the actual proposal form are consistent with those on ACP which have been approved by the HoD and the Dean where applicable
- VAT has been accounted for correctly both within the proposal and ACP e.g. VAT on sub-contracts or on proposals to commercial funders
- On collaborative projects the costs of collaborators are incorporated into the proposal and their approval has been given to Lancaster to submit the proposal on their behalf
- The proposal forms are signed by the relevant approver if a signature is required
- If necessary any non-standard terms and conditions have been reviewed by the contracts team
- Any ethical or other issues raised through the approval process are passed on as appropriate e.g. to the relevant research ethics committee

The RSO pre-award team can only carry out these checks effectively providing that sufficient time is allowed between receiving the completed proposal from the PI and the deadline for submission. PIs should take into account that there will be other proposals already in the RSO workflow and there may be a number for the same deadline. Once all checks have been completed the application may need to go to the Director of Finance and in some cases the Vice-Chancellor for final approval. If Dean level approval is the final level required proposals must still be confirmed for submission by the RSO to ensure these last checks are completed.

The **Director of Finance/Vice-Chancellor** approves and signs the proposal to confirm:

- That the proposal is consistent with the university strategy
- That any resource issues raised by the Dean have been resolved or that a clear process exists to resolve them
- That any institutional commitment is fully agreed

To allow time for proper consideration, the full proposal should be available to the RSO no later than **one week before the deadline for submission**.

## **Awarded Set-up**

### **Financial Approval**

Following formal notification of award, approved details are entered against the ACP proposal record as an 'awarded' costing type. If any details of the proposal have changed significantly since the original proposal this is resent for approval using the same authorisation levels.

### **Due Diligence**

At award a due diligence questionnaire is sent to some third parties to complete including a request for three years of financial accounts and evidence of policy documents. The responses are reviewed internally by a university assurance panel to consider the potential risks identified and any mitigating actions that have been agreed. An assessment on whether any preliminary due diligence needs to be completed at pre-award stage is taken by Research Services based on the type of organisation, its location and the university's experience with the partner.

### **Contract Negotiation**

Research contracts are first reviewed by the research development team for financial considerations before being forwarded to the [contracts team](#) or delegated departmental contact for review and negotiation. Grants are only started before a signed contract is received in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Head of Research Services after assessing the risk level.

### **Ethical Approval**

The PI is responsible to ensure ethical approvals, if required, are in place before research commences; including for research being undertaken by third parties. Proposals needing ethical review are identified on ACP by the PI which is checked by the Head of Department and Research Services. Following award notification the PI applies for [ethical approval](#) via the [appropriate Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#); this approval can also be gained pre-award if required. The committee reviews the application and any participant documentation giving feedback, comments and approval. The applicant may be required to discuss the application at a committee meeting and can be referred to the presiding University Research Ethics Committee if concerns remain.

### **Financial Set-up**

Once a formal award letter has been received by Research Services the grant is allocated an internal project number (7000 code) on the university's financial system (Agresso). Research Services is responsible for returning any start certificates and acceptance documents to the funder. The PI and relevant Departmental Officer(s) are informed of the project set-up with a link to relevant web guidance and useful information. The procurement team is informed of any awarded grants with equipment budgets greater than £25k.

**The PI is responsible for ensuring that research does not start before due diligence, contract negotiations and ethical considerations are all approved.**

## Post-Award Management

The day-to-day administration of research grants is carried out by the PI and their departments; the university advises that large and complex grants should include funding for a project administrator to assist with the workload. PIs are responsible for the financial management and integrity of their research projects in accordance with the funder's terms and conditions, university regulations and the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#). Advice and guidance is provided by Research Services through [central webpages](#) and departmental contacts; training is arranged with partners across the university in all elements of grant management, some of which is also available online.

### PIs must ensure that for each research grant they hold:

- They have read and understood the grant/contract terms and conditions of award
- Both funder and university procurement requirements are adhered to
- Timesheets are completed by relevant staff and authorised on a monthly basis when required
- Only legitimate costs that properly relate to the grant/contract and which are in accordance with the contract are charged to the project
- Potential cost overruns are notified to the HoD and the RSO as soon as they become apparent
- The research is conducted in an ethical manner in accordance with the University's code of conduct and the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)
- Interim and final reports are submitted to the funder on time

### Research Staff Recruitment

If staff are to be appointed on a research project a staff form will be completed by the department on Stonefish for new appointments or COREHR for contract amendments. This will be approved by the HoD and sent to the Dean and RSO for final approval before the post is advertised or a staff contract is amended by Human Resources.

RSO checks the details of the post requested and calculates the expected cost taking into account inflation and spinal point increases. Any shortfall between budgets and expected cost is discussed with the PI and department before the staff form is approved by a Post-Award Team Leader and sent to HR via the appropriate workflow.

### Financial Management

PIs are ultimately responsible for the financial management of their grants however support is provided by Research Services' Post-Award team, departmental staff, and faculty finance teams. The Post-Award team is responsible for initiating all invoicing and claims by the due date in accordance with the funder's terms and conditions. This is done in liaison with the PI to ensure eligibility of expenditure and full use of the available funds. Post-award also arrange and coordinate any grant audits that may be required either during the lifetime or after the final reporting period. Once all claims are made and final payments have been received Post-Award closes the grant, charging any overspends or ineligible expenditure to the appropriate departmental cost centre.

Expenditure monitoring can be undertaken by the PI at any time by using an [online Tableau report](#) of Agresso transactions. Grants are also reviewed by Post-Award at points during the grant including, when approving funds for new or amended staff contracts and during invoice or claim preparation.

## Research Integrity

All research involving staff and students should be conducted in line with the principles set out in the university's [Code of Practice](#) and shall at all times be legal and transparent following the principles set out in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#). Responsibility and accountability for research integrity is placed with the PI or Supervisor. These responsibilities include ensuring that all (i) grant milestones are met and reported, (ii) activities and expenditure are eligible within the funder terms and conditions, and (iii) research is conducted according to the approved ethical application. Any allegations of [research misconduct](#) are taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

## Reporting

Internal and external reporting requirements are supported through a central research information management system ([Pure](#)), contact [RSO Systems](#) for access problems and help using Pure or any of the [research systems](#). Research Services supports the reporting of information for internal university, faculty or departmental strategic planning, staff promotions and external reporting such as [HESA](#) and [HEBCI](#).

## Outputs

Support for disseminating research and the recording and monitoring of outputs in Pure is available from the [library](#). This information is used to report both internally and externally such as for the RCUK [ResearchFish](#) submission and the [Research Excellence Framework](#). Funding is available for some [open access fees](#).

## Impact

The [Pure Impact Module](#) assists researchers with the recording and monitoring of research impact, which is assessed in the [Research Excellence Framework](#). Advice, guidance and training are provided by the [impact team](#). The university funds competitive calls to support researchers [pursuing the wider impact of research](#). Researchers who require help with a [Pathways to Impact](#) statement forming part of a research proposal should contact their relevant [Research Development Officer](#).

## Non-RSO Support

Researchers are able to access support from professional services across the university. A non-exhaustive signposting list is below but if in doubt please contact a member of Research Services for help.

### Library

- [Disseminating Research](#) and [Open Access](#)
- [Research Data Management](#)
- [Academic Impact](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Scholarly resources](#)

### Procurement

### Information Security

- [Information Security Training](#)

### Health and Safety



## Appendix 1 – Definitions

### 1. Research Projects

#### 1.1 Definition

Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.<sup>1</sup> It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship<sup>2</sup>; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.

The term R&D covers three activities: basic research, applied research and experimental development.

**Basic research** is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.

**Applied research** is also original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective.

**Experimental development** is systematic work, drawing on existing knowledge gained from research and/or practical experience, which is directed to producing new materials, products or devices, to installing new processes, systems and services, or to improving substantially those already produced or installed.

The following activities are to be **excluded** from R&D except when carried out solely or primarily for the purposes of an R&D project: routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques, the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

In some cases the classification between 'research' and other activities may be border line. In such situations the work to be undertaken should be discussed with the Head of Department to determine the classification.

#### 1.2 Accounting for Research Projects

Research projects are costed on ACP and accounted for on a full-economic cost basis.

### 2. Teaching-based project

#### 2.1 Definition

A Teaching-based project is defined as the provision of teaching or training under external contract or outside the normal course of teaching duties. If such activity is expected to continue indefinitely then it should be budgeted as part of normal departmental activity.

<sup>1</sup> Frascati Manual 2015) <http://www.oecd.org/publications/frascati-manual-2015-9789264239012-en.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Scholarship is defined as the research imperatives involved in the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines. Scholarship is made accessible to present and future audiences in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues, websites, archives and contributions to major research databases.

## 2.2 Accounting for a Teaching-based project

Teaching-based projects should normally be costed and accounted for in the same way as a research grants. Unbudgeted surpluses or deficits at the end of the project should be accounted for in accordance with the relevant Faculty policy.

## 3. Consultancy Projects

### 3.1 Definition

Consultancy can be defined as expert advice or testing, which draws upon and applies the expertise of members of staff. It is unlike research in that it does not have as its prime purpose the generation of new knowledge and there is no academic output, such as publications in refereed journals. Consultancy contracts are usually short-term, from a day to a few months, and generally involve extra work for existing staff members rather than employment of new staff.

At Lancaster there are three types of consultancy:

- a) University consultancy
- b) Wholly Private consultancy

### 3.1 a) University Consultancy

The University is the contractor and the consultancy work is conducted within an individual member of staff's contract of employment.

Typical examples of University Consultancy may include:

- Projects and services arising from public tender processes or invitations
- Specific advice arising out of professional network affiliations
- Acting as an expert witness
- Laboratory and other testing of materials, devices, products or produce
- Data analysis

The distinction between research and consultancy is often a grey area. Some projects may be defined by the client as consultancy but the work is nonetheless sufficiently original that it meets the definition of research and the University can reasonably claim the contract within the various research returns made to HEFCE. In these cases the project/proposal should be considered as a 'research' project.

University Consultancy projects should normally be costed on ACP and accounted in accordance with the relevant Faculty policy.

### 3.1 b) Wholly Private Consultancy

If an individual staff member wishes to undertake wholly private consultancy that is not through LUCS then the consultancy services will involve a contract directly between the client and the individual member of staff. Private consultancy of this nature is assumed to be carried out within the freedom of academic employment and must be approved by the Head of Department.

It should be noted that:

1. A member of staff undertaking wholly private consultancy must confirm in writing to the client that they are NOT acting on behalf of the University (see letter approving private consultancy).
2. A member of staff undertaking wholly private consultancy may not use any University facilities, stationery, telecoms etc.
3. A member of staff undertaking wholly private consultancy is **NOT COVERED** by the University's professional indemnity policy.
4. The University has no interest in the conditions under which wholly private consultancy is conducted and has no claim on any income earned.

## Appendix 2 – Costing Approval Matrix

EXTERNAL FUNDING APPROVAL LIMITS			
RESEARCH PROPOSALS	Institutional Authority		
	HoD *	Dean/Equivalent *	Dir. Of Finance *
Research Councils (normal funding 80% of FEC)	≤ £250k	≤ £3M	All > £3M (**or which require matched funding and/or an institutional support letter to be approved by DoF and VC)
UK Government Departments (normally expected to be 80% FEC or above)	≤ £100k	≤ £2M	> £2M **
Private Sector (normally expected to be 80% FEC or above)	≤ £100k	≤ £1M	> £1M **
Charities (FEC recovery varies. Rate for charities eligible for HEFCE funding = price + HEFCE contribution)	≤ £100k	≤ £1M	> £1M **
European (H2020) (FEC recovery varies)	≤ £100k	≤ £2M	> £2M **
Other Research Funders (FEC recovery varies)	≤ £100k	≤ £1M	> £1M **
<b>NON-RESEARCH PROPOSALS</b>			
	HoD	Dean/Equivalent	Dir. Of Finance
Non-research projects - All Funders	≤ £100k	≤ £2M	> £2M **
* Research Institutes (RI)	PI's host department HoD approves up to above limits	Directors of RI approve as Dean equivalent (except where the Director is PI then PVC Research approves) up to above limits	DoF approves over above limits
A new project may require re-approved before it can be accepted if the amount awarded differs to that originally requested and approved, or the funder requests a revised budget prior to awarding the project. Re-approval is required if:			
1. fEC percentage recovery is reduced by more than 5%      2. Directly incurred costs are more than the amount awarded			
3. DA staff costs, estates or indirect costs are reduced by more than 10%      4. The funding will be used for a different purpose than originally planned and approved, or other significant change			
<b>Proposals exceeding these limits must be authorised by the Vice-Chancellor (or Deputy Vice-Chancellor in his absence)</b>			
Contractual documentation relating to proposals authorised under the above schedule of delegations will normally be signed on behalf of the University by the following list of delegated authorities.			
Senior Contract Officers	Contracts Manager or Head of Research Services	Director of Research and Enterprise	Director of Finance
≤ £250 k (Green Route Contracts)	≤ £500k	≤ £5M	> £5M