

Lancaster  
University



Research Services

*How to write a Justification for  
Resources*

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## Introduction

Proposals to all the Research Councils always include a Justification for Resources attachment. This is your opportunity to show to the reviewers that you have carefully considered the resources to be requested and the value that they add to your proposal. The following guidance sets out the general principles of writing a good Justification for Resources. Please refer to specific call guidance where necessary.

## Why is the Justification for Resources important for the PI?

The quality of your research case is paramount but so is the Justification for Resources. If you have a good case a strong justification of the resources requested will keep your proposal in contention, but a weak justification of the resources requested will kill your application. It is important to remember that your costings and justification for resources are **not** a wish list of what you would like. Instead these are an **opportunity** to demonstrate that you have really thought about what you need to deliver the outputs and have planned carefully and realistically

It's important to note that while it is wrong to over cost, it also wrong to under cost and risk not being able to deliver.

## Why is the Justification for Resources important for the reviewers?

The Justification shouldn't be a shopping list but should explain to reviewers why you need the items in the budget. It should be clear for administrators and academics from other disciplines to follow without being patronising to experts in the field.

It is really important that the information in the Justification should be easy to cross-reference with the costs listed on the application form. In particular, it is important to consider:

- Do these resources correspond to the requirements of the project's design/methodology/aims?
- Are the costs within the upper and lower thresholds set by the funder?

## What is the Justification for Resources for?

The purpose of the Justification is to aid reviewers when assessing proposals so that they can make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the research posed.

## What isn't the Justification for Resources?

It's not just a list of the items you're requesting, this has already been provided in the costing table on Je-s. If you simply use the Justification to list the items without explanation you can expect the bid to be returned by the Research Council before it reaches the assessment stage. It's not necessary to include the cost of items but it is necessary to explain why they are needed.

## Justify EVERYTHING

It is important that you justifying everything. For example: don't assume that an assessor will know why you need to attend a conference, explain why, what the conference will add to your project and why it is essential to the delivery and outcome of the project. Make sure you have allocated enough of your own time to the project.

## Setting out your Justification for Resources

The Justification should be no more than 2 sides of A4, in font size 12. It is an attachment to your proposal. It is mandatory and should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the research. A good tip is to refer to the costings in Je-S and methodically go through each item and say why you need it. As the Justification is a free text document, it is recommended that you match the costs to the proposal heading, where appropriate, as follows:

<b>Cost to the proposal</b>	<b>Justification needed</b>	<b>Questions to consider</b>
Staff – directly incurred posts Researcher/Technician	Need to justify why a researcher/technician is needed for the proposed work and why the proposed time input is appropriate.	Is the work of appropriate scientific technical difficulty to warrant employing a RA? Why has the grade level been requested?
Staff – directly allocated posts Principal Investigator (PI), Co-Investigator (Co-I) and Research Co-Investigator time	The time spent on the grant has to be justified. You do not have to justify the cost, but the time. You cannot request time for supervising postgrad students, writing publications after the end of the project, writing grant applications or peer review.	How much time do you intend to dedicate to the project? Will you be doing all the research yourself? What work packages are the PI and Co-I involved with and why? Have you factored in time to work with project partners and collaborators? Are you only managing staff on the project?
Travel & Subsistence	Need to give a full breakdown of the costs e.g.	If you are planning to visit people to discuss your research you should explain

	How many people are travelling, where are they going and why it is necessary.	why those are the right people to talk to and how they can contribute to you meeting your objectives. If you plan to attend conferences you should comment on the advantages of conference attendance and give an indication of the number you want to attend, who will attend and if national/international/general or subject specific. Travel costs incurred when using facilities should be included where necessary.
Other Directly Incurred costs	What has been requested and why?	Any proposals requesting items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the research organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants). Please see below for guidance regarding requests for equipment funding.
Impact	Need to justify any resources requested to support the impact plan. For example: Staff time Travel & subsistence Consultancy fees Publication costs Public communication training.	You need to explain what these are and why you need to use them.
Other Directly Allocated costs	In some cases, such as use of internal facilities and shared staff costs, the cost doesn't need to be justified but the need for the resource does.	
Estates and Indirect costs	Does not need to be justified.	You need to explain what you are using the facility for and why you need to use it.

Research facilities (at Research organisations)	Only the time needs to be justified.	You need to explain why you are using a pooled technician and justify the time requested.
Pooled Technicians	For example workshop or lab technicians based at the University. Usually not named.	
Infrastructure technicians	The cost should be displayed separately to Estate & Indirect costs in the Other Directly Allocated costs box. The cost does not need to be justified.	
Exceptions PhD student	Need to justify why a PhD student is needed for the proposed work.	Will a student be skilled enough to tackle the research problems and will they in all likelihood get a thesis out of it? If you are asking for both an RA and student, is there sufficient work at the right technical level for both? Why are both needed?

## Hints and tips

- Remain focussed, minimise loose ends and things that could antagonise (e.g. spelling mistakes, excessive repetition, inconsistency)
- Avoid the words 'contribution', 'average' and 'contingency'
- For investigators the amount of time and their role in the project is justified, there is no need to justify the grade.
- For other staff the time, role and grade should be justified
- Be as specific as possible about plans for meetings and conferences
- Indirect and Estates (overheads) don't need to be justified
- Tables should be used with caution, but may be useful where space is limited

### **Do ensure you check the call guidance:**

- All funders are slightly different
- All calls can be slightly different
- Calls may be slightly different from the last round e.g. page length of Justification can vary from 2 to 4 pages etc.

**REMEMBER the justification is so reviewers can assess whether the resources requested are appropriate for the proposed research.**

## Reasons for returning Justifications to PIs for amendments

This is a list of the most common reasons why Justifications are returned to PIs for amendments:

- Costs stated in the Je-S form are not fully justified in the Justification e.g. the investigator time that has been asked for has not been justified (please note: the investigator salary cost does not need to be justified, only the time asked for)
- Costs/descriptions stated in the Je-S form do not match those in the Justification
- Costs in the Justification which are not in the Je-S form and vice versa
- Justifications of why an item is needed are not clear or are poor e.g. listing the items from the Je-S form without any description of why it is needed
- If the PI time includes supervision of PhD students

## Example Justifications

### *1. Investigator cost*

PI Dr W (12% FTE) will manage the day-to-day running of the project, supervising the PDRA at Lancaster, leading project meetings, liaising with Co-Is and project partners and providing guidance on analysis and on running the FRSGC/UCI CTM at Lancaster.

Co-Is Dr X, Dr Y and Dr Z will implement and deliver the model simulations required for the project based on expertise with their respective CCMs (UKCA, GISS, CESM and STOCHEM). We request 10% FTE for these Co-Is to reflect the time requirements for preparing, running and diagnosing the models over and above their administrative roles in the project.

All investigators will be involved in project development, attend annual meetings, and contribute to manuscript preparation.

### *2. Travel and Subsistence cost*

*Conferences and workshops:* We request support for the PDRA to attend two international conferences to disseminate the results of the project and to provide opportunities for networking and career development. We propose the AGU (Fall 2017) and IGAC (2018) as appropriate meetings which attract broad international audiences in the atmospheric sciences (2 x £1900). We request funding for the PI and Co-Is to attend one such meeting (6 x £1900) over the 3-year period, and plan to convene a session at one of these meetings in the final year of the project at no additional cost. We seek funding for the PDRA, PI and model Co-Is to attend one CCMI project workshop each over the period of the project to liaise with project partner YYY, discuss applications of the analysis, and disseminate results to the international modelling community (6 x £1200).