

The Funding Application Process

If you are thinking about applying for research funding, the information below will help you to understand the process. Please make contact with a [Research Development Officer](#) as soon as you start thinking about making an application. We are here to help and to answer any questions that you might have.

I have an idea for a project what should I do?

- Discuss your initial idea with your Head of Department or Research Director to establish whether it fits with the Department's research strategy and if it is the right time in your career to applying for funding.
- If your Head of Department or Research Director gives the project the go-ahead [make contact](#) with a Research Development Officer (RDO) in your Faculty.

How long will the application process take?

- It generally takes 6-8 weeks to write, cost and get approval for a proposal. However, the process can happen more quickly if a call comes out with a shorter deadline period.

I already have a funding scheme in mind what happens next?

- If you already have a funding scheme in mind for your project discuss it with your RDO who will be able to tell you if the scheme is the best fit for your project. If it is, then you will be able to move to the next stage in the application process. If not, the RDO will be able to help you identify other, potential, sources of funding.

I don't know which funder to apply for what should I do?

- Register with [RESEARCHconnect](#). It is an online tool that researchers can use to search for a range of funding opportunities.
- Discuss it with your RDO. RDOs have experience of working with a whole range of funders and will be able to advise you about the best fit for your project.

I'm ready to start the application process what are the first steps?

- Check if there is a funder deadline for the submission of your application and, if there is, make sure you have a realistic plan for submitting your proposal before the deadline.
- Start drafting your proposal. Draw up an outline of the idea (one side A4) and discuss your proposal with peer groups, colleagues, and with senior and more experienced researchers. If you have never sent in a proposal to the funder before try to get the advice of someone who has already been successful. Research Services have a library of successful bids you can use as an example of work that has been funded so ask your RDO about this.
- Identify a project start date and, if you are responding to an open call, a proposed application submission date. For most applications, your RDO will recommend a start date that is no earlier than 9 months after the date of submission.

- Think about your costings. At this stage, you should be considering who else you are going to work with on the project (e.g. RAs, Co-Is etc.) and any non-staff costs that will be associated with the project (consumables, travel and subsistence etc.). Research Services requires the Full Economic Cost (FEC) of the project regardless of what the funder will actually cover so it is important that you take that into account at the planning stage.
- Complete the initial [costings form](#) and email the costings to your RDO. Your RDO may enter the costs directly into the internal costings system (ACP) or they may ask you to liaise with a member of the [costings team](#).
- Register for the correct [funder application portal](#) and familiarise yourself with the online application process. Remember to add your RDO to your online application so that they can view it and enter the costings.

What documentation do I need to prepare for my application to the funder?

- As a minimum, most funders ask for a Case for Support, a Justification for Resources, an Impact Plan and a Data Management Plan. Depending on the scope of your project, you may also be asked to submit a Technical Plan. It is important that you check exactly what the funder expects you to submit with your proposal so you know what documentation you need to prepare.
- If you need support with any aspect of your application your RDO will be able to help you. You can also find lots of useful information on the [Applying for Grants](#) section of this website.

What happens after I've submitted the initial costings?

- Once the trial costings have been created in ACP your RDO will contact you to review the costings.
- When the costings have been finalised your costings application will be submitted into workflow. At this stage, you will receive an email alert from ACP. You need to go into ACP, complete the Governance tab, upload your draft proposal and approve the costings. Don't worry if you're unsure about what to do in ACP. Contact your RDO who will be able to help you with this.

What happens when I've approved the costings?

- When you have approved the costings in ACP an email alert will be sent to your Head of Department asking them to review the information, complete a checklist and give their approval.
- Depending on the amount of funding that you are applying for, your application may need further internal approvals which your RDO will oversee.
- Your RDO will also enter the costings into your online funding application if this is something that you would like them to do.

I'm ready to submit my application what should I do?

- Contact your RDO who will confirm that all the necessary internal approvals are in place and do a final check to ensure that your online application is complete.
- When final checks have been completed you can submit your application to the funder. Please note, for some funding applications your RDO will complete the final submission to the funder.

I have submitted my proposal to the funder what happens next?

- This depends on the funder and the advice given here applies to Research Council applications. Check your funder's website to find out more about their post-submission process.
- Research Councils will carry out a technical review of the application to ensure all of the sections on the online application have been completed correctly. If there are errors, the application will come back to Research Services with list of requested changes and a date for return. You can only make the changes they request, any further editing of the application will disqualify it.
- The application is sent to reviewers who will comment on the suitability of the proposal.
- For Research Council applications, there is an opportunity for you to respond to the reviewers' initial comments. **This is very important**, it is an opportunity to correct any errors of interpretation you think the reviewers have made.
- Proposals receiving an average score of at least 4.5 out of 6 from the external academic reviewers are forwarded to the Panel Members (Introducers) for a funding recommendation. Application that score below 4.5 are discounted.
- Research Councils will take at least 30 weeks to review a proposal and make a decision.

What happens if my award is successful?

- If your application is successful you will receive notification from the funder. Please let your RDO know as soon as you hear that your application has been successful so that they can set up the award.
- Celebrate!