

Applying for External Research Funding: A guide to managing your project's pFACT from ideation to submission

If you are planning to bid for external research funding, whether as lead PI or in collaboration with another leading partner, the project will need to be costed and approved following the below internal guidelines and procedures prior to the bid being submitted to the funder.

First Steps

If you have a research project idea you would like to bid for, then please discuss it with your Research Lead and with us here at the Research Support Office! We can, for example, help you identify an appropriate funding call, or suggest colleagues who might be able to help you grow your idea! When you are ready to progress the project, please complete the [TDE Grants Panel: Intent to Submit Form](#).

This form is a new addition to the bidding process, but aims to streamline and simplify it by:

- providing your Head of Department with the details required to approve workload planning allocations;
- providing the RSO with the core details needed to setup a project pFACT; and
- allowing you to nominate internal peer reviewers from the Peer Review College (see: [Peer Review College Members List](#)), which we will try to accommodate where possible.

Looking for a Funding Call?

Please consult the *TDE Funding Bulletin* circulated fortnightly by Bous Baiche and, if you have not already, please take half a minute to create your own individual Brookes account with [Research Professional!](#) It is a great gateway that allows you to search a vast array of funding opportunities by keyword or subject, and setup weekly email alerts too!

How does the Peer Review College work?

The Faculty Peer Review College was established to ensure applications benefit from having two internal reviews, and thereby also facilitate debate and discussion of proposals. All grant applications led by Principal Investigators based in TDE are assigned two reviewers by the Grants Panel. The Peer Reviewers are asked to complete the [Grants Panel Review Form](#) and, preferably, to meet up with the Principal Investigator to discuss their suggestions and recommendations.

The Peer Review College, chaired by Marcel Vellinga (Grants Panel Chair), has about 30-40 members including both experienced researchers and ECRs, which also makes it a great developmental opportunity for less experienced academics keen to familiarise themselves with peer reviewing processes towards learning best practice which can, in turn, contribute to their own grant writing (for a full description see: [The TDE Peer Review College](#)).

Internal approvals

Before a bid can be submitted to the funder, it will need to be approved by both the faculty and the university. For the approvals process to start, the RSO must have received the *final budget* and *final application form* as intended for submission to the funder. Please allow *at least two weeks* for the relevant checks and approvals to be carried, which means one week for faculty approvals and the second to gain university approval.

Please note that if the Oxford Brookes portion of the budget exceeds £250,000 fEC, additional finance approval will have to be sought from the University Head of Finance, so adhering to the required timescales is important.

[Please note that pFACT is being replaced by a new system, Worktribe, on 1 Aug 2019, and that while we will try to minimise the disruption caused, any bids due to be submitted in early August may require longer lead-in times]

Frequently Asked Questions?

What is pFACT?

pFACT is the 'Project Financial Appraisal and costing tool' Oxford Brookes currently uses to cost research projects, and to coordinate the faculty and university approvals needed for research and consultancy bids.

What if I am submitting a Letter of Intent or Expression of Interest?

The approvals process is the same for single and multi-stage applications, so full Faculty and University approvals must be gained for an Expression of Interest, Letter of Intent, Outline or Preliminary bids.

What is the difference between Directly Incurred and Directly Allocated costs?

Every project has three main types of costs: The Directly Incurred (DI) are expenditures necessitated by the project itself should it be awarded, such as for equipment, consumables, salaries for an RA or Post-Doc, etc. In contrast, Directly Allocated (DA) costs are those expenditures already incurred by the faculty/ university which they agree to allocate to the project, such as existing staff time. The third cluster comprise the estate (for office or lab space) and indirect costs or overheads, which is basically the whole cost of running Brookes divided per person (FTE). These three budget components amount to the 'full economic cost', or fec, of a project.

Why does the budget for the same project vary depending on the funder I apply to?

Different funders have different funding formulas and while, for example, charities largely only fund a project's Direct Costs, Research Council's will fund 80% of the full economic cost.

If you have any queries around the research approvals process, please contact the TDE Research Support Office on tde-research@brookes.ac.uk

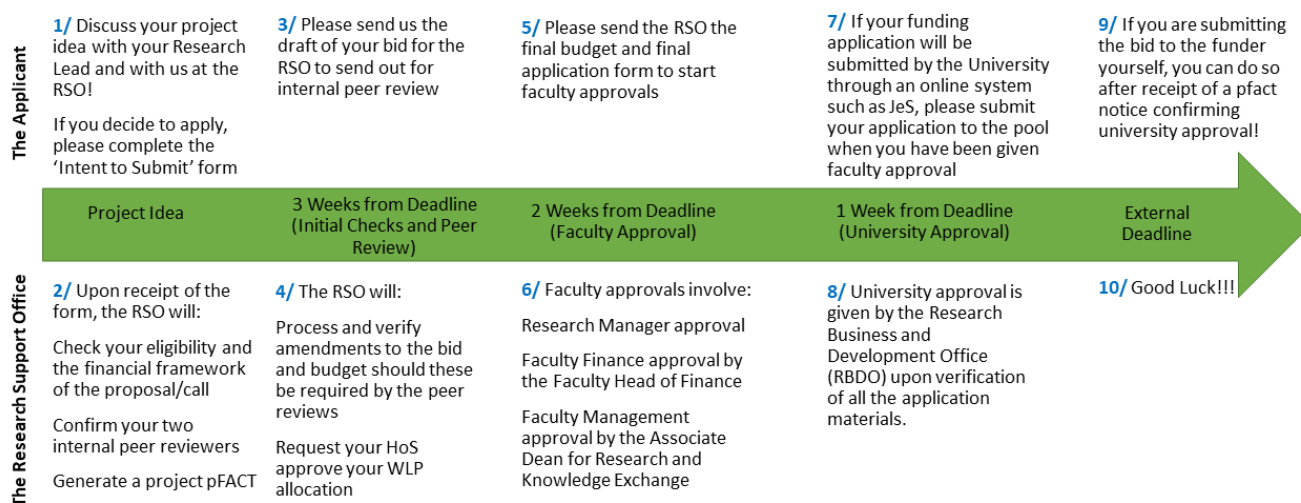
What to do if you cannot make the two-week deadline?

The Faculty Research Support Office and the Research Lead of the relevant School will help you get everything in place as quickly as possible. Please bear in mind, however, that rushed applications are rarely successful.

If you are unable to meet the statutory deadlines, the [Faculty procedure for bids being submitted on short timescales](#) will apply. In essence, this means that you will have to convince the Grants Panel why the bid needs to be submitted to *this* call in *this* round, and why it wouldn't be equally reasonable to submit to another call/ round. The Grants Panel and RSO also need to see a realistic timetable that outlines when all the documents will be delivered – and a real commitment to stick to it.

However, if we are given less than two weeks to obtain approvals, we cannot guarantee that all approvals will be granted in time, particularly at peak times when a large number of applications are being submitted.

A Research Funding Application from Inception to Submission



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