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 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

A Research Funding Application from Inception to Submission

1/ Discuss your project idea with your Research Lead and with us at the RSO!
2/ Upon receipt of the form, the RSO will: Check your eligibility and the financial framework of the proposal/call Confirm your two internal peer reviewers Generate a project pFACT
3/ Please send us the draft of your bid for the RSO to send out for internal peer review
4/ The RSO will: Process and verify amendments to the bid and budget should these be required by the peer reviews Request your HoS approve your WLP allocation
5/ Please send the RSO the final budget and final application form to start faculty approvals
6/ Faculty approvals involve: Research Manager approval Faculty Finance approval by the Faculty Head of Finance Faculty Management approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange
7/ If your funding application will be submitted by the University through an online system such as JeS, please submit your application to the pool when you have been given faculty approval
8/ University approvals given by the Research Business and Development Office (RBDO) upon verification of all the application materials.
9/ If you are submitting the bid to the funder yourself, you can do so after receipt of a pFACT notice confirming university approval
10/ Good luck!!!

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