

## PROCEDURES FOR EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING

These guidelines reflect the way the costs of all Research Grants and Contracts are calculated following the introduction of FULL ECONOMIC COSTING (fEC).

The guidelines do not cover grants for postgraduate studentships, except where the cost of a studentship is included in a project application. Enquires on individual studentships should be directed to the [Graduate School](#).

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## Research Grant Application Procedures

When preparing and submitting an application for External Research Funding, the University requires you to:

- Discuss the requirements of the research project or contract with RSO.
- Prepare your budget using figures calculated by RSO.
- Obtain Faculty approval, incorporating Finance approval.
- Complete an internal RS1 form.
- Obtain signatures on application documents from University-authorised signatories.
- Submit

### Discuss requirements with RSO

The Research Support Office will assist you with your funding application. They will help you interpret the funder's requirements, the eligibility of costs and the regulations that must be met.

RSO also represent the University's interests and will check that you do not omit any eligible costs, commit the University to unsuitable terms and conditions or advocate unsuitable research.

Note: if you will be working with collaborative partners, you must complete Central Finance Due Diligence forms **4 weeks in advance** of submission. The forms are available from your Divisional Financial Analyst, or from the [RSO StaffSpace](#) site.

### Prepare budget using RSO figures

The University requires that figures used in research grant applications adhere to fEC methodology and are approved by RSO. This means using salary, estates and indirect costs that we have calculated for you, taking into account on-costs, increments and inflation where appropriate. If you are undertaking contract research for public benefit, RSO will ensure that your rates are at least equal to the full economic cost of the work, by either fEC and/or University Costing and Pricing methodology, as appropriate. *RSO are required to perform a full economic cost calculation, whether or not the funder supports fEC.* This is to inform the faculty and the University of the COST of carrying out the research, to compare to the PRICE applied for. See [COST vs PRICE](#). If the PRICE is below the COST, it must be approved by the Faculty, and possibly also via Central Finance. Contract research that is not for public benefit and consultancy are handled by KUEL, not RSO. If you are unsure, RSO will be happy to assist you work out which category your application falls into. Note that if you require equipment, you must adhere to the procurement procedures of the [University](#) and the Funding body when apply for funds or purchasing. [Research Council](#) procedures should be consulted as a model of good practice for applications.

### Obtain Faculty Approval

The University requires that you get approval from your Faculty prior to submission of your application (see next sections). This allows them to manage their resources, check for unsuitable applications, and to ensure that applications are in-line with the Faculty Research Strategy. They should also be able to offer you advice and guidance, strengthening your application via input from other colleagues. This may be achieved through discussion, or through a formal process of internal peer review – check with your Faculty for their requirements. For contract research, also contact your Faculty Business development Manager who may be able to assist you with preparation of business cases, negotiations etc.

You should therefore discuss your application with your Faculty at an early stage. This will prevent wasting your time on a proposal with an unsuitable slant or insufficient funding. It will also allow time for any formal processes your Faculty may have, and to make any changes suggested. Depending on [COST vs PRICE](#), your Faculty may have to obtain agreement from Central Finance before approving (see below).

### Complete and return RS1 form prior to submission

Research applications are submitted by the Principal Investigator as a representative of the University. They also make use of Faculty resources (e.g. academic time) and many applications commit the University to the terms and conditions of the award. It is therefore important to obtain approval for your application. The Faculty must approve the commitment and use of resources involved, considering the

management of their resources before they approve an application. Faculty approvers also act as the University-approved signatory, as only certain people are entitled to sign on behalf of the University.

As every funding body has different requirements for approval of its submission forms, there is an internal form, RS1, which collects all the approval requirements in one place. The main Kingston applicant is required to fill in their details and also details of resources that will be required to perform the research, to inform the Faculty approver, and sign their intention to apply for the funding. RSO will provide an approved value for the Full Economic Cost of the work, for comparison to the PRICE of the award applied for. The form should then be provided, along with a copy of the application, to the correct University-approved signatory (see below) for their signature. A copy of the completed RS1 and application should be sent to RSO, **before** your application can be submitted. The completion of the RS1 is the requirement of the University. Your Faculty may also have internal procedures to which you must adhere - please check with your Faculty.

Please note that any research where the PRICE is below the COST, must be discussed in advance with the Dean, and may need to be **approved through Central Finance via the Dean**, in advance of Faculty signatures. Please allow time for this to happen. See [COST vs PRICE](#). If Due Diligence is required, the [DD1 form](#) must be attached to your RS1 form.

### **Use University-authorised signatories**

Only authorised individuals are allowed to sign on behalf of the University, as grant applications commit the University to the funding body's terms and conditions. You must get the correct signature on your RS1 form, to authorise your application. If your application requires a signature to designate Institutional approval, the same regulations apply. Those involved in giving approval should have advance notice of your intentions and adequate time to respond. The table below shows the University-authorised signatories for different values of application. Please note that these differ to the signatories authorised at the post-award stage, as the commitments are potential as the award has not yet been made. A list of current [Faculty Designated Authorities](#) and [Faculty Business Managers](#) can be obtained from [StaffSpace](#), along with information about absence/variation of signatories.

<b>Value of Application</b> (excluding value to collaborators not via KU)	<b>Application / RS1/ Other paperwork</b> to be signed by:
Up to £150K in total	Faculty Designated Authority
Over £150K in total	Dean of Faculty via Faculty Designated Authority

**NB** for the Faculties of Engineering, Computing Information Systems & Mathematics, and Science that will form the new Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing, **all** RS1 forms must be signed on behalf of the new Faculty by the SEC Faculty Dean, Edith Sim.

If your application requires support from the University at the highest level e.g. when only one application per Institution is accepted, it is usual to approach the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), via RSO, for a letter of support. An internal competition may be arranged in these circumstances to select the Institutional submission.

### **Submit**

Once faculty approval and all the correct signatures have been obtained, you may submit your application. Some electronic submission systems (e.g. Research Councils' Je-S) have a stage built in for Faculty and/or Institutional approval. In such cases only, an RS1 may be returned after submission, but should still be completed, as it addresses internal issues that are not covered by the application and provides proof of who approved the submission. If you are using an electronic system with built-in approval processes, please note that all approvals must be completed by the published deadline and allow sufficient time for these to occur. If unforeseen circumstances mean that you will be close to the deadline, please notify the approvers concerned, and check their availability. **Please note that your RS1 form must be fully signed and returned to RSO BEFORE you can submit your application.**

**Electronic submission**

Many major funding bodies now use electronic submission, often exclusively. If you need assistance with registration or use of such a system, RSO will be happy to provide advice and training. Documents to assist with use of the Research Councils' Je-S system are available on the RSO StaffSpace pages. Many electronic systems allow you to give access to your application to colleagues and collaborators. This is a very useful feature, allowing input from a number of colleagues whose experience can strengthen your application. We recommend that you give access to RSO staff, who will fill in the fEC values directly, and provide advice on the completion of each screen. If you are making a joint application with another Institution, consult RSO about whether to use the joint application function which allows each Institution to be responsible for its own costs. **Please note that your RS1 form must be fully signed and returned to RSO BEFORE you can submit your application.**

**COST vs PRICE**

RSO will calculate the fEC of the project, using the funding body guidelines e.g. including or excluding VAT. This gives the COST of the Research. When clear guidance is given as to what will be funded, RSO will identify the eligible costs and assist with preparation of the financial section of the application. When eligible costs are not clear, if a cap on funding prevents full cost recovery or when consultancy charge-out rates can be used for personnel costs, the applicant must use the fEC information to decide the PRICE that will be charged to the funder. In an ideal world, this would be the full fEC COST, but may actually be lower, or higher. The applicant should set the PRICE after discussion with the Faculty, as they will have to underwrite any costs not covered, and give permission for the application to go ahead.

Note that where the PRICE is below the COST for contract research, or meeting any of the conditions below for grant-funded research, it **must be approved via Central Finance**. It must be referred by the **Dean** to the relevant Divisional Finance Analyst **BEFORE submission**, outlining the rationale for undertaking the research at that PRICE with reference to faculty strategies where appropriate, and identifying the source of Faculty funds to be used to support the research.

To allow SMG consideration of issues, Central Finance should be notified 4 days before the **bid** deadline, with a suitable justification when:

1. A **shortfall** is expected in the **Directly Incurred** costs (i.e. the new costs specific to that project, that in general result in external spend).
  - The only *exception* is for applications which cover *only travel costs*, up to a direct cost of £5,000, where the additional costs will be covered by a Faculty fund earmarked for that purpose.
2. When a **shortfall** is expected due to the **cost of academic time** neither being funded, nor suitable replacement costs offered by the scheme.
  - An *exception* is made that up to 11% of the contract of an academic who is contracted to KU throughout the project period can be committed, with Faculty agreement, and provided other commitments allow.
3. When **no overheads** will be funded on any application where the **direct costs are greater than £50k per annum** (allows employment of grade 8 postdoctoral researcher).
  - Exceptions are made for the following
    - i. Applications *exclusively for travel funds* where no research is committed to
    - ii. Applications *exclusively for funds to buy research equipment*
    - iii. Applications for funds to be used *exclusively to fund studentships*
    - iv. Applications to the EU FP7 *Marie-Curie* schemes
    - v. Applications to *UK registered charities*, including, but not limited to, the *Wellcome and Leverhulme* Trusts
4. a) Where the **funding rate** will be **less than 80% of the full fEC** value and the **direct costs** are greater than **£200k**.
  - b) If **reduced** overhead is requested when such would be a fundable cost under the scheme processes. Where the funder provides for overheads with a maximum limit below KU overhead costs, we should bid for that maximum overhead, for example in the case of Qatar National Research Fund.
    - There will be no exceptions to these criteria.

These notifications and exceptions **do not exempt** any application from the requirement to undergo the usual approval process.

Although undertaking research at less than fEC is permissible it must be demonstrable that there are longer term benefits in doing so as the Government has stated it is not acceptable to use Public money to subsidise research for Private gain. Government auditors will be checking that Universities are making their research activities sustainable through consistent application of fEC.

Different sectors fund in different ways:

- *Research Councils* fund on an fEC basis, paying 80% of fEC costs.
- *UK registered Charities* have collectively stated their inability to meet fEC costs, but some collect fEC data to inform future decisions. The Government is sympathetic to their case and there is an understanding that, for the foreseeable future, Charities will pay only 'additional' (i.e. [DI](#)) costs.
- *UK Government departments* have been instructed to meet 100% of fEC.
- *EU FP7 programmes* allot a fixed percentage towards overheads, currently 60%, but do not pay the full cost (75% for most research). An 'actual cost' methodology for UK Universities, based on fEC methodology, will be implemented at a future date.
- *Industry* varies in its approach to funding. The PI should use the COST, as calculated by the **University Costing and Pricing policy** to inform the PRICE of the project, depending on what the market will bear. fEC must also be monitored. This should mean a significant number of projects being priced at higher than fEC. However, many industrial funders have got used to the 'cheap' research services of Universities and may balk at sudden sharp increases. It is at the discretion of the Faculty, in consultation with the PI, whether the PRICE quoted in an application to an industrial funder is below the COST. However, where the PRICE to be quoted is below the COST, as specified in the criteria above, the application **must be approved through Central Finance, via the Dean, in advance of Faculty approval, and BEFORE the quote is submitted.**

### **Other Considerations**

Below are some other matters that should be taken into consideration when writing an application:

- *Referees.* Choice of referee could have a critical bearing on the success of the application. Referees should be experts in your subject area and/or be able to provide an expert view on the value and benefits to users of the proposal. Referees may not be either KU staff or current or proposed collaborators, but do select those acquainted with your research, preferably those with whom you have had personal contact and can trust to give a fair assessment. If your project is interdisciplinary your choice of referees should reflect this. If the Grant Body gives guidelines on a format for presenting your case for support you are strongly advised to adhere to this. Regular referees and panel members will be used to this format and may not be sympathetic to variations.
- *Space.* Purchase of large equipment will have space requirements, as will the appointment of new staff. Be sure to consult your Faculty to ensure availability of the necessary space. Also consider power consumption, access, refurbishment needs, safety, and the need for a comfortable and secure research environment.
- *Equipment.* If you require equipment to carry out your research, that is not already available within the University, you may be able to apply for funding on your research grant application. If eligible, you should also consider space, servicing and maintenance, related consumables, software and training costs. Staff costs may also be relevant if a member of technical staff will be needed to run and maintain the equipment. The relevant procurement procedures for the [University](#) and the funding body should be adhered to both for funding applications and purchase of equipment. [Research Council](#) procedure can be considered a good model for funding applications. This currently places individual items of equipment into 3 categories. Equipment items below the lowest limit are treated as consumable items. Items above this limit require quotations and extra justification of the need, incorporating an evaluation of existing equipment. Items above the capital asset threshold additionally require a business case to be provided, explaining the strategic requirement. If funding is approved, these capital assets will be located where RCUK decide is the best strategic location. RCUK will decide the appropriate level of funding for equipment, but a contribution from the benefitting organisation is likely to be expected. In the case of equipment below the capitalisation limit, they have indicated this is likely to be around 50%. Therefore, this

should be discussed with the Faculty and appropriate central departments in advance. Sharing equipment with other establishments and/or renting time should be considered as alternatives. Leasing equipment should also be considered, but costs will be considered in the same way as purchasing equipment.

- *Social Surveys.* If a large survey is to be undertaken, it is worth considering sub-contracting to specialists, and the value of this compared to an in-house undertaking. If so, the sub-contract should be subject to competitive procedures, including full tendering procedures when applicable. If applying to Research Councils, sub-contracted social surveys will be funded at 100% and the cost placed in the exception equipment section of the Je-S form. If such a survey will be carried out in-house, [RCUK](#) will fund at 80%, and the rationale and benchmarking must be provided.
- *Insurance Cover.* Some research work (e.g. aeronautical and pharmaceutical research and work undertaken outside the UK) may not be automatically covered by the KU insurance unless special arrangements are made in advance of work commencing – see [Professional Indemnity Policy](#). In such cases, any additional insurance premium ought to be included in your costings. Professional Negligence Cover will be required if you are providing advice, design or specifications to another organisation or individual. Contact the [University Secretary's Office](#) for advice.
- *Legal Implications, Protection of Intellectual Property (IPR).* Serious consideration should be given to the potential value to both staff and the University of any Intellectual Property that may be generated. Contact the University's Enterprise Support Office for guidance when developing a working relationship with a commercial company. The University Secretary's Office has produced a series of contract templates, these and similar standard contract templates produced by the Government (Lambert Agreements) can be downloaded from the [University Secretary's Office](#) pages.
- *Due Diligence.* If you are entering into a contractual financial relationship with a company, please ensure that due diligence is performed to check that the company is a solvent legal entity. Central Finance [Due Diligence forms](#) must be completed **4 weeks in advance** of submission. Contact your Faculty Business Manager for further advice. See also the section on [Contracts](#).
- *Ethical Considerations.* Each Faculty has an Ethics representative who reports any issues to the respective Faculty Research Committee. You must inform this representative if your proposal involves research on humans. Check the [University's Ethics Guidance and Procedures](#).
- *Data Protection.* If your research involves processing personal data, especially sensitive personal data (e.g. Health Studies), or the sharing of such data with anyone outside of the University, please check with the [University's Data Protection Officer](#) concerning data protection legislation.
- *Health and Safety Issues.* Check with the [University Safety Office](#).

## Research Grant Award Procedures

Different Funding Bodies have different procedures for notifying you of the outcome of your application. Regardless of procedure and outcome, it is important that you let all interested parties know. This includes Co-Investigators and staff involved in the research, anyone who mentored or assisted you with the application, and all administrative staff involved, such as RSO and Faculty Research Administration.

### Successful Applications

Although you are the applicant, and the letter may be addressed to you, usually grants and contracts are awarded to the University, which holds them on your behalf. The award constitutes a contract to carry out work according to the funding body's terms and conditions; for administrative and legal reasons the University is the contracted party and therefore "holds" the award. This also makes the award eligible to be counted during evaluation processes such as the RAE. A University-authorized signatory must therefore sign documentation on behalf of the University, the contracted party.

These procedures cover all awards (inc. Fellowships and Travel grants) that are to be administered by the University. Your Faculty may also have internal procedures to which you must adhere. If in doubt please check with your Faculty administrative officers.

Most awarding bodies will require notification of acceptance in writing, perhaps on a pro-forma acceptance slip, possibly within a time limit. They may require signatures from the grant-holder and/or a senior administrative or financial staff member. *Follow their rules but do **not** immediately send a reply to the award body. You **must** follow the University's procedures, of which notification to the awarding body is a late step. You **must** follow these procedures, signing on behalf of the University when you are not authorised to do so may lead to legal problems.*

- Use form RS2 to formally declare your acceptance of the award
- Obtain a signature from the appropriate University-authorized signatory
- Pass paperwork to your Faculty Officer, who will forward to RSO, with additions
- Ensure that a written contract has been issued and is understood, appropriate and legally acceptable
- RSO check paperwork and forward to Central Finance
- Central Finance activate required cost centres
- Acceptance of award, **signed by University-authorized signatory** returned to funding body

### Use form RS2 to formally declare your acceptance of the award

Fill in an internal **RS2** form "Formal Acceptance of a Research Grant/Contract", to confirm to the University that you will accept the award. As Principal Investigator (or leading Kingston Investigator if it is a subcontract of a collaborative award), you are responsible for checking the value of the award and the terms and conditions of the contract. If you have any concerns about the award (e.g. if the amount awarded is less than the original bid) you should flag it in the appropriate space on the form and state whether the offer is suitable for the work to be undertaken (i.e. if the amount offered is sufficient to cover costs). Your Faculty Research Office should be able to give you advice about any such concerns.

**Please note that a grant cannot be accepted and this form cannot be signed unless the application paperwork (RS1) is in order.**

### Obtain a signature from the appropriate University-authorized signatory

Pass your completed RS2 form and award letter to the person with the appropriate financial authority to sign on behalf of the University – see table below. Only these people can formally accept a grant on behalf of the University. The same restrictions will apply to signing of contracts or acceptance letters to the grant-awarding body. Please note that these University-authorized signatories differ from those required for Grant Applications, which are a special case.

Value of Grant/Contract	Contract / Acceptance Letter / RS2/ Other paperwork to be signed by:
Up to £75K in total	Dean of Faculty
Over £75K	Vice-Chancellor or Deputy VC
Over £500k	Board of Governors

A list of current [Faculty Business Managers](#) can be obtained from the RSO StaffSpace site.

**NB** for the Faculties of Engineering, Computing Information Systems & Mathematics, and Science that will form the new Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing, **all** RS2 forms must be signed on behalf of the new Faculty by the Dean of Science, Engineering and Computing.

### **Pass paperwork to your Faculty Officer, who will forward to RSO, with additions**

Pass Form RS2, the award letter and other paperwork, including any acceptance form required by the awarding body to your Faculty administrator responsible for activating new grants and contracts. This is usually the Faculty Finance Officer (FFO), but please check with your Faculty Administration.

The FFO will complete Form RS3, which allocates the new cost centre to the award. The cost centre allows expenditure for salaries, consumables and equipment as budgeted by the award. The FFO will pass the completed Form RS3, together with Form RS2 and the award paperwork to the Research Grants Administrator in the Research Support Office. Paperwork should be sent to RSO even if a new cost centre is not required.

### **Ensure a written contract has been issued and is understood, appropriate and legally acceptable**

All Awards, whether from government, Industry, a UK funding body, the EU or elsewhere involve a relationship with the funder. There must be a written contract in place to define the terms of this relationship. A contract will usually be issued by the funder to be signed as part of the acceptance. This contract will define the relationship wanted by the funder. It must be checked to ascertain that it suits the purposes of the relationship wanted by the University and that it covers all issues that might arise, and should be renegotiated if necessary. It must also be checked for legality. Please ensure that your contract is checked by your **Faculty**, and if there are any queries or uncertainty at all refer it to the University Secretary's Office (Kate Allan). Many funding bodies use standard contracts, but do not assume that this is the case with your award, or that a standard contract is necessarily acceptable - all contracts should be checked and considered in context. When ready, it must be signed by a University-authorized signatory.

### **RSO check paperwork and forward to Central Finance**

The Research Support Office will:

- Check whether the application paperwork (including RS1) has been received
- check whether the Form RS2 has the required signature(s)
- send contract documents to the University Secretary's Office for further scrutiny, if required. Contractual terms should be clarified at an earlier stage in the negotiations, where possible. In such an eventuality you should allow up to ten working days for any contract to be vetted.
- enter the new award on the Research Grants & Contracts database
- Pass the forms to the University Finance Office for the new cost centre to be set up and activated on the Finance system.

### **Central Finance activate required cost centres**

The University Finance Office will set up the new cost centre on the Finance system and will inform the faculty by e-mail when the new cost centre has been activated. Your Faculty Officer will let you know that the cost centre is set up. **Please note that a grant cannot be accepted and this form cannot be signed unless the application paperwork (RS1) is in order.**

Note - Faculty Finance Offices have access to the RSO Grants and Contracts database on a read-only basis and may check the information entered on the new grant, or any award, at any time.

### **Acceptance of award, signed by University-authorized signatory returned to funding body**

You may now confirm to the Grant Body that the award has been officially accepted by the University. Please note that your acceptance **must** be signed by a University-authorized signatory (see table).

Note - If for any reason the actual start date differs from the proposed start date (e.g. delays in recruiting Research Staff) you should notify your Faculty Officer and RSO.



Value of Grant/Contract	Contract / Acceptance Letter / RS2/ Other paperwork to be signed by:
Up to £75K in total	Dean of Faculty
Over £75K	Vice-Chancellor or Deputy VC
Over £500k	Board of Governors

### **Post-Award Responsibilities**

You will be responsible, in consultation with your Faculty Finance Officer, for the financial management of the award throughout its duration. You will be obliged to adhere to the University's Financial Regulations in respect of expenditure. Proper records need to be kept in case of internal or external audit, and for reconciliation and final claims. Besides financial management you are also responsible for providing reports required by the funding body. Please ensure that you are aware of the nature (e.g. research, financial) and timing (e.g. annual, interim, final) of reports required.

You must also ensure that a written contract that is understood, appropriate and legally acceptable is in place to govern relationships with funding bodies, and also with any external bodies involved in your research, such as other Universities for collaborations. Your Faculty and the University Secretary's Office will be able to help you with this.

### **Unsuccessful Applications**

When you receive notification, you should inform everyone involved in the application process, including: Co-Investigators/Collaborators, named Researchers, Faculty members, and RSO.

Competition for grant funding is intense, with success rates varying between approximately 10% and 35%, depending on the funder and the scheme. Therefore no stigma should be attached to a lack of success – the majority of applicants will probably be in the same position. Instead, treat it as part of a learning process and incorporate the lessons you have learnt into future applications and pass them on to colleagues.

You should obtain feedback from the funding body as to why you have not been successful. Many funders will automatically provide referees responses, if they do not, request them (if applicable). If referees responses are positive, the funding body may be able to provide additional information e.g. if your application was highly rated, but not sufficiently highly prioritised to obtain a cut of the available budget they may be able to explain why.

If you do obtain feedback as to why they have not funded the proposal please pass this to the Research Support Office. The RSO maintains a database of applications and any detail from a funder -especially if negative - is helpful in establishing profiles and trends. Such information will help us to advise you and your colleagues in writing future applications and developing research strategy.

You may wish to re-draft your application and either re-submit (regulations allowing), or to submit it to another funding body. In either case, you should make significant changes to your application. Feedback will help you to identify areas that require changing and strengthening.

### **Signatures**

*Please Note:* Paperwork post-award deals with actual contracts and funding, rather than potential contracts and funding at the pre-award stage. This is why the University-approved signatories differ between the two stages. This also means that actual signatures are required on documents. *Electronic signatures are not acceptable on University paperwork at the post-award stage.*

## Full Economic Costing (fEC)

fEC was introduced from August 2005, in order to address issues of transparency in University funding, to move towards sustainability and to address under-investment in infrastructure. An fEC approach to costing is now a requirement for all applications for government-funded research funds. Additionally, **it is a University requirement that a full economic cost analysis is undertaken on every application for external research funding**, even where the funding body does not pay on an fEC basis, to allow the University to assess the cost of the work to be undertaken.

Prior to the introduction of fEC, research grants or contracts would generally fund only the direct costs of the work i.e. salaries of additional staff, and the costs of equipment, consumables and travel required to undertake the work. The underlying costs incurred by the University in supporting the research were often not addressed, or a small amount towards 'overheads' was paid.

In order to promote sustainability and investment in infrastructure, full economic costing (fEC) was introduced. Additional budget was made available to government-funded grant-awarding bodies in order to allow them to fund the costs incurred by the University, in addition to the direct costs of the project.

Applications continue to be assessed on the strength and quality of the proposed work. The Case for Support forms the major part of the application, addressing aims, objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, dissemination etc. However, budget information will be prepared on an fEC basis, calculated by RSO. You should consult RSO as early as possible, as calculation cannot be left until the last minute. We appreciate that you may not have all the information required until you have worked out the details of the research, but a prior discussion may bring costs to light that you had not considered. It is also simpler to revise an fEC calculation than to start one at the last minute, and a preliminary costing may help you make decisions concerning your budget.

Irrespective of to whom you are applying (e.g. Research Council, Charity, Government Body, EU Commission, Industry), **the fEC must be calculated**. The fEC process calculates the COST of the project, but this may ultimately be different from the PRICE as quoted on the final grant submission. For example, the Government/HEFCE have determined that the PRICE paid by Research Councils will be 80% of the fEC, requiring the University to meet the difference between COST and PRICE from their own or 'other' resources. Additionally, the University is at liberty to set a lower PRICE than the COST (fEC) if undertaking the project is deemed advantageous to the research strategy of the School/Faculty. However, in the long term the institution must be seen to be managing its research costs in a sustainable manner. You are required to get approval of the COST from RSO (who will calculate it for you) and of the PRICE from the Faculty. The University RS1 form is used for this approval process.

Under fEC, costs fall into the following categories:

- Directly Incurred
- Directly Allocated
- Indirect
- Exceptions

### **Directly Incurred (DI)**

Directly incurred costs correspond approximately to the items funded on grants prior to fEC. This category relates to items, the cost of which is wholly and exclusively attributable to the research project in question. Examples include additional staff hired for the project, travel, equipment, consumables and consultancy fees.

### **Directly Allocated (DA)**

Directly allocated costs are costs which can be directly, but not exclusively, related to the project in question. An example is Investigator salary. Academics are paid by the University, but time spent on research can be directly attributed to a grant. Therefore the relevant proportion of the salary cost is allocated to the grant budget. This category would also be used for other staff who are shared between projects, but care must be taken as not all staff are eligible to be costed. For example, you cannot include part of a departmental administrator's salary to cover administrative assistance, as all University

administrators' salaries are used in the calculation of Indirect costs, so this would represent double charging. This does not prevent the hiring of assistance (Directly Incurred). The same is true of technical assistance, except in the Faculty of Engineering and the Schools of Chemistry, Pharmacy and Life Sciences.

In these lab-based subjects, technical assistance has been used to calculate an 'Infrastructure cost', which relates to the costs of general assistance (e.g. washing glassware, preparing solutions, dealing with hazardous waste) that benefits all research projects, and a 'Pool staff cost' which can be applied when specific technical assistance is required.

This category also contains 'estates costs' which relate to the cost of maintenance of the facilities to be used (e.g. heating, lighting, furniture, cleaning).

**Indirect**

Indirect costs cover the costs of running the University that benefit and support a project, but cannot be directly attributed to the project. Examples are central administration, library services, mail delivery. TRAC assigns a percentage of each of the running costs of the University to different types of activity, producing a rate for research which is used to calculate the charges for each research project.

**Exceptions**

This category denotes items that do not fit into the above categories. It may be used differently (or not at all) by different funding bodies. It is often used for items that are funded at a different rate to the rest of the items applied for. An example is the Research Councils, which generally fund a PRICE that is 80% of the COST. However, certain items are fully funded (100%), such as studentship fees and stipends, and Capital Equipment. These are therefore treated as exceptions.

**Examples of the different cost categories**

<b>Directly Incurred Costs</b>	
Dedicated Staff Salaries	Salaries of staff working solely on the project in question. Usually researchers, but could include administrative or technical assistance. The PI will need to work with RSO to decide the level of research expertise required of staff to be recruited to work directly on the Project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grade 5 – Research Assistant</li> <li>▪ Grade 6 – Research Associate</li> <li>▪ Grade 8 – Researcher (Postdoctoral minimum)</li> <li>▪ Grade 9 – Senior Researcher</li> </ul> For further assistance, consult RSO or the <a href="#">Personnel Office</a> . <b>RSO will calculate staff costs over the duration of a grant - including employer's costs (National Insurance &amp; Superannuation), also known as on-costs and annual increments.</b> Information on employment legislation is available from <a href="#">Human Resources</a> .
Replacement Teaching Costs	Some schemes (e.g. Leverhulme Trust) that do not fund on an fEC basis will pay Replacement Teaching costs during the applicant's period of Research Leave. Check with RSO how these schemes operate.
Travel & Subsistence	<a href="#">HR StaffSpace</a> pages quote rates for UK costs. RSO can advise.
Conferences and Seminar costs	Where possible you should give full details of the name, location and dates of conferences as this shows you have planned your scheme of work and your dissemination strategy. Check if this is an 'eligible' item, as some grant bodies do not fund dissemination costs.
Dissemination Costs	E.g. exhibitions, printing of specialist material. Check if this is an 'eligible' item, as some grant bodies do not fund dissemination costs.

Equipment, inc. Computer Hardware & Software	<p>Some schemes class small equipment as consumables – check the guidance. Research Councils classify large equipment as Exceptions, as it is funded at a different rate.</p> <p>You will need to make a case that any equipment is <i>essential</i> to the conduct of your research. Including a PC in your costs without full justification is inadvisable. Check with your Faculty Technical Officer and/or the University's Purchasing Manager on specification, price and VAT – you must follow the Procurement procedures of both the <a href="#">University</a> and the Funding Body. These will apply at application for funds as well as when purchasing. <a href="#">Research Council Procedures</a> should be regarded as a model of good practice for applications. You may need to include a quotation, extra justification and/or a business case. Costs of computer software licences should be included. Consider also the installation and maintenance costs of any equipment and whether these costs will be borne by the funder.</p>
Consumables	Small items needed to carry out the research can be included under most schemes, but must be justified. General running costs, such as normal usage of stationary and photocopying cannot be included within fEC-funded grants as this is included within the University's costs.
Advertising and Interview costs	Human Resources can advise on current rates in various Media. Under fEC the Research Councils will now contribute to these costs.
Research Studentship Stipends and Fees	These costs are directly incurred, but may be found under Exceptions for some funding bodies e.g. Research Councils, where they are funded at a different rate. Where a Research Studentship is being included in a project application consult RSO about the standard rates.
<b>Directly Allocated Costs</b>	
Principal Investigator Salary	The amount of time that the PI will commit to the Project should be discussed with RSO who will calculate the equivalent salary cost. If a Postgraduate Student is to be funded on the project then the time the PI spends supervising the student should be determined separately.
Co-Investigator Salary	As for PI salary. Co-Investigators at other Institutions should approach their own Research Office for salary calculations which should be passed on to RSO.
Technical and Support Staff Costs Any other KU staff e.g. pool technicians	<p>The Project may require technical support on a part-time basis from existing support staff members. The availability of such support should be discussed with the appropriate Faculty staff.</p> <p>If the funding body supports fEC, such costs can only be included for pool technicians in the Faculty of Engineering and the Schools of Chemistry, Pharmacy and Life Sciences, all other staff are covered by Indirect costs.</p> <p>If the funding body does not support fEC, these costs can be included, but are rarely eligible. RSO will calculate these staff costs on your behalf.</p>
Estates Costs	RSO calculates these costs. RSO takes the information the PI has provided about research staff commitment (any new research staff plus PI and Co-Investigator time) and applies this to an institutional rate. The institutional rate is set by Central Finance and is based on data provided through the TRAC exercise. These costs are compulsory and integral to fEC.
Infrastructure Costs	RSO calculates these costs similarly to Estates costs. They represent general technical support and are only applicable to the Faculty of Engineering and the Schools of Chemistry, Pharmacy and Life Sciences. The institutional rate is set

	by Central Finance and is based on data provided through the TRAC exercise. These costs are compulsory and integral to fEC.
Use of Major Facilities, Charge out rates for shared equipment.	Faculties may offset the cost of major facilities by charging for their use. If the funding body supports fEC, a limited number of small research Facilities (SRF) have a set hourly rate that can be applied. Charges for use of external facilities can be claimed. If the funding body does not support fEC, consult with the appropriate Faculty Staff on the cost of the facilities you wish to use.
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	
Indirect Costs	RSO calculates these costs similarly to Estates costs. They represent the costs of running the University that benefit and support a project, but cannot be directly attributed to the project. The institutional rate is set by Central Finance and is based on data provided through the TRAC exercise. These costs are compulsory and integral to fEC.

### Calculation of fEC

RSO will discuss the funding requirements of the project with the PI and will calculate the salary costs, estates, pool staff, infrastructure, SRF use and Indirect costs. We will need to know:

- Funding body, start date, duration etc.
- Details of new staff posts to be created
- Details of existing contract staff to be transferred to new project
- Details of studentships to be created
- Details of Principal Investigator time commitment
- Details of Co-Investigators and their time commitment
- Details of any supporting staff roles
- Use of existing Facilities and/or equipment during the Project. This will need to be discussed with your faculty finance or administrative staff.

Details of other costs such as consumables, travel, subsistence, new equipment, recruitment and advertising costs, publication costs etc.

This information can be provided by discussion, e-mail, or by using the form RS0. Use of this form is not necessary, but will provide prompts as to the nature and detail of the information needed.

If the Project is a collaborative bid (e.g. with another HEI or a company), then discussion will centre solely on the costs to be incurred at Kingston. The collaborating organisation should prepare their own budgetary information.

**RSO will calculate and provide all fEC data to the PI. Calculation detail can be made available to the PI and Faculty Research administrators, if required.**

### Costing and Pricing Policy

The University Costing and Pricing policy cover the calculation of COST for Contract Research, in addition to consultancy and non-research activities. It requires a minimum overhead to be applied for each of the Faculty and the Centre, and for a surplus to be made on the research. Contact your Faculty Business Development Manager for further information, or RSO for assistance with Contract Research for public benefit, or KUEL for assistance with Contract Research not for public benefit or consultancy. If in doubt, contact RSO for advice.

Please note, that where the PRICE is below the COST, or where research grant applications fit within the guidelines in the [COST vs PRICE](#) section, it **must be approved via Central Finance**. It must be referred by the **Dean** to the relevant Divisional Finance Analyst **BEFORE submission**, outlining the rationale for undertaking the research at that PRICE with reference to faculty strategies where appropriate, and identifying the source of Faculty funds to be used to support the research.

## Research Funding Guidance

**These guidelines do not cover grants for postgraduate studentships, except where the cost of a studentship is included in a project application. Enquires on individual studentships should be directed to the Graduate School (email: [graduate-school@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:graduate-school@kingston.ac.uk)).**

### Identify Source of Funding

Identify to whom you will apply for funding. ResearchProfessional is a good source of information (<http://www.researchprofessional.com>). We have an Institutional subscription and you can sign up for a personal account from any University computer. They have a large database of funders and call information which you can search for suitable opportunities. You may like to consider the following questions:

- What do I want funding for – to start, develop or complete research?
- What is the "scale" of the research – a small self-contained project that requires minimal financial support or perhaps a full-scale interdisciplinary, cross-institutional and international scheme of several years' duration?
- What are the aims of my research? What am I trying to do – in both theoretical and practical terms?
- What is my subject area? Some funding schemes are very specific as to subject and may be missed if not considering all aspects of the research subject.

Contact the Research Support Office (RSO) if you require assistance.

Once you have identified likely sources of funding, or if you are already aware of funding bodies with a track record of funding research in your area, you will need to find details of the suitable schemes and of the funding body's requirements. Today virtually every funding body uses internet webpages to promote its schemes. From such websites you should be able to download applications forms and guidance notes for their completion. It is important to familiarise yourself with the funding body and their requirements. Read what a funding body has to say about itself; especially its funding philosophy. Please read their literature on what they will and will not fund; for example, you may have decided your research methodology will require teaching relief and an integral cost of your proposal would be replacement teaching costs, therefore you would need to check the eligibility of replacement teaching costs.

### Produce Project Proposal

Work out the broad details of your project. Consider producing an outline. Cover the questions to be answered, the methodology, the timeframe and levels of staffing and resources likely to be required.

- What are the research questions or problems that I intend to address and what are the issues that will be explored in the course of the research?
- Why is it important that these questions or issues be explored? What other research is being or has been conducted in this area? What contribution will my project make to my area of study and to which audiences will the outcomes be of interest?
- What will be my research methodology? How am I going to address the questions I have set myself? Is my chosen methodology the most rational and appropriate means by which to answer the research questions? What will be the roles of other staff involved (fellow staff members, research appointees) and how realistic is my research timetable?
- How can the research costs be justified? Will the research be value for money?

An outline will give you a framework on which to base your application and to outline your resource requirements – remember to give RSO plenty of notice of your costing requirements. Your outline will also serve as a basis for discussion of your project with your colleagues (highly recommended), who may be able to suggest improvements and also to take your proposed application to your Faculty. You must discuss the suitability of your proposed project with your Faculty before proceeding. The Faculty will wish to reassure themselves that time and space are available; that you are applying for

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sufficient funding to cover the costs of the research, and that your proposed project fits with the Faculty and University Research Strategies. This will also allow you to be check that a University-authorized signatory will be available to approve your application when you propose to submit it. Check with your Faculty concerning procedures for approving funding applications.

### **Presenting The Best Case To The Funder**

Some funding bodies print lists of projects they have funded in the past and these may be useful to consult. Administrators at funding bodies are usually happy to give further guidance on their schemes and speaking to them can provide insights into their expectations of what constitutes a good application. Your colleagues may also have useful insights that will improve your application. Every applicant has a different experience, and drawing from these will help to improve your application.

You must also familiarise yourself with their application procedure. For example, some request outline applications in the first instance, whereas other schemes, even from the same funder, will have a one-stage process. Be sure to check their deadlines and their administrative requirements on layout, budgets, referees, number of application copies etc. Ensure that you provide the information

Remember that competition for funding is very fierce and increasing, so your application will need to stand out if it is to receive support. All funding bodies are likely to take account of the following;

- Whether the project falls within their terms of reference, meets their rules, and is presented in the required format.
- Whether the objectives of the research have been clearly defined. Ensure any requested 'short description' is a succinct and positive piece understandable to the layman.
- Whether you are up-to-date with current research in the field and how your work will complement it or extend the boundaries.
- Whether a convincing case for the originality and timeliness of the project has been presented.
- Whether the proposal appears realistic in terms of experience and resources (particularly time). Your plan of investigation will need to contain sufficient detail to justify the staff and other resources requested.
- Whether the project represents 'value for money'. Please note that it is value and not cost that is considered. Reducing costs may count against you when your proposal is assessed for realistic planning.
- Whether appropriate methodology is to be used. You will need to demonstrate that you have thought the proposal through and that the methodology is appropriate for the research questions and that the project will succeed in answering the questions. In some areas it is useful to show evidence from pilot studies which support your application.
- Whether you have given appropriate consideration to ethical, data protection and health and safety considerations.
- Whether you have a good track record or clear potential in research. Most grant bodies use a system of peer review to decide upon allocations. Highlight your record of completion of research projects; particularly stressing completion on-time.
- Whether the project is relevant. Government Departments and the Research Councils in particular, are required to take account of the 'user communities'. You should emphasise the relevance of your work, and who it will benefit. Include several stages of benefit – who it will benefit directly, who indirectly, and the eventual benefit (e.g. The outcomes of this project will have direct relevance to surgeons, improving the quality and speed of operations and will therefore also benefit patients. Ultimately it will a knock-on effect on lengths of waiting lists, availability of NHS resources, and on stress in patients, carers and their families, thus proving beneficial to the entire community).

Be sure to have a dissemination strategy and check whether these costs are eligible for funding. If applicable, show you have given due consideration to the issue of Intellectual Property Rights. Consider whether collaboration with colleagues in other universities or a multidisciplinary approach will enhance your prospects.

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You will probably be asked to suggest referees to peer-review your application. Some or all of these will be used. Choose your referees with care as an application with a poor review is unlikely to be funded. Referees should be external to Kingston University and should not be current collaborators. They should be experts in the field who can comment intelligently on your work. However, one that is familiar with your work is more able to give a valid opinion than a big name in the field whose opinion would be more respected. Someone who does not know your research may refuse to referee your application, or may give a poor review due to misunderstanding your intent, especially if they have many demands on their time. If your project is interdisciplinary your choice of referees should reflect this.

You are strongly recommended to circulate your final draft amongst colleagues. Invite corrections, amendments, hints on presentation and comments on the strength and viability of the application. Colleagues will find mistakes that even the Spellchecker on your PC has missed.

Finally, don't be discouraged if you are unsuccessful. Success rates vary across Funding Bodies but 20-30% success is the norm. This could mean four or five applications to achieve one award. See further information on unsuccessful applications [here](#).

### **Tips from a Research Council**

These are some suggestions from the BBSRC – they apply to most Research Council applications.

*What makes a successful grant application?*

- Is it high quality research?
- Is it really high quality research?
- Are you absolutely sure it is high quality research?
- Is the case for support clearly written and not overloaded with extraneous detail?
- Have you had someone read it who is reasonably expert in the subject?
- Can a non-specialist understand why the work is important?
- Have you had someone read it who doesn't know the area in detail?

*How not to get a grant*

- Don't bother following the guidelines, they're for other people, your idea is so brilliant it must be funded...
- *Use an unusual typeface in the smallest font possible to maximise the number of words you can use. (Referees will enjoy the challenge of reading your case for support).*
- fEC means that you can apply for anything you want, whether or not you need it. Put the costs in whatever category looks right.
- Don't justify the costs of your research, everyone will recognise that you need it all, even the technician who isn't mentioned anywhere in the case for support.
- Use jargon wherever possible. Everyone who sees your application will be an expert in the field and will know what you mean.
- Don't bother with experimental details, a vague overview of what you plan to do will suffice.
- If the referees dare to criticise your application, complain about the choice of referees. Do not bother to react to their trivial suggestions.
- Don't write the application until the day before the closing date. Your HoD and administrator will definitely be there to approve it and the JeS server never crashes. If you miss the closing date, it will be the Research Council's fault.
- Be rude to Research Council staff whenever possible, they'll respect you for it and will be more helpful in the future!
- Don't speak to anyone else about your application, no other scientist in your department has ever had a grant and besides what do they know about what you are doing...
- Proof reading is pointless this is a science application, you are not taking an English exam - sloppy applications will impress the committee