

Guidance on Leading an external research application.

Leading an external research application comes with many challenges and responsibilities. This guide is intended to assist you through the application stage. The details of the process may vary between funding bodies, but the basic principles are likely to be very similar.

Principal Investigator (PI) Responsibility

Overview: The PI is responsible for the management and integrity of the design, conduct, and reporting of the research project and for managing, monitoring, and ensuring the integrity of any collaborative relationships. Additionally, the PI is responsible for the direction and oversight of compliance, financial, personnel, and other related aspects of the research project and for coordination with school, department, and central administration personnel to assure research is conducted in accordance with BU financial regulations and any funders policies and procedures.

The following key areas of responsibility for the PI are:

- The research idea.
- Identify a suitable funding call and ensuring you are eligible to apply (with support from RDS).
- Read the guidance, and then read it again.
- Identify internal Co-Is, eligible external partners (both as Co-Is or collaborators) and stakeholders.
- Contact external partners and ensure you have their agreement and their institution's permission to participate in your project.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of everybody in the consortium. Check that your partners have the resources, capabilities, and capacity to undertake the work they will be expected to do.
- Identify and deal with any conflicts of interest.
- Clarify intellectual property matters with all partners from the outset.
- Adhere to the internal deadlines RDS has set for you and ensure that any partners meet our deadlines. RDS will have determined these deadlines by scrutinising submission requirements and what part of the BU processes must be followed for that specific funding call.
- Ensure that all partners (to include those collaborating, such as industry/international partners) agree to the final application being submitted and that they all receive a copy of the submitted application.

Project Finance and Approvals

An important aspect of being a PI is ensuring that when you are planning a research project, you apply for an appropriate amount of funding from a suitable funder, as well as gaining organisational

approval. RDS will set deadlines for each requirement and provide support to the PI in delivering the following:

1. Provide initial costs
2. Finalise costs and provide a draft application, including where appropriate, any supporting documents such as letters of support and CVs.
3. Finalise the application form, which should be at least two weeks before the funder's published deadline. This allows RDS time to request internal approvals and carry out any additional tasks, as well as seek Legal Services approval through a CAF (if required) and Finance approval through a CAF and due diligence (if either required). This time allows for e-submissions for funders who stipulate that the submitting organisation's research office carry out checks on applications and approves/submits it on their system **after** the PI has submitted it.
4. If an application is over £100k in income value, it will need a cash flow produced by RDS and approval by UET. You will need to have final costs from all partners no later than three weeks before the submission date.
5. Date by which you must submit the final bid. This will either be the funder's deadline, or an internal deadline if institutional checks and approval are required by the RDS, as described above.

Managing Partners: Communication

In the current research environment, creating a strong application with impact requires having partner organisations involved. Partners can help you engage the public, target communities of users, help you disseminate the research to your target audiences and ensure your research is 'used' effectively beyond academia. However, having partners comes with its own challenges and responsibilities. The following details the key areas of responsibility for the PI when managing partners:

- The PI should communicate with **all** partners **personally** throughout the bid development stage.
- Make it clear to **all** partners at the outset, that they must obtain formal approval from their organisation to participate and that you need evidence of this (in whatever format is standard approval procedure for them).
- Consider if partner organisation testimonials to demonstrate the impact of the research are required and ensure that the partners are notified of this.
- Make sure **all** partners have been involved in the bid development and are happy with the content. Take on board any feedback from partners, particularly with regards to their own involvement so that everybody is clear about what they are expected to do.
- Lay out a timeline to **all** partners with explicit deadlines and make sure to follow up with any partners that aren't responding to you.
- When the bid is finalised, make sure **all** partners have seen and approve the final version, prior to its submission and inform them when the bid has been submitted.

Managing partners: Project Finance and approvals

The deadlines you set for your partners should be ahead of the internal deadlines BU has set for you, so that you have everything required in time for BU internal processes and submission of the application. You should set the following deadlines for your partners:

- Date for partners (receiving income from the application) to provide their estimated costs. This will allow you to get a broad picture of the overall budget to ensure you are within the funding limit that the funder has stipulated (where applicable). It will also identify if a cash flow is required, and therefore UET approval. You should set the deadline just ahead of step one described above.
- Date for partners (collaborators/'project partners') to provide the costs (cash or in-kind) they will contribute to the application.
- Date for partners to finalise their costs. You should be in regular discussion with partners to develop the budget to ensure that the split is fair and appropriate for the tasks required. You should set the deadline for the final budget just ahead of step two described above.
- Date by which your partners must review the draft proposal and provide any feedback to be incorporated. You should set the date ideally a week before step three described above. You can then use that time to keep communicating with your partners and to incorporate feedback and iron out any queries or misinterpretations.
- Date for partners to provide any supporting documents, such as CVs (normally Co-Is), letters of support (normally collaborators/'project partners'), or impact testimonials. You should set the deadline for this just ahead of step three described above.
- Date for your partners to review the final application and approve the content. This should be a formality at this point, as you will have discussed the proposal with them already and responded to feedback provided. You should set the deadline for this just ahead of step three described above.
- Date for your partners to provide evidence that they have completed their institution's standard formal approval process so that you have confirmation that they can participate in the project. You should set the deadline for this just ahead of step three described above. You should ensure that all confirmations are sent to you directly from individual partners and not from a third party (i.e. another partner involved in the application). It is important that you have partner institutional approval by this date, as this will form part of the paperwork that is sent to the BU approvers for our internal approval process.

It will be helpful to keep track of what you have asked your partners to provide and by what date, taking into consideration the internal deadlines set by BU. Below is a template to assist this. You may wish to send the below to your partners, providing only the task, partner deadline and comments columns.

Partner organisation	Task	Deadline for partner	BU internal deadline	Completed? Y/N	Comments
An Organisation	Provide estimated costs	01/11/2020	03/11/2020	Y	Draft costs are required from partners seeking income from the application so that you can get an overall picture of the budget
	Provide final costs and supporting documents	8/11/2020	11/11/2020	Y	Required so that you can pull together the final budget for BU's pre-award process and ultimately, internal approval. You should ensure that all letters of support (from collaborators) are sent to you directly from individual partners and not from a third party (i.e. another partner involved in the application)
	Review draft proposal and provide feedback/raise queries	17/11/2020	24/11/2020	Y	Allow partners and yourself plenty of time for this step so that you can incorporate feedback and address queries
	Review final application and confirm it can be submitted	01/12/2020	02/12/2020	Y	Should be a formality at this stage
	Provide evidence that partner has obtained formal approval from their institution	01/12/2020	02/12/2020	Y	Required, as it forms part of the documentation required for BU's internal approval.
<p>Once the above is completed, RDS will request internal approval. Once BU has approved the bid, you can submit it. At this point, if required by the funder, RDS will carry out e-submission checks and subsequently approve the proposal on the funder's application system (there may be amendments required by the PI if queries are identified by RDS during the checking process). You should ensure that you provide each of your partners with a copy of the final submitted version of the application.</p>					