# Bournemouth University Research Councils Development Scheme

## Outline

Research is a key strand of the University’s Fusion activities. There is a challenge to increase the quality and quantity of proposals to support the achievement of the University’s research and knowledge exchange ambitions. In addition, there are external factors that require our research bidding to be more competitive in an environment where success rates are decreasing, and demand management measures are put in place by funders (mainly research councils) in order to increase the quality of applications submitted.

As a result, BU is introducing the Research Council Development Scheme (RCDS), which will be piloted from March 2018. The RCDS is a coordinated, targeted set of activities designed to inspire and equip BU researchers to achieve greater success with Research Council funding. The scheme is part of the RKEOs Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Frameworks ([RKEDF](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/staffdevelopmentandengagement/fusiondevelopment/fusionprogrammesandevents/rkedevelopmentframework/)) ‘Research Council Funding’ pathway. RKEO supports funding development by offering support for individual proposals and training to increase funding-related skills and awareness.

### RCDS Objectives

1. Increase awareness of the Research Councils opportunities.
2. Equip researchers with the confidence and skills to apply for the Research Councils funding in line with their career stage.
3. Fast-track the development of a portfolio of proposals by facilitating proposal writing, setting next steps and allocating support.

### How the RCDS works

Due to the wide range of opportunities offered by Research Councils, the RCDS will feature a range of activities which may be generic in scope or targeted to a cohort as follows:

* E cohort – early career researchers[[1]](#footnote-1) and those new to Research Councils (learning aims: first grants, fellowships, general mind-set and approach)
* M cohort – mid-career researchers and those with some Research Councils experience (learning aims: project leadership and moving up to larger grants/collaborations)
* P cohort – professorial level and those with significant Research Council experience (learning aims: high value, strategic and longer-larger funding)

The RCDS will consist of a mix of development activities:

* As a group and within targeted cohorts: training, workshops, structured proposal writing sessions and opportunities to build peer-to-peer support.
* 1:1 support for scoping/identifying funding streams and planning/starting proposals.
* Hands-on work to develop proposals through the scheme, including bid surgeries.

The training and development timetable for the pilot of the RCDS is shown at [annex 1](#Annex1).

Each participant can also call on a total of three hours of 1:1 support from the external funding consultant throughout the scheme. In addition, three bid surgeries will be available throughout the pilot where members will be given a one hour slot to meet with the external funding advisor. There will be further opportunities for development available under the [RKEDF](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/staffdevelopmentandengagement/fusiondevelopment/fusionprogrammesandevents/rkedevelopmentframework/) which will support members of the RCDS. RKEO will make cohort members aware of these. On completion of the RCDS, members of the cohort will be put in touch with an RKEO Research Facilitator to assist them with taking forward applications.

**Expectations**

Around 10 participants will be selected for each targeted stream (30 in total) in the pilot phase. Due to the limited places and the significant opportunity that this represents, there is a strong expectation that those selected for the RCDS attend all activities and develop outline proposals. The ultimate requirement is that each participant will submit a Research Council application within 6 months of completing the scheme. RKEO will monitor progress and provide reports to Faculty’s.

Those wanting to participate in this great opportunity will need to submit an expression of interest to RKEO, stating:

* Why they are applying to the RCDS
* Research Council Bidding experience to date
* Which targeted cohort they consider themselves to be in: E, M or P
* Do they have a funding proposal in development? If so, provide details of the proposal

RKEO will send a **membership agreement form** to potential members, where they will agree to attend the training sessions and submit proposals to the research councils. Potential members will need to seek approval from their line manager and Faculty DDRPP.

The RCDS will run on a cohort basis with the first (pilot) cohort starting in March 2018 and completing the scheme after six months. Following evaluation of this pilot run, it is intended that the RCDS will become a regular feature of RKEO’s development offer with the potential for multiple cohorts per year depending on demand. The pilot will be evaluated by RKEO in summer 2018.

For any queries about the RCDS, please contact Jo Garrad, RKEO Funding Development Manager or Rachel Clarke, RKEO Research Facilitator.

### Annex 1 Timetable

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| **Title** | **Description** | **Audience (E/M/P)** | **When** |
| Welcome, Myth busters and an Introduction to RCs and how they fund research | **Morning**: Introduction to the scheme, expectations and institutional support; Myth busting workshop, led by a panel of experts, will discuss common myths and misconceptions about RCs funding. A survey will be distributed beforehand to gather members thoughts; The panel will then hold a Q&A.  **Afternoon**: Introduction to the Research Councils, an overview of components of an RC proposal and key items to look for in call documents. | All | **7/3/18**  10am – 4pm  Lunch provided |
| Creative inter-disciplinary collaboration | This training session will be delivered as part of the **Interdisciplinary Research Week**. ‘How to be part of a successful IDR collaboration’ will provide insight to the tools and approaches for building IDR collaborations. There is also an opportunity in the afternoon to undertake training in ‘Networking’. | M/P | **20/3/18**  Session 1: 9am – 12.30pm; Session 2: 1.30pm – 5pm |
| Early career funding | This training session will cover the general principles of early career funding opportunities, to include first grants and fellowships. | E | **28/3/18**  10am – 12 noon |
| Approaching the Case for Support and tackling the Pathways to Impact | **Morning**: This training session will focus on the central plank of a research council proposal.  **Afternoon**: This training session will focus on impact basics, impact planning and writing a ‘Pathways to Impact’ statement. | All | **18/4/18**  10am – 3pm  Lunch provided |
| Strategic programmes | This training session will focus on higher-value, strategic and longer/ larger schemes offered by the RCs, including processes, criteria and expectations that set these apart from standard schemes. | P | **25/4/18**  10am – 12 noon |
| First bid writing retreats | These will be structured writing workshops to work on proposals based on learning from the sessions so far. Two sessions will run with E cohort starting at 10am and M/P cohort starting at 12 noon (with working lunch provided for both cohorts) | E  M/P | **1/5/18**  E 10am – 2pm  M/P 12 – 4pm  Lunch provided |
| *Bid writing surgery 1:1’s* | *One hour slots will be available for members to meet with the external application reviewer – by appointment only* | *All* | ***10/5/18***  *10am – 4pm* |
| Becoming a reviewer | This training session will focus on how to review proposals, the benefits of becoming a reviewer and how to approach funders and put yourself forward as a reviewer. | Mandatory for E and open to M/P | **16/5/18**  10am – 12 noon |
| Mock funder panels and peer review of draft proposals | This session combines training on the panel process and the opportunity to play the role of panel members – assessing draft proposals of cohort members, discussing with other panel members and prioritising proposals, as well as acting as an interview panel to question peers on their drafts. This will be limited to groups of around 6 and within their cohorts. | All but within cohorts | **13/6/18**  E 10am – 12;  M – 12– 2pm (with lunch);  P – 2 – 5pm |
| Second bid writing retreats | These will be the second structured writing workshops for cohorts to work on their draft proposals taking into account the reviewer’s perspective developed through the peer review session. Two sessions will run with E cohort starting at 10am and M/P starting at 12 noon (with working lunch provided for both cohorts). | All | 27/6/18  E 10am – 2pm  M/P 11am – 2pm  Lunch provided |
| Closing session | This session will follow on from the bid writing retreat and will provide a roundup of key messages from the scheme, an opportunity for RKEO to obtain feedback on the scheme and, most importantly, a celebration of progress and completion of the cohorts. | All (30) | 27/6/18  2 - 4pm |
| *Bid writing surgery 1:1’s* | *One hour slots will be available for members to meet with the external application reviewer – by appointment only* | *All* | ***12/7/18***  *10am – 4pm* |
| *Bid writing surgery 1:1’s* | *One hour slots will be available for members to meet with the external application reviewer – by appointment only* | *All* | ***9/8/18***  *10am – 4pm* |

1. ECR in this case is defined as someone who started their research career on or after 1 August 2013. This is the point at which they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’, with any HE or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)