

Owner:	J Northam, Head of RKE, RKEO
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Due for review:	Summer 2016 (to be reviewed annually)

BU Bridging Fund Scheme

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (2002) provided legislation on the appropriate use of fixed-term contracts. BU abides by this legislation and BU's [Code of Practice - Use of Fixed-Term Contracts](#) provides clear guidelines on when it is appropriate to use a fixed-term contract. Despite these changes in employment legislation, research staff in particular continue to rely heavily on short-term contracts usually linked to external research funding. This situation sometimes impacts negatively on continuity of employment and job security and can result in a costly loss of researcher talent for the institution.
- 1.2 BU aims to mitigate these circumstances by redeploying the researcher where possible, or where feasible, by providing 'bridging funding' for the continuation of employment for a short-term (maximum three months) between research grants. BU's Bridging Fund Scheme is intended to permit the temporary employment, in certain circumstances, of researchers between fixed-term contracts at BU, for whom no other source of funding is available, in order to:
- (a) encourage the retention of experienced and skilled staff, and sustain research teams and expertise;
 - (b) avoid the break in employment and career which might otherwise be faced by such staff;
 - (c) maximise the opportunity for such staff to produce high-quality outputs and/or research impact at the end of funded contracts/grants.

Scheme Terms and Conditions

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 The following eligibility criteria underpin the allocation of bridging funds under this scheme:

- 1) The scheme is only available for staff who are employed on a fixed-term contract (staff on established, part-time hourly paid or casual contracts are excluded) by Bournemouth University. This includes members of staff who may be on family-related (e.g. maternity, shared parental, etc.) or other similarly approved leave.
- 2) The use of bridging funds must support the BU2018 strategy and Faculty research plans, and there must be a detailed and clear plan of work for the staff member to undertake whilst being funded from bridging funds.
- 3) It must contribute to the career development of the staff member in accordance with the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#).
- 4) Applicants must have completed their probation period and have satisfactory performance in all other aspects of their role.
- 5) When the application for bridging funding is made on the basis of there being a gap between awarded research contracts or because the decision on a submitted research grant is pending, the researcher must be named on the submitted proposal.
- 6) Normally an application for bridging funds would be anticipated about three months prior to the conclusion of a current employment contract and be as an outcome of a review of options undertaken as part of a redeployment exercise as per the BU [Code of Practice – Redundancy](#).
- 7) Costs associated with research during the bridging period, other than the salary and employers on-costs, must be met by the Faculty.

4. Rules of the scheme

- 4.1 Applicants must normally be on academic/research contracts. In exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to other grant-funded staff.
- 4.2 Efforts must have been made to secure a new grant for further funding in good time before the expiry of the present contract and all other relevant sources of support fully and satisfactorily pursued.
- 4.3 Every effort must have been made (and continue to be made) to secure from the external funding body the early start of a new award, so as to minimise the period between contracts and the length of time for which bridging support is sought.
- 4.4 The line manager and the Deputy Dean (Research and Professional Practice) must support the application for bridging support and provide an assessment of the benefits which would result to the department and individual concerned.

- 4.5 A satisfactory programme of work must be agreed with the Deputy Dean (Research and Professional Practice) to cover the period of employment for which bridging finance is sought, and details must be provided when applying for bridging funds.
- 4.6 Where no further funding has yet been secured, bridging support may be requested until the likely start of further funding or to provide sufficient time to produce research outputs and/or maximise research impact from the previous project, provided this period does not exceed three calendar months. If, within the extension period, the application to the funding body is rejected, bridging finance will nonetheless continue for the remainder of the agreed extension.
- 4.7 Applications are contingent on the availability of funding and securing an extension of eligibility to work in the UK if required.
- 4.8 Preference will be given to staff who can demonstrate that they have previously undertaken appropriate training and development.
- 4.9 Even in the event of an application, the University will still be required to continue to follow the end of fixed-term contract process, to ensure that appropriate support and contractual notice is provided to the staff member.
- 4.10 Decisions are made at the discretion of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, and the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange. There is no right of appeal.
- 4.11 The Scheme can be removed at any time, without notice, at the discretion of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation.

Procedure

5 Application Procedure

- 5.1 All applications for bridging support must be made on behalf of a named staff member by the line manager, using the standard Bridging Fund Form.
- 5.2 The completed Bridging Fund Form should include the following:
- (i) a description of the research to be undertaken during the period for which bridging support is requested;
 - (ii) details of any previous bridging support received by the applicant (or a statement that no previous support has been received);

- (iii) information about the efforts which have been made to secure a new grant, and to arrange the early start of any new award;
- (iv) a statement from the Deputy Dean (Research and Professional Practice), indicating his/her support for the application and outlining the benefits which would result to the department and the member of staff;
- (v) for situations whereby the application is made and further funding has not yet been obtained, the application form should include an up-to-date curriculum vitae for the applicant, including a list of publications;
- (vi) confirmation of successful completion of probation and satisfactory performance in all other aspects of the role;
- (vii) confirmation from the Director of Operations that there is sufficient Faculty funding available to support all other costs (except salary and on-costs) for the extension period, and details of any Faculty funding available to contribute to the salary and on-costs during the extension period.
- (viii) whether the staff members employment is subject to permission from the UK Visa and Immigration Service.

- 5.3 The completed form (Appendix 1) should be sent electronically to the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange. The salary cost will be calculated by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office and added to the application form. The decision as to whether to fund will be made by the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, and the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange, dependent on availability of funds and link to BU2018. The Faculty is strongly encouraged to co-fund salary costs where possible.
- 5.4 The University will continue with redeployment planning as normal during the bridging period to investigate alternative redeployment in the event this is necessary.
- 5.5 The Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange will advise the Faculty and Human Resources of the decision made in relation to the extension of the fixed-term contract using bridging funding. Human Resources will issue the appropriate contractual documentation. Where applications to the fund are not successful, action will be taken to continue to seek redeploy for such staff and/or implement the appropriate redundancy and notice procedures.
- 5.6 The staff member's line manager is responsible for keeping them informed throughout the process.

6 Right to work

- 6.1 Where an individual's employment with BU is subject to sponsorship from the UK Visa & Immigration Service, continued permission to work and live in the UK is not guaranteed and advice would need to be sought under the immigration legislation and regulations at that time. Further information can be sought from Human Resources.

General

7. Equality Assessment

- 7.1 The scheme has been equality assessed and the outcome can be found in Appendix 2. On an annual basis an equality review of applications and outcomes will be undertaken by RKEO.

8. Acknowledgements

- 8.1 In developing this scheme BU has looked to the documentation from the following institutions:
- London School of Economics - [RIIF Bridging Fund](#)
 - University of Oxford - [Bridging Support Scheme](#)
 - University of Stirling - [Bridging Fund for Fixed-Term Contract Research Staff](#)
 - University College London - [Bridging Fund for Research Staff](#)

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4. Approval from the Faculty Deputy Dean (Research and Professional Practice)

Statement indicating the Deputy Dean's support for the application and outlining the benefits which would result to the department and the member of staff if the application is approved:

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Approved by Faculty Deputy Dean (Research and Professional Practice):	Signed:..... Date:.....
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4. Approval from the Faculty Director of Operations

Confirmation there is sufficient Faculty funding available to support all other costs (except salary and on-costs) for the extension period:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Details of any Faculty funding available to contribute to the salary and on-costs during the extension period:	£.....
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The applicant has successfully completed their probation and has satisfactory performance in all other aspects of their current role:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Is the applicant's employment is subject to permission from the UK Visa and Immigration Service:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Approved by Faculty Director of Operations:	Signed:..... Date:.....
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5. Applicant's CV

For situations whereby the application is made and further funding has not yet been obtained, the application form should include an up-to-date curriculum vitae for the applicant, including a list of publications.

Applicant's CV attached:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2: Equality assessment for BU Bridging Fund Scheme

When completing the assessment template the policy-maker/team should complete this template in partnership with the team who supported the assessment.

Equality Assessment Template		
1.	Background	Answer
1.1	What policy is being assessed or reviewed?	BU Bridging Fund Scheme
1.2	What are the aims of the policy?	To permit the temporary employment, in certain circumstances, of researchers between fixed-term contracts at BU, for whom no other source of funding is available, in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) encourage the retention of experienced and skilled staff, and sustain research teams and expertise; (b) avoid the break in employment and career which might otherwise be faced by such staff; (c) maximise the opportunity for such staff to produce high-quality outputs and/or research impact at the end of funded contracts/grants.
1.3	Who is affected by the policy?	Fixed-term contract research staff (and in rare circumstances other fixed-term grant-funded staff).
1.4	Who supported you and why to complete the first assessment or this review?	Sally Gregson, HR Manager
2.	Equality information	Answer
2.1	For existing policies, what equality information have you used as referenced in Table 2 of the guidelines , and how have you used the information to inform the first assessment and subsequent review? (Please also describe who provided this information and why they were approached)	N/A
2.2	If this is a new policy, what equality information will be used to monitor the impact as referenced in Table 2 of the guidelines , and how you will use the information to inform the first assessment and subsequent review? (Please also describe who provided this information and why they were approached)	Data on staff applying for contract extensions under the scheme, as well as those contract research staff who are eligible but who do not apply. Also data on which applications were approved.
2.3	How will the collected information be used to inform the first assessment and subsequent review?	The collected equality information will be used to see if there are any patterns in terms of application / approval based on the protected characteristics. If patterns are identified then the scheme will be reviewed with the aim of mitigating these.
3.	Equality relevance	

Equality Assessment Template

Equality Assessment Template										
	When undertaking an assessment policy owners are required to complete the equality relevance table by indicating whether or not the policy has a: positive impact (PI), negative impact (NI) or no impact (NO). Any decision taken when completing this table will need to take into consideration available equality information.	Age	Disability	Gender	Gender Reassignment	Pregnancy/ Maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual Orientation	Marriage/civil partnership
3.1	Does the BU policy have a positive, negative or no impact in terms of addressing prejudice by fostering good relations among people with a protected characteristic and those who do not at the University?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
3.2	In advancing equality of opportunity, does the BU policy have a positive, negative or no impact in terms of removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people at the University due to their protected characteristics?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A
Equality relevance										
	When undertaking an assessment policy owners are required to complete the equality relevance table by indicating whether or not the policy has a: positive impact (PI), negative impact (NI) or no impact (N). Any decision taken when completing this table will need to take into consideration available equality information.	Age	Disability	Gender	Gender Reassignment	Pregnancy/ Maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual Orientation	Marriage/civil partnership
3.3	In advancing equality of opportunity, does the BU policy have a positive, negative or no impact in terms of taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people at the University?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A
3.4	In advancing equality of opportunity, does the BU policy have a positive, negative or no impact in terms of encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in all activities at the University where their participation is disproportionately low?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A
3.5	Does the BU policy have a positive, negative or no impact in terms of seeking to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act (Equality Act, 2010) at the University?	NO	NO	NO	NO	PI	NO	NO	NO	N/A
4.	Decisions/ Feedback/ Approval	Answer								
4.1	What are the decision outcomes as outlined in Table 3 of the guidelines as part of the first assessment or at the review stage?	Continue the BU policy (Level 1).								
4.2	In what way have the decision outcomes changed since the first assessment?	N/A								
4.3	What actions need to be taken to promote/share any positive impact as part of the first assessment or review?	N/A								

Equality Assessment Template

4.4	What actions need to be taken to mitigate any negative impact as part of the first assessment or review?	N/A
4.5	Who completed this first assessment or review?	Julie Northam, Head of RKE
4.7	What feedback has been provided from DDESG to the assessment or review?	TBC
4.8	How has feedback from DDESG been used to inform the first assessment or review?	TBC
4.9	Which School/Professional Service Executive Committee has approved this assessment?	RKEO
4.10	Date approved by School or Professional Services Executive Committee	1 June 2015
4.11	Date for assessment review	Summer 2016

Appendix 2: Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making checklist¹

The checklist below provides a summary of the actions a BU policy-maker/ assessment team needs to consider when giving consideration to the aims of the general equality duty in respect of policy and decision-making.

Question/Comment		Answer
1.	Has assessing the impact of equality been integrated into all policy development/decision-making within your School and Professional Services business planning processes? (Please provide examples)	
2.	What equality information has been used to assess the impact of the BU policy? (Please provide examples)	
3.	Has the assessment identified and understood how a policy might affect people with particular protected characteristics differently? (Please provide examples)	
4.	Has the assessment identified any possible changes necessary to meet different people's needs, in terms of removing or mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive ones? (Please provide examples)	
5.	Do you feel the time and effort involved to undertake the assessment was proportionate to the importance of the policy in advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations? (Please provide examples)	
6.	In undertaking the assessment please outline who you have engaged with, and why did you engage with them. (Please provide examples)	
7.	As part of undertaking the assessment have you documented how you have considered the impact of the BU policy, and how that informed your decision-making?	
8.	Have you provided feedback to DDESG on the effectiveness of the BU guidelines as part of your policy development and decision-making within your School/Professional Service? (Please provide examples)	

¹ This checklist is an adaptation of the EHRC (2012:18) summary guidance and has been modified to make them relevant to Bournemouth University.