

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND BID MANAGEMENT POLICY ROP/06

Policy Title	PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND BID MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND RELATED AGREEMENTS
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PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND BID MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND AGREEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description

Application: This policy applies to the development of externally funded research proposals (grant applications and research contracts).

Exceptions: Research proposals and agreements which include non-research activities (such as the provision of Education, Outreach or Public Engagement) should be considered in consultation with the appropriate College Officer(s).

Applications to approve exceptions to this policy should be made through the Director of the Research Office.

1.2 Aims

The Proposal Development and Bid Management Policy sets out the principles governing the development of funding proposals (grant applications and research contracts) and relevant College controls. As such, it aims to provide early-stage guidance to academic and administrative staff.

The policy also sets out the principles and obligations governing bid management of 'complex' proposals, clarifying responsibilities and supporting a co-ordinated approach for cross-Faculty collaborations.

2 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

- 2.1 **Research strategy:** Proposed research should support the [College's strategic plan](#) and align with the relevant Departmental and Faculty Research Strategy.
- 2.2 **Research classification:** Only activities that meet the [definition of research](#) should be classified as research and subsequently included in the College's statistical returns. At its simplest, (University) research is understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding for the public benefit.
- 2.3 **Restricted research:**
- 2.3.1 **Tobacco funding:** Acceptance of funding or soliciting research funding from tobacco industries is prohibited (see the [College Research Codes of Practice](#)).
- 2.3.2 **Classified research and classified materials** (see the [College Policy Statement](#)):
- Research and/or consultancy (UK and Overseas) that is subject to a security classification above 'Official Sensitive' is not permitted to be undertaken by College staff on any College campus.
 - No materials, documents or information in any form, which are subject to a security classification above 'Official Sensitive' or equivalent classifications from overseas Governments, shall be generated or stored on any College campus.
- 2.4 **Ethics Code:** The College is committed to operating to the highest ethical standards. The [Ethics Code](#) sets out the conduct expected from the College community to promote and support good ethical behaviour. Research that compromises the College's independence, objectivity of judgement or reputation must be avoided. Within the context of proposal development, research proposals and related agreements must not compromise the College's commitment to honesty, integrity and fairness.
- 2.4.1 **Relationship Review Policy:** Proposed relationships with third parties (e.g. research funders and collaborators) should be considered within the context of the College's [Ethics Code and Relationship Review Policy](#). Due diligence checks outlining potential risks, along with mitigating actions, should be documented and escalated within the defined framework. Proposed relationships must not:
- Compromise the College's status as an independent institution.
 - Create material conflicts of interest (see 2.5).
 - Arise, in whole or in part, from illegal activity that might include tax evasion, fraud, bribery; the violation of international conventions on human rights or the environment; or violation of any applicable Sanction laws.
 - Lead the College to contravene data protection and/or freedom of information legislation or require the College to be involved in action that may be deemed illegal.
 - Require the College to suppress or falsify academic research.
 - Require the College to deviate from its normal hiring, promotion, procurement and contracting procedures.
 - Require the College to provide special consideration for admission to its programmes of study.
 - Restrict academic freedom.
 - Deter others from supporting or working with the College.
 - Cause any damage (e.g. financial, reputational) or expose the College to significant liability.
 - Conflict with the aims of the College in any other way.
- 2.4.2 **Research with potential for misuse:** Research that may involve or generate materials, technologies, methods or knowledge that could be misused for unethical purposes (such as criminal, terrorist or unethical military purposes including weapons production, operation or dissemination) may not be entered into without a fully documented risk assessment process and appropriate referral or escalation.

- 2.5 **External Interests Policy (Conflicts of Interest and Register of External Interests):** Conflicts of interest (perceived, potential or actual) relating to proposed research must be referred and mitigated in line with the [College External Interests and Annual Declaration Policy](#), and with due regard to relevant Funder Conflict of Interest policies and reporting requirements (such as the [National Institutes of Health Financial Conflict of Interest Policy](#)).
- 2.6 **Research using animals:** As stated within the [College Animal Use Policy](#) and associated guidance, animals may only be used in research programmes where their use is shown to be essential. No such research can be undertaken without associated ethical and Home Office approvals.
- 2.7 **Research using humans, their tissue or data** may only be undertaken within the constraints of the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks and [research governance](#) requirements (e.g. UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research, Principles of UK Policy Framework, Good Clinical Practice, Data Protection). No such research can be undertaken without associated ethical and regulatory approvals.
- 2.8 **Research which involves the processing of personal data** must comply with the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).
- 2.9 **Investigator Eligibility Policy:** Where funders state investigator (principal investigator and co-investigator) eligibility criteria for specific funding schemes (which may include requirements governing minimum qualifications, academic grade etc), these will take precedence over College policy for that scheme only. Where no minimum eligibility requirements are stated by a funder, then the [College Investigator Eligibility Policy](#) will determine the criteria.
- 2.10 **Costing and Pricing Policy:** The full cost (inclusive of VAT where applicable) of all resources associated with the proposed research must be established and inform (but not dictate) subsequent pricing. Pricing should take account of the College's strategic and financial objectives.
- 2.10.1 [College Costing and Pricing Policy](#) sets out the principles governing Full Economic Costing (FEC) methodology and pricing strategies as these relate to non-commercial and commercial research.
- 2.10.2 Where non-commercial funders (e.g. Research Councils, Charities, European Commission) prescribe their own pricing rules, these take precedence over College Policy.
- 2.10.3 Projects requiring significant financial institutional commitment (value and duration) should not be entered into without initial referral or escalation to the relevant Faculty Finance Officer(s).
- 2.11 **Foreign Currency Policy:** Proposals submitted to Funders in a foreign currency should be converted in accordance with the [College's Foreign Exchange policy](#). For Euro and USD proposals, the Foreign Exchange Rate Table should be used.
- 2.12 **College Procurement Policy:** The College must demonstrate probity, accountability and transparency and as such, is required to achieve best value for money in buying goods and services. Procurement of goods or services over £10K (exclusive of VAT) must comply with the [College's tendering requirements](#). Consideration should be given to future procurement obligations within proposals and any tendering requirements specified by Funders.
- 2.13 **Preferred Terms and Conditions Policy:** This sets out the preferred contractual position for the core terms in a research agreement (e.g. terms relating to publication, Intellectual Property, payment etc). These have been designed to protect academic freedom; minimise financial and reputational risk; support the development of research outcomes; and maintain consistency of approach between funders. Authority for acceptance has been delegated to the Faculty Research Services and Faculty Contracts teams. The Research Office has authority to accept contractual terms outside of the preferred terms and conditions.

- 2.14 **Approval and Authorisation Policy:** The President is the recognised Institutional Signatory for research applications / proposals and research-related agreements. Faculty Approval and College Authorisation responsibilities have been delegated through the Research Office and Faculties within a set framework outlined in the [Approval and Authorisation Policy](#) and [Preferred Terms and Conditions Policy](#).

Faculty Approval and College Authorisation must be reaffirmed if:

- Substantial amendments are made to a research agreement which significantly affects the financial recovery and/or period of the activity, such as additional subcontracted activities, supplements, time extensions or early termination.
- Amendments to a Clinical Trial protocol or any other supporting documentation will significantly affect the safety or physical or mental integrity of trial subjects; the scientific value, conduct or management of the trial; or the quality or safety of any investigational medicinal products used in the trial. A Notice of Substantial Amendment should also be submitted to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and Research Ethics Committee.

Proposal development guidance: [Funder Information](#), [Planning a Proposal](#) and [Costing & Pricing](#).

3 BID MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The President (through the Provost) has devolved operational responsibility for the development of research proposals to the Faculty Deans. Ownership of the associated processes is delegated to the Academic Departments and Faculty Research Services and Faculty Contracts teams. Subsequent delegation must conform with Obligation 4.3 of this policy.
- 3.1.1 Delegation to the Academic Department is jointly to the lead Principal Investigator (PI) of the research proposal and the senior administrative officer associated with the PI's academic department, e.g. Department Operations Manager or equivalent.
- 3.1.2 Delegation to Faculty Research Services is firstly to the Faculty Research Services Manager, Contracts Manager or other senior Research Services officer.
- 3.2 The PI is considered the primary owner of scientific proposal development, but must notify and consult with Faculty Research Services at an early stage to ensure all potential complexities and bid requirements (e.g. new funders, third party due diligence, ethical approvals, compliance requirements) are identified and managed appropriately.
- 3.3 All proposals for external research funding must specify a named PI from a single lead Faculty and must satisfy the eligibility criteria set by the Funder. Where no such eligibility criteria exists, the [College's Investigator Eligibility Policy](#) will take precedence.
- 3.3.1 For cross-faculty proposals, the faculty of the PI will lead the bid unless an alternative arrangement is agreed by the relevant Faculty Deans. The lead Faculty Research Services team is responsible for coordinating the costing and approval of all sub-projects.
- 3.5 Faculty Research Services must be notified of all **proposals to funding calls, giving a minimum notice period (set by each Faculty team) ahead of the funder deadline**. Additional time and consideration must also be allowed for relevant Departmental approval and related requirements.
- 3.6 Where a proposal is particularly complex and requires extended consultation or approval, a designated bid manager should be appointed from the lead department to coordinate submission (this can be the PI). Such proposals include those:
- developing research centres or institutes;
 - with large cross-faculty collaborations;
 - developing major research facilities;
 - involving three or more external research partners;
 - involving researchers being located overseas or where research is to be subcontracted to overseas organisations;
 - requiring approval for Capital Expenditure (e.g. creation of new buildings or major modifications to existing buildings);
 - requiring an Institutional Statement of Support (see 4.8); and/or
 - requiring a central authorisation from the President, Provost and/or Vice Provost (Research and Enterprise) (see 4.9).
- 3.7 Central business units (e.g. Research Office, Enterprise Division) may lead the development of proposals in cases where the Vice Provost (Research and Enterprise) assumes the role of PI, or in other circumstances, only with agreement of the lead faculty. The lead faculty retains overall accountability for proposal development and institutional approval via Faculty Research Services or Faculty Contracts.
- 3.8 Where funding schemes impose an institutional quota (i.e. the funder restricts the number of submissions per institution), the process for each bid is managed by the Research Office's Funding Strategy Team.
- 3.9 The International Relations Office must be notified by the designated Bid Manager if a bid requires:
- Formation of a consortium with overseas universities or research institutes not funded by the European Commission's Programmes, with the exception of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities scheme.
 - Creation of a physical presence abroad such as an Institute or Research Centre.

- Legal clauses on Undergraduate / Postgraduate Taught / Postgraduate Research exchanges, Continuing Professional Development or other educational provisions abroad.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Academic Department Responsibilities

- 4.1 **Principal Investigator** is responsible and accountable for the development and timely submission of their research proposals. Appropriate elements of the process (e.g. proposal costing) may be delegated to administrative or other staff, but the Principal Investigator must:
- Abide by the governing principles and policies outlined in Section 2 of this policy.
 - Notify their Head of Department and Faculty Research Services of any matters or concerns that could affect the probity of a research proposal or related third party relationship, e.g. potential conflicts of interest, research with potential for misuse, unethical practice allegations etc.
 - Ensure that due consideration is given to any ethical, due diligence, research integrity and safeguarding requirements as part of proposal development.
 - Follow Departmental or College internal peer review procedures where required.
 - Comply with the funder's terms and conditions of funding.
- 4.2 **Heads of Departments** may not grant approval for prohibited research (see 2.3) and must ensure due consideration and escalate matters (where required) in line with the College's Ethics Code and related policies (see 2.4 - 2.7).

Faculty Responsibilities

- 4.3 **Faculties** must ensure that proposal development and bid management responsibilities are only delegated to staff with the appropriate level of skills and knowledge in areas including:
- Principles and policies governing proposal development
 - Applicable College policies, processes and systems
 - Costing and Pricing methodologies
 - Funder terms and conditions, associated policies and systems
 - Any other externally imposed conditions, regulations and guidelines
- 4.4 **Faculties** should ensure that an appropriate Bid Manager is assigned to each complex bid (as defined in 3.6) and is responsible for liaising with relevant business areas; coordinating the bid preparation, review and submission process; and supporting the research team with any additional funder requirements such as preparation for interviews.
- 4.5 **Faculty Research Services** are responsible for the provision of advice and guidance in support of proposal development; act as the interface between the College and Funder for issues relating to funder terms and conditions and financial matters; and must ensure that all proposals comply with Funder and College Policies outlined in Section 2 (e.g. Approval and Authorisation Policy) prior to granting College authorisation. This includes submission to funding schemes with institutional quotas where a Research Office pre-submission process is required (see 3.8).
- 4.6 **Faculty Contracts** act as the interface between the College and Funder for issues relating to contractual matters and are responsible for ensuring that proposals and agreements comply with Funder and College Policies outlined in Section 2 (e.g. Approval and Authorisation Policy and Preferred Terms and Conditions Policy) prior to granting College authorisation.

Research Office Responsibilities

- 4.7 **Research Office** (Funding Strategy team) is responsible for managing and communicating the internal processes governing the selection of bids to schemes that have a restricted submission (see 3.8).
- 4.8 **Research Office** (Funding Strategy team) will support the provision of institutional statements of support where required and appropriate to the bid. Letters of support from the President, Provost or Vice Provost (Research and Enterprise) will only be provided when requested by an authorised departmental representative or bid manager who is responsible for ensuring that the proposal is of appropriate quality, fits the remit of the funding call, and that any financial commitments on behalf of the College which are included in the proposal have been agreed by the budget holder. The Bid Manager or relevant departmental contact must ensure that:
- [Research Office \(Funding Strategy team\)](#) and relevant Faculty Research Services team are informed of the intent to apply.
 - All appropriate approvals are obtained in good time.
 - A draft letter of support with a copy of associated approvals and a copy of the bid are provided to the Research Office (Funding Strategy Team) for review.
 - Research Office (Funding Strategy Team) is given a minimum of 10 working days' notice to review the letter of support prior to the submission deadline.
- 4.9 **Research Office** is responsible for authorising those bids which specifically require a central authorisation from the President, Provost and/or Vice Provost (Research and Enterprise). However, this obligation will not negate the need for a lead Faculty, lead Principal Investigator and/or Bid Manager. In such cases, the lead Faculty must ensure that:
- Research Office and relevant Faculty Research Services team are informed of the intention to apply.
 - All appropriate approvals are obtained in good time.
 - Research Office is given a minimum of 10 working days' notice to review the bid prior to the submission deadline.
- 4.10 **Research Office** is responsible for negotiating all European Commission contracts and consortium agreements.
- 4.11 **Research Office** is responsible for the policy and system frameworks within which the Faculty Research Services teams operate.