SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS

Research Committee

9th January 2019

Responsibilities of the Portfolio Managers and Researchers to support research proposals, awards and reporting

Janet Ball, Head of Research Services

Background – A review of the content of the Worktribe system and comparison of reports with known activity reveals that Portfolio Managers are not always informed in good time, and with adequate detail, of research applications through to submission (including final copies of applications). The PM team has been under pressure so has not been able to follow up queries, chase for detail, request new funder or scheme set-ups, or provide more in-depth pre-award support. The PM team should regain capacity through a new post and training in, for example, more efficient system use.

The Research Support Office has not been picking up records completed by the School to trigger inclusion in reports, while Contracts have also fallen behind, causing delays to application and award reporting. The RSO is now working to catch up.

Many researchers are not aware of the range of support available, either in the School or in the wider support community, so induction to research support for new researchers will be formalised and the website updated.

Action requested from the committee – Researchers in the School to interact as early as possible with the PM team and to supply more detailed information about the project (funder, scheme, deadlines, partners, contacts, documents at each stage from outline to full).

A draft document is overleaf. It does not include any internal deadlines as I don't think these work in practice. Comments and suggestions welcomed.

When approved, I request that this goes out to the research staff (and business development teams) endorsed by the Head of School and re-enforced by the DoR and Institute Directors.

Main subject text – see draft on next page

Equality and diversity implications – N

Resource implications (staff, space, budget) – N

DRAFT Research Support in the School of Informatics: how to work with the Portfolio Management team

The Portfolio Management team (Caroline Hastings, Carrie McNamee, Ruta Bader, Laura Rich, Fiona Williams and Helen New) provides support for and management of research grant activity in the School of Informatics. Each Portfolio Manager works with one or more institutes, though they also work as a team ensure cover. **They are the first point of contact for the research community from funding opportunity through to close of a research project**. Support provided includes:

- funding opportunities, queries
- research grant proposal preparation and costing (including funder, partner, legal liaison)
- financial management of research grant portfolios and institute budgets
- research staff contract extensions and end of employment process
- advertisement of research grant funded positions
- appointment of research staff, in collaboration with Human Resources
- commitment of studentship funds and offers, in collaboration with the Graduate School

Staff member	Area of Responsibility	Email	Phone	Location
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Ruta Bader	ICSA, IPAB, SPECKLED	ruta.vaupsaite@ed.ac.uk	50 2724	IF 2.36
Fiona Williams	IANC & CISA	fiona.williams@ed.ac.uk (on leave, please contact Carrie or Ruta)	50 9330	IF 2.36
Janet Ball	Head of Research Services	janet.ball@ed.ac.uk	50 9970	IF 3.26

https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/portfolio-management - contact details and updates to staff or responsibilities.

The same process applies for *any* research application, bid or tender, whether you are applying for a fellowship or a research grant, a studentship or travel funding, to a charity, national, international or commercial funder or a Research Council, and whether you are the Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator on a project.

As soon as you identify a funding opportunity please speak to your Portfolio Manager, providing as much background to the opportunity as possible. This may be a website link, emails or simply something you've heard. This will allow the Portfolio Manager to check that the funder and scheme are set up in the Worktribe system, to ensure that costing and pricing is appropriate, and that we can accept the terms and conditions. For new or unusual funders this can mean talking to them directly where the rules are unclear or we need to explain our processes in their context.

Where you have partners (external or within the University, other academic or industry), please provide contact names so that authorised costs can be collated and held or, if they lead, sent to them. *Costs for the School of Informatics must be provided and approved by the PM team.*

If we will administer a budget which is passed on to partners, it may be necessary (depending on location, nature of the funding or whether you have worked with them before) to run a due diligence process. Due diligence is provided by the central Research Support Office (RSO) or – where the funder is a commercial entity - Edinburgh Innovations (EI).

When you receive costs for your project, there will be a record number (Project 1234568) with it. Please use it in all correspondence. Using the reference number allows the PM team to identify the proposal, making workload sharing easier. You can request multiple iterations so please don't re-use older costings without checking as salary scales, overhead rates and other on-costs are updated throughout the year. If you decide not to submit, for whatever reason, let the PM know so the record can be closed.

Please send a copy of your completed application to your portfolio manager as soon as possible *before* submission to the funder. Portfolio managers check that the costs match those approved, that it has been through internal review or ethics processes and that it fits the scheme requirements. **This stage is the School approval to submit.** *Without completion of this stage, the application is not recorded as submitted and will not be included in research activity reports.*

After submission, please ensure that your portfolio manager is included in any communication about the process, especially if there are any challenges from the funder. Award letters or draft agreements should be forwarded to your portfolio manager who will ensure these are negotiated, accepted, signed and set up. While some funders will inform the University through the RSO of success, invitation to resubmit or rejection, other funders may only contact the applicant directly – please let the Portfolio Manager know in each case.

There can be a considerable delay between learning that a proposal is successful to being able to start the project. Where there is no record of costing or approval, the award does not match the approved costs, or where there are unexpected partners with no contact details and no record of their approved participation, this adds greatly to the time it takes to negotiate and finalise the award. Grants cannot start until all agreements are signed but often there is a fixed start date, a need to recruit and a firm end date, so the better prepared we are the faster this can be dealt with.

As well as being necessary for both internal and external (funder) audit, this process enables accurate and timely reporting of application and award activity. Research Information Systems produces monthly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports showing this activity (https://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/research-support-office/key-performance-stats

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Janet Ball (janet.ball@ed.ac.uk)