

Title Research Funding

1.0 Introduction

Funding for research is available from a number of sources including national agencies, international agencies, industry, charitable organisations and others. Research Support Services (RSS) assists and facilitates researchers in obtaining funding for University of Limerick research activities, by providing intelligence on funding programmes and by supporting the development of funding applications for submission to funding bodies. Funding applications may be individual, collaborative or institutional.

This Research Funding process relates to pre-award aspects of research funding, i.e. ranging from identification of funding opportunities to the notification of funding outcomes.

A process flow and associated systems to support is shown in figure 1.

Process Step		System
Step 1	Identification of funding opportunities	See guidance on Researcher Journey – Identifying Funding Opportunities
Step 2	Analysis of relevant guidelines and requirements	
Step 3	Communication of funding opportunities	UL Connect • Powered by Workvivo
Step 4	Registration of intention to apply	RPAS system
Step 5	Proposal Preparation	RPAS system – collaborative workspace on sharepoint
Step 6	Proposal Authorisation	RPAS system
Step 7	Funding Outcome	Logged in RPAS system

2.0 Procedure

Step 1: Identification of funding opportunities

Research funding information is identified by RSS using various mechanisms, including:

- Circulars from funding agencies.
- use of available funding search tools e.g. Research Professional
- communication with funding agencies and attending funding information events
- monitoring recommendations from government and agency reports

Step 2: Analysis of the relevant guidelines and requirements

Responsibility for co-ordination of support for strategic research funding opportunities is generally established through the assigned remit of each of the Funding Officers within RSS. For strategic funding opportunities that are not

encompassed within the assigned remits of the Funding Officer, the director of RSS allocates responsibility for coordination to a funding officer within the unit.

For strategic programmes supported by RSS, the relevant funding officer will familiarise themselves with the details of the funding programme.

Step 3: Communication

Within Research Support Services

The communication of funding information within the office is operated through RSS meetings where intelligence and advance information on forthcoming opportunities are shared, current calls are discussed and office resources and initiatives planned.

With the Research Community

Once a programme is identified one or more of the following mechanisms are used for disseminating information on specific programmes to researchers as appropriate:

- a) UL Connect – Research Space
- b) Direct contact with researchers
- c) Funding related events

(a) UL Connect - Research Space Information relating to research can be issued as required to the UL Connect intranet with options for dissemination to researchers, entire UL community and bespoke groups.

(c) Direct contact with researchers: Funding officers communicate targeted research funding information **directly to researchers**, on an individual or group basis. This is useful where funding opportunities are appropriate for sub-groups of the UL research community (e.g. discipline-specific calls). Targeted sub-groups are identified via ULRIS, and where required, with support from faculties, departments, institutes or centres.

(d) Research events: Research funding information may be communicated through the organisation of events and briefings aimed at updating researchers on upcoming funding programmes. Funding agencies may also be invited to visit the campus to provide briefings on upcoming opportunities. These events are promoted to researchers via the events tabs on UL connect.

Step 4: Intention to apply

Any staff member looking to apply for external research funding is directed in the first instance to register their intent via the Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS).

Research Proposal Authorisation System enables supports (funding officer and finance officer) to be assigned to the proposal. The system establishes a collaboration workspace in sharepoint to be automatically established. Within this space the proposer can invite internal collaborators and supports to their sharepoint space as they deem appropriate.

Step 5: Proposal Preparation

There are three types of funding applications: individual, collaborative and institutional.

Individual and Collaborative Proposals

These applications are led by researchers and supported by RSS and other administration departments as required. The following steps are followed for the preparation of proposals.

1. Queries from researchers are addressed by RSS.
2. RSS check eligibility and conformance to funding body requirements
3. For strategically important programmes, RSS provide additional support to researchers in developing proposals, including one or more of the following:
 - a. advice
 - b. content review
 - c. content development

Institutional Proposals

Institutional proposals are targeted based on strategic priorities. Given the size and scope of institutional proposals, the Office of the Vice President Research examines resources required across the institution and agrees roles and responsibilities of the project team members, in addition to the procedures for individual and collaborative proposals outlined above.

Step 6: Proposal Authorisation

Applications for external research funding use the Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS) to ensure the appropriate approvals, declarations and undertakings are recorded. Detailed step by step instructions on the use of the RPAS system are available on the Research Portal.

1. RPAS operates on an early identification principle, whereby intention to apply is the first step in the process.
2. The system supports a workflow of the appropriate approvers for funding applications.
3. Each application is assigned a unique identifier.
4. RPAS system allocates the appropriate staff supports (funding officer and finance officer) based on funding agency/faculty/department. The system super administrator can re-allocate supports as required on the instruction of the Director of Research Support Services.

5. RPAS system operates an archive mechanism whereby approved versions of proposals are retained to inform the post-award/contracts stage.
6. RPAS system operates a series of alerts connected to provided deadline dates to ensure approvers are alerted to their requirements within the workflow.
7. Proposals are submitted to the funding body (by the lead applicant) in accordance with the funding body requirements, such as via online grant submission systems, email submissions and/or submission of physical hardcopies

Step 7: Funding Outcomes

Funding results are communicated to the lead applicant directly. The applicant updates the RPAS system to identify the proposal as awarded/not awarded/not submitted.

Significant funding announcements are communicated to Governing Authority as part of the President's Report to GA once their embargo period has passed.

Award Acceptance – in the case of successful funding outcomes, grant offers and awards are processed by the Post-Award team.

3.0 Records

In accordance with the UL Records Management & Retention Policy the following records are held:

3.1 Final records of proposal applications and their approval history are held within the RPAS system archive.

4.0 Review

This process is reviewed in accordance with the self-assessment process, and any necessary changes will be documented in a new revision of this process.

Revision & Approval Log

Rev No.	Date	Revised By:	List of Revisions	Approved Sign & Date
2	30/09/2015	PS	Updated following internal review and QMS audit recommendations	PS, 09/11/2015
3	10/10/2022	CB	Updated to reflect RPAS system deployment	ROM, 14/10/2022
4	23/10/2024	SR	Updated to reflect Researcher Journey sharepoint page	OVPR MGMT 11/11/2024