Research and Consultancy

Project Management Guidelines
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Research and Consultancy Project Management Processes

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the processes to be followed for establishing, administering and managing research and consultancy activities in the University.

Research and Consultancy Activities

The University uses the Project Quality System (PQS) to record and manage contract research (Categories 2-4) and consultancy projects. These guidelines provide guidance on the management of these categories and consultancies.

Australian Competitive Grants (Category 1) are managed by Research and Innovation Services. All Australian Competitive Grants should normally be initiated and managed by the Contracts Execution and Grant Management team in Research and Innovation Services.

When conducting research activities at the University, staff should refer to the University Activities – Research and Consultancy Guidelines.

Different Types of Projects

Within the framework of Research & Consultancy (R&C) activities there are different categories for each activity. This is defined by the type of client and the nature of the project. R&C projects are categorised as:

- **Category 1 (CAT 1)** – Australian Competitive Grants (ACG), including:
  - ARC Discovery and ARC Linkage Grants
  - National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Grants
  - Other grants listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register

- **Category 2 (CAT 2)** – Research projects with other Australian Government clients such as Federal, State and Local Government Departments/Agencies,
  - Cooperative Research Centres where the University is not a core/essential participant

- **Category 3 (CAT 3)** – Research projects with private sector clients and International organisations, including:
  - Private not-for-profit organisations such as World Vision
  - Private and listed companies such as GHD and BHP Billiton
  - Philanthropic organisations such as the Ian Potter Foundation

- **Category 4 (CAT 4)** – Research projects with Cooperative Research Centres where the University is a core/essential participant, e.g.:
  - CRC CARE, Wound, Remote Economic Participation CRC.

- **Category 5 (CAT 5)** – Research projects that cannot be reported as part of the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) including:
  - Research projects funded directly by other Australian Universities (not shared projects where the original source of funds is external to the University sector)
  - ARC Linkage – Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) Grants
  - Research projects funded directly by ITEK – the University’s commercialisation arm or any of its other wholly owned companies

- **Consultancy (CONSULT)** – Non-research commercial projects

- **Consultancy with Profit Share (CONSULTPS)** – Non-research commercial projects with profit sharing with participating University staff member(s)

- **Training (TRAIN)** – Non-award academic training/courses offered to the public or organisations provided by University staff member(s)

- **Testing (TEST)** – Testing using the expertise and equipment of the University,
• **Scholarship (SCHOLAR)** – Undergraduate scholarships (please note that post graduate scholarships are treated as research projects and the category should be selected based on the organisation funding the scholarship),

• **Internal (INTERNAL)** – For internal projects within and between Divisions/areas of the University.

**Project Proposal Development**

Details of a project proposal for all income categories apart from Category 1 should be considered and reviewed by the Business Development Manager (BDM) and Chief Investigator(s) (CI). When developing proposals the following must be taken into consideration:

- that the division(s) has sufficient resources to undertake the proposed project,
- the time period required to complete the project can be achieved,
- the return to the University as a result of undertaking the project,
- the expected income from the project, and
- the expected expenditure associated with the project.

The BDM and project team shall put together a detailed project proposal. The BDM ensures the project proposal is entered into the PQS.

Proposals are to be authorised by the Head of School (HoS) or Pro-Vice Chancellor before being presented to the clients.

**Risk Management**

**Project Risk Identification and Assessment**

The primary responsibility for identifying and assessing risk in R&C projects lies with the BDM or equivalent. When making such an assessment, the BDM should consider the following:

- Type of client, the nature of the client and the client’s business;
- Type of contract;
- Insurance
- Intellectual property;
- Political and commercial sensitivity;
- Capacity to meet contractual commitments;
- Legal risk exposure; and
- Realisation of expected benefits.

Guidelines for assessing risk for projects are set out in the [Risk Assessment for Projects within the Project Quality System](#) guidelines.

**Risk Mitigation**

Where the risk is assessed as greater than ‘low’ the BDM must identify the controls that will be put in place to mitigate the risk and enter those comments in the Project Quality System. The BDM is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and review of project risks.

**Project Risk Approval**

The levels of delegation for approving proposals and contracts or accepting customer orders for the University’s R&C activities are established within the VC’s Authorisations. Where the overall project activity risk assessment is evaluated as ‘high’, the approval should be at the next highest level.
Financial Responsibility
The responsibility for financial management lies with the division PVC, HoS and Directors of Institutes/Centres. For more information please refer to the University’s Financial Management Handbook.
(https://my.unisa.edu.au/staff/Portal/myManagement/Finances/FinancesHandbook.aspx)

Financial Risk Approval
The levels of financial delegation for approving proposals and contracts or accepting customer orders for the University’s R&C activities are established within the VC’s Authorisations. A guide can be found in the Financial Management Handbook.

Ethics and Integrity
The Code of Ethical Conduct is applied across the University for all its R&C activities and should be clearly understood by its staff members.

The University also requires that its staff adhere to the requirements outlined in the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

Ethics and biosafety approval is outside the confines of the Project Quality System but is essential for the commencement of any project. For information on ethics and biosafety approvals, refer to the University’s Ethics and Integrity website (http://w3.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/default.asp or contact the Manager, Ethics and Integrity).

Ethics and biosafety requirements must be entered into the Project Quality System. Whilst the responsibility for obtaining ethics and other approvals lies with the CIs the BDMs or Business Support Officers are to liaise with CIs to ensure that all appropriate approvals are obtained before commencing project activities. As approvals may impact the scope and schedule of the project, advice should be sought prior to finalisation of the agreement.

Intellectual Property
Intellectual Property is to be managed in accordance with the University Intellectual Property: Ownership and Commercialisation guidelines. This requires the recording of background, project and third party Intellectual Property. The BDM and CI are to ensure that Intellectual Property ownership and conditions of use are agreed during proposal development. For further intellectual property information please contact the Manager, Contracts Execution and Grants Management in RIS.

Approvals, Authorisations and Endorsements
At predetermined steps in setting up projects, approvals and authorisations are required. These checks are used to determine whether the proposal meets the University’s standards and if the University will have the resources and expertise to satisfy the clients’ needs.

Changes to University Levy: The University Levy Waiver Process shall be used. An authorisation for partial or full waiver is required when the default University levy cannot be applied. This authorisation request should be sent to the
Director: Research and Innovation Services (RIS) or their nominated staff in the Director’s absence for research projects.

The Director: RIS will only waive levies for research projects where the client or funding body specifically does not allow levies to be factored into the project budget.

For other leviable projects, the request should be sent to the Chief Operating Officer or nominee. These authorisation requests should be followed up by an email to the nominee from the BDM detailing the reasons for the request.

Requests for levy waiver must be made at proposal stage and not retrospectively.

Less than Full Cost Recovery: Endorsements are needed for projects where less than full recovery of costs is expected. These requests should be sent to the Chief Operating Officer or nominee and followed by an email to the nominee from the BDM detailing the reasons for the request.

Foreign Exchange Exposure: Endorsements are needed for projects with foreign exchange exposure. These requests should be sent to the Chief Operating Officer or nominee and followed by an email to the nominee from the BDM detailing the reasons for the request.

Project Approval: Once a risk assessment is completed by the BDM in consultation with the CIs an authorisation request should be sent to the HoS or equivalent to be assessed on workload or capacity to conduct the research. If risk has been identified as ‘high’ this also requires consideration and approval by the HoS or equivalent. Where the HoS is also the CI on the relevant project, the Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC) will need to authorise the request. If the PVC is also the CI on the relevant project, the project will need to be approved by the Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

In terms of monetary value of projects, there are threshold limits which the HoS and PVC can authorise. These limits are recorded in the Vice Chancellor’s Authorisations on the University website at [https://www-p.unisa.edu.au/cha/vca/default.asp](https://www-p.unisa.edu.au/cha/vca/default.asp).

**Contract Development**

Where possible, the standard University agreements should be used. (Standard University contracts can be found at: [http://w3.unisa.edu.au/res/contracts/contract.asp](http://w3.unisa.edu.au/res/contracts/contract.asp)). BDMs and CIs, in conjunction with the client(s), will negotiate terms if a standard University agreement is not suitable.

Non-standard University contracts must be reviewed by the University’s Contracts Execution and Grant Management team in RIS.

Insurance: The BDM in consultation with the university’s Insurance officer and the Manager, Contracts Execution and Grant Management in RIS are
to assess any insurance implications of the project. For example a customer supplied item may need to be added to the University insurance policy.

Customer-supplied Items: The University’s responsibility to identify, verify and safeguard customer-supplied items provided for use or incorporation into a product and/or service should be included in all contracts. If any customer property is lost, damaged or otherwise found unsuitable for use, this shall be reported to the customer and records maintained. Please note that customer property can also include intellectual property.

Client Acceptance
The project must not commence until the client has signed the agreement and it has been countersigned by the relevant signatory in UniSA, in accordance with the VCAs, and all the necessary authorisations have been granted.

Managing Project Milestones
Project milestones must be clearly defined while formulating the proposal and be communicated between all parties. After the proposal has been accepted and an agreement signed by the client(s), the defined project milestones must be entered and maintained in Project Quality System by the relevant BDM or project officers.

Milestone changes agreed with clients are to be evidenced and filed in the project file and updated in the Project Quality System. If the change is significant then a contract variation should be prepared and accepted by all parties. HoS or PVC approval (as appropriate) is to be obtained before any adjustment to the monetary value of the project is agreed. Any milestone schedule adjustments are to be notified to Divisional Accountants and the HoS as any changes are likely to have budget implications.

BDMs are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that milestones are met. Research and Innovation Services will periodically monitor outstanding milestones and provide BDMs with a report.

Document Control and Filing
Project records must be collated and maintained in a safe, readily accessible project file or archive and be available for ongoing reference. Project records must be maintained according to contractual requirements, or as designated by each division.

The BDM has primary responsibility for ensuring that project records are kept securely. However, these records can be kept by other appropriate staff (i.e. project leader, administrative officers) according to the relevance of their role in undertaking the project activity and what is considered to be essential. All records relating to a proposal and project are to be clearly marked for identification.

Proposal and project records include:
- Proposal documentation
- Project records, including proposal documentation, standard university contracts and copies of non-standard contracts, project information form, milestone and final reports and other essential correspondence
- Assessment of subcontractors/suppliers and client feedback.
Electronic versions of project records (which may include large databases, multimedia reports etc) should be referenced on the file and named/indexed such that a unique reference is dedicated to the particular file. Electronic files should be stored on an appropriate system, which is subject to backup and archiving. In addition, copies by way of disc or CD should be kept and stored.

**Project Closure**
Upon receipt of the final financial statement the BDM should ensure that the project file is complete with all essential records.

Measuring client satisfaction and their perceptions of service delivery forms a vital part of the continual improvement process for R&C activities within the University. The End of Project Survey is conducted at the completion of the project by phone conversation between the client contact and the relevant BDM. The questions for this survey can be found in the PQS under the task heading of “Setup/Record Client Feedback”. As a general rule all contract research and consultancy projects should receive client feedback.

**Training**
Research and Innovation Services (RIS) will provide necessary training for the BDM network in using the University’s project management system (PQS).

**Local Level Procedures**
Each Division/Institute has its own project management procedures. Contact your local area BDM for more information.