

## Solent's Bid Process

Solent's Strategy for 2020-2025 identifies Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) as one of its three key strategic priorities and so puts RKE at the heart of the University's mission. We have already taken a number of steps towards building Solent's RKE profile and will continue to work together to grow our RKE capacity, community and reputation. Increasing our income from external funding for Research and Knowledge Exchange activities is a key part of this process, and it is particularly important that this is strategically approached. To this end, colleagues are strongly encouraged to consider how their planned RKE funding bids align with current strategic priorities at the Faculty/School and/or [Unit of Assessment](#) (UoA) level.

The steps below outline Solent's Bid Process, from the earliest idea stage through to submission. They are intended as a guide for all those seeking external funding for a Research or Knowledge Exchange project. Each application is different – depending on its size, timeframe, collaborations, funder and so on – so the steps below are indicative of the process and not an exhaustive description of each stage. However, **all bids**, including those led by other institutions, need to go through steps **1 to 12**.

In addition, there are two key messages to keep in mind:

- It is **never** too early to let the Research Office know you are thinking about a bid
  - The Research Office is here to support your submission. We are a small team and each step takes time, so the more notice you can give us about a bid and its submission deadlines, the smoother the process is likely to be.
  - We also understand that not all ideas develop into submitted bids, so feel free to come and talk to us in the very early stages, including before you are sure you will make a funding application.
- There is **always** someone you can talk to about any stage of the bid process
  - The Research Office has supported the development of many bids – large and small – to a whole range of funders, from Research Councils to small independent charities.
  - Your R/KE Lead and/or your UoA Lead have lots of experience of bid development and submission across a whole range of application types.
  - Together the Research Office and your R/KE and/or UoA Lead can also help put you in touch with colleagues who have relevant experience – for example, of applying to your intended funder, developing a particular type of application (such as a consortium-led international bid), and so on.

## 1. Idea

- First, talk to your R/KE Lead and/or UoA Lead about your idea or the funding opportunity you are interested in. This will help you think through your plans and help the Lead consider where the activity fits in relation to their wider strategy. As part of this process, you might consider, for example, how the project would align with one of the UoAs, with Faculty/School strategic priorities, with the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), and so on.

## 2. Proposal form

- Next, complete the Research Office [Project Idea Proposal Form](#). This will let the Research Office know what you are considering.

## 3. Line manager

- Arrange to talk to your Line Manager as soon as possible. It is important to make them aware of your plans as early as you can and to keep them informed throughout the process.

## 4. Research Office

- Then talk to the Bid Support Officer in the Research Office for approval to proceed with the application. They will ensure that PURE is updated to show that the bid is in development.

## 5. Proposal development

- Begin developing the proposal / application. Procedures, forms, processes, sizes and timeframes all differ, so make sure you are familiar with all the requirements. Your R/KE Lead and/or UoA Lead and the Research Office can all help with finding appropriate support for you at this stage (for example by putting you in touch with colleagues who have made applications to the funder you are applying to). The **funder rules** need to be established at an early stage. These are usually on the call or bid documents or funder website. As the PI/Co-I, you have the responsibility for researching and identifying the funder rules, but if you need help with this, consult the Research Office.

## 6. Ethics

- As part of the proposal development process, you will need to consider the ethical implications of your project. You do not need to obtain ethical approval or carry out risk assessments at this stage, but you will need to complete a form: a) to indicate whether your project will need full ethical approval; and b) to confirm that, if your bid is successful, you will apply for ethical approval (via self-certified ethics release or full ethical review, as appropriate) and complete the appropriate risk assessments **before** you start data collection. The Research Office can supply you with the **form**.

## 7. Costings

- Meet with the Faculty Management Accountant to cost your project. This is a crucial step – without approved costings your application cannot proceed – so it is important to allow time for it to take place. Ahead of this meeting, you will need to think about:

- The staff involved (named individuals or job titles (e.g. research assistant))
- Their hours on the project
- The timescale of the project, (expected or proposed start and end dates)
- The cost of any additional expenses (travel, accommodation, transcription, conferences, workshops, equipment etc.)
- Any external supplier or collaborator costs
- Overheads

## 8. Feedback

- At this point, you should seek feedback on your costed draft application from your R/KE Lead and/or UoA Lead. They may also suggest asking other colleague(s) to review it. This is an important opportunity to revise and refine your application in the light of comments from experienced colleagues who have not been involved with the detailed development of your application and so can bring a fresh perspective to your proposal.

## 9. Line manager approval

- You should then seek approval from your Line Manager to submit the bid. Please forward the relevant email to the Research Office so that approval can be documented on PURE.

## 10. Dean approval

- Then seek approval from your Dean. Again, please forward the relevant email to the Research Office so that approval can be documented on PURE.

## 11. University approval

Lastly, you will need to supply the Research Office with your final application and all supplementary documents, including costings, so that you can obtain approval from the University to submit. The Research Office will again document this on PURE. If the project has a deficit of £50,000 or less, the project will need to be approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange (PVC RKE). However, if your proposed project has a deficit of **over** £50,000, you will be required to produce supporting evidence or a business case for why it should go ahead. This must be supplied via the Research Office to the PVC RKE, who will inform the Chief Financial Officer and the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor. The PVC RKE, in consultation with the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, will decide whether the application can proceed.

## 12. Submission

- Once all these approvals are in place, the bid can be submitted. How that takes place varies – some funders require submission by the Lead Applicant (who may be based at another institution if your bid involves partners external to Solent), other funders require submission by the Research Office, and so on. Again, the Research Office will support the submission process. **Please note that you cannot submit without the green light from the Research Office.**