Starting a grant

Can we charge to a grant before it’s been handed over (At Risk Policy?)

The College does not currently have an "at risk process" for the PI to start spending in advance of the grant being handed over to Research Finance. The Head of School may exceptionally authorise us to set this up to enable the PI to proceed with staff recruitment. This would be at the school's risk. Non staff expenditure should not be incurred on the grant before the start date.

Can you define research and confirm whether this a research project?

Marcela Acura Rivera (Research Development Manager for Sciences) and Chris Daley (Research Development Manager for other departments) can determine whether a project should be classed as research as set out in the Frascati Manual.

There is an offer Acceptance notification on JeS. Do Research Finance accept these?

If it’s an offer acceptance, then Research Services complete the offer acceptance rather than Research Finance.

Can you tell me if VAT is applicable on my research project?

As VAT is a specialist area, information regarding VAT status should be confirmed with Taxqueries@RHUL.ac.uk

Staffing

I have just started a grant that requires me to hire a research assistant. Could someone talk me through the process?

Principal Investigators can request that their School Administration team raise a staff recruitment request or contract variation for an existing staff member. The School Administrator raises this using Stonefish. The request will go through the approval workflow on Stonefish. Research Finance checks the request against the award. The request is then passed onto HR to approve and initiate the recruitment process.

I am applying for a grant, and I would like to confirm the salary grade and spine points of the additional staff to be involved in the project?

Research and Innovation provide support with costings for research grant applications, please direct your query to them. Research Finance provides post award support for grants at the college.

I have a research grant that will be starting and need to arrange for visas for a visiting academic overseas, what is the process for arranging a visa?

Research Finance are not involved in visa applications. HR has useful information on its web pages. For further information on Visa applications, we recommend you contact hroperations@rhul.ac.uk. Visa costs cannot be charged to research grants even if a budget has been awarded as per university policy.

Contacts

Can you please provide contact details for a Research Council?

UKRI have a dedicated email contact for each research council available on their website. They do not have individual staff member email accounts. Contact details for your school administration team can be found on these pages.

Can you let me know who is my school administrator contact?

Contact details for your school administration can be found on these pages.

Could you let me know who the administrator for my project should liaise with in Post Award?

The list of Post Award staff and the schools they are responsible can be found here.

Budget and Transactions

Is it possible to get a current balance on my research grant?

Principal Investigators can view their budget on Agresso. Instructions are available on how to run this report here. Your project administrator can be set up to access these same reports in Agresso. Please email agressosystemadmin@rhul.ac.uk
We have several different types of costs – participant travel, conferences, away days, and project partners. How are these coded?

When ordering goods and services, the department administrative team need to use account codes specific to the purchases being made. When a grant is set up in Agresso, the breadth of these codes cannot be anticipated so we use generic supplies and services codes. The reports available to you in Agresso show a sub-total of these codes so you can see the current total of non-staff costs.

Can I check that the following payments have been made from the account. For example, a payment of £500 for a computer in March and another for £300 for a consultant in April?

The reports available to you in Agresso, allow you to see all the transactions that go through your grant and can be made available to your administrator as well. Instructions are available here. Your project administrator can on your request to the Agresso admin team be set-up to access those same reports in Agresso. Please email agressosystemadmin@rhul.ac.uk.

Overheads P account

I have been informed that 7% of the overheads of my grant will be put into my personal account. Could you please let me know when this will be?

Each Principal Investigator is assigned their own personal P-account at the college. To find your P-account number and arrange for general charges to this account you should contact your school office.

The 7% return of overheads is set by the college. For UK Charity grants, the rate is 3.3% of income as there are no overheads associated with that type of grant. The overhead return doesn't come out of your actual grant. It is College funds, credited annually in arrears, based on the overheads earned from your grants in the previous financial year (August-July).

Overheads will be credited automatically each September/October. If you have any queries, please contact Bradley Daw/Ross Wilson (LSS and EPMS) and Nicholas Mok/Chris Hawkins (LSE, SBM, PDA, Hums). Research Finance are not responsible for P-accounts.

Purchasing Items

Can you let me know what the upper cost limit is for purchasing individual items of equipment?

For UKRI projects individual items over 10k are considered as capital equipment. Capital equipment cannot be purchased in the last 6 months of a grant although there are occasions permitted due to exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from UKRI. Examples of disallowed costs would be purchasing laptops in the last week of a grant and the funder wants to ensure that their funds are spent on research costs only.

How do I purchase items required for my research project?

Research Finance are not involved in the general day to day ordering of good and services. The administrative team within your school are responsible for this aspect of your grant. Please contact your school administrator.

Grant ending, extensions, and transfers

I have been granted a no cost extension. Who do I approach with this matter?

If your grant has been given a No Cost Extension (NCE) then please forward the email approval from the funder to finance-research@rhul.ac.uk. We will then amend the ends dates on our system.

I am planning on taking a grant with me to another University. Please can you let me know how I can arrange this transfer?

You will need to let the funder, your Head of Department, RHUL Research Contracts team and your new institution know about the transfer. The details of a grant transfer are usually jointly decided by the funder and both the 'new' and 'old' institution. All grant transfers (in to and out of RHUL) must be approved by the Head of School. It needs to be agreed with the funder whether the entire grant should be transferred or only part of it.
Once the transfer date is agreed, then the new agreements can be drawn up. In some cases, the original grant is ‘novated’ to the new institution, and this is initiated by RHUL contracts and signed by all parties. In other cases, the ‘old’ award/contract is terminated by the funder with the ‘old’ institution and a new contract is issued to the ‘new’ institution.

The funder normally requests a financial statement to show the budget, spend up to the date of transfer and the remaining balance. This can only be completed by Research Finance after transfer date.

**AUDITING**

I work at another university and one of our grants has been selected for audit by the UKRI. Can you send me a copy of your transaction listing from your general ledger as you are one of our collaborators on this project?

An auditor should only seek transactions from the institution they are engaging with, not the collaborators as well. If UKRI or another auditor requires this information they should seek it from us directly.

**Will my project be audited and what will they ask for?**

European Commission and Innovate UKRI grants will be audited by an external company called ‘Lees.’ The frequency of this is determined by the value of the grant, this may happen after every claim or just at the end of the grant. Other funders such as UKRI and Wellcome Trust conduct periodic audits at the university and pick a sample of Research Grants to review. The university may also conduct its own internal audit on research grants to ensure effective controls are in place. For auditing purposes, we may be required to produce a full transaction listing of all the costs on the account and you may be required to provide evidence of timesheets, travel costs and explain the purpose of these and the reason for attending.

**Who will pay for Innovate UKRI auditing?**

For Innovate UKRI awards, Royal Holloway must pay the audit fee. Research Finance will raise a purchase order to the accountancy firm who will conduct the audit. Innovate UKRI grants will be audited by an external company called ‘Lees.’ The frequency of this is determined by the size of the grant. This may happen after every claim or could just happen at the end of the grant.

**What happens with grant surpluses, deficits, and forex differences?**

We will first review the award letter. Generally, charities ask for any surplus income to be returned to them. For some industrial funders we can keep the surplus. According to our grant closure procedure, any income (surplus on a research account) will be transferred to department. Research Finance is not involved in discussions on what happens thereafter or transferring the balance elsewhere.