



AN OPERATING HANDBOOK ON

## Obtaining and Executing Funded Research within the University

Research  
graduate studies



NUI MAYNOOTH  
Dlíscail na hÉireann, Má Nuad  
Research Administration Office



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# 1 Research & Graduate Studies Office

Research endeavour at NUI Maynooth is underpinned by the Research Charter – a set of integrated policies for the enhancement of research within the University<sup>1</sup>. Research activity is made possible largely through external funding. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies (R&GS) coordinates and provides institutional support for research, while the Research Administration Office (RAO) assists with the financial aspects of research management.

The R&GS office offers assistance with securing research funding at the ‘pre’ award stage and provides follow up support at the ‘post’ award stage. The type of assistance provided for research activity within the office is outlined in the following pages.

For all your research funding enquiries please contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies: [pgdean@may.ie](mailto:pgdean@may.ie)

## 1.1 Funding alerts/notification (Pre award)

### 1.1.1 Web-based Internal Diary

The office runs a web-based diary internal to NUIM, which provides notification regarding:

- Announcements of proposal calls from external funding sources i.e. Irish agencies, EU Framework programme etc;
- Agency and funding body closing dates for application submission;
- Dates for submission of applications to R&GS prior to agency submission, e.g. Proposal checking, signing etc.
- Meetings relevant to research at NUI Maynooth;
- Calls for NUI Maynooth internal funding.

There are two diaries: Science and Engineering, and Arts & Humanities. Access to both is available at:

[http://www.may.ie/research/research\\_funding\\_support/research\\_calendars.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/research_funding_support/research_calendars.htm)

### 1.1.2 Email notification

- An email alert is sent to members of staff in notification of calls for proposals for EU framework programme and the Irish agencies.

<sup>1</sup>The Research Charter can be viewed at [http://www.may.ie/research/research\\_policies/research\\_charter.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/research_policies/research_charter.htm)

- A research expertise database has been set-up, which is located at:  
[http://www.may.ie/research/research\\_database/rss.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/research_database/rss.htm)
- A Research Support System Database has also been set-up at  
<http://www.rss.may.ie/>

This RSS database is also part of the All Island Research Portal, available at <http://www.expertiselreland.com>. When your profile is entered a facility exists whereby email alerts are sent to you for any worldwide calls relevant to keywords that you have selected.

## 1.2 Assistance in proposal writing (Pre award)

### 1.2.1 Workshops

The office will assist you with the application requirements of a particular agency. We organise workshops with representatives from the various agencies and we also offer one-to-one assistance when it is required.

### 1.2.2 Proposal Checking

All proposals and/or applications for external support must be reviewed and approved by the Research and Graduate Studies Office BEFORE they are submitted to a sponsor. The aim is to ensure that applicants are not removed from evaluation due to an administrative problem.

We ask all applicants to submit their proposals to us (usually 4 working days) before the submission deadline and we check the following:

- The applicant meets eligibility requirements;
- Costing and budgetary issues e.g. eligibility of expenditure, VAT, overhead (this is performed in consultation with the Research Administration Office);
- Management structure;
- All requested documentation is complete.

Proposals that are incomplete or contain inappropriate information or which do not follow University policies or procedures will need to be corrected and resubmitted to the R&GS Office before the proposal may be sent to the sponsoring agency. Proposals are checked by the Office of Research & Graduate Studies: [pgdean@may.ie](mailto:pgdean@may.ie)

## 1.3 Institutional Signature

Most funding agencies require that the institution where the research is being proposed, sign and stamp the proposal application form before submission. Since the proposal document is submitted and the award is made to the University, not to the Principal Investigator (PI), we have responsibility to ensure that all regulations and policies are met. This process is designed to protect both the individuals and the institutions involved over the long term.

This authorisation is granted following a satisfactory proposal check. All applicants should apply for signature not later than *3 working days* before the submission deadline. Only applications that have been prior submitted for proposal checking will be signed.

For proposals that are sent to sponsoring agencies without being reviewed and approved by Research and Graduate Studies Office, the following may occur:

- The University reserves the right to withdraw the proposal;
- The University has the right not to accept the award if funded;
- The University has the right to renegotiate the terms and conditions, budget, resources etc., before accepting the award.

## 1.4 Letter of Offer/Contracts (Post-award)

### 1.4.1 Signatures

When the grant recipient has received a letter of offer from the awarding agency, it must be signed by the principal investigator and also by the Bursar via the Office of R&GS, on behalf of NUIM. Contracts are signed by the Bursar and the R&GS facilitates this process. Once again the R&GS will send contracts back to the agency and send a copy to the applicant.

### 1.4.2 Setting up Business Unit Numbers

The R&GS office will ensure that all the required documentation is sent to the RAO. This will enable the awardee to request a new business unit for their research project.

## 1.5 Ethical Approval (Post-award)

The college has an Ethics committee in place and a policy on Ethics in Research see: [http://www.may.ie/research/research\\_policies/research\\_policies.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/research_policies/research_policies.htm)

Several of the funding agencies now require ethical approval for projects dealing with human or animal subjects. The ethics committee reviews successful projects for ethical approval when required. You may contact the secretary of the ethics committee at: [pgdean@may.ie](mailto:pgdean@may.ie)

## 1.6 The Process – how the interaction works?

### 1.6.1 Pre-award

- Call notification – Applicants are notified of a call, eligibility requirements, closing date.
- One-to-one meetings can be arranged for assistance with proposal writing. Please allow plenty of time for this as the office can become quite busy with large calls.
- Workshops are arranged for the larger calls.
- Proposal Checking – Applicants must submit proposals to the R&GS office within a particular time frame prior to submission. The times for proposal checking are notified in advance and vary depending on the nature of the call.
- Proposal signing – Application to agencies usually require an authorised signature from the University. **Please note that the R&GS office MUST sign such applications.** (Only applications that have been prior submitted for proposal checking will be signed). When bringing a copy of an application for signing please make sure that the applicant brings an extra copy for the files of the R&GS office.
- Office files – ALL applications for funding must be recorded by the R&GS office, therefore a copy of proposals that do not require an authorised signature must be forwarded to the R&GS office, prior to submission. (Failure to do this could result in a refusal by the college to sign any successful grants).

## 1.6.2 Post-award

- Letter of Offer – Some agencies send letters of offer directly to the applicant, others send it to the president. Letters sent directly to the applicant should be brought to the R&GS Office for the authorised signature. Letters of offer sent to the president will be signed by us, returned to the agency, and a copy will be forwarded to the applicant.
- Contract – Contracts sent directly to the academic should be sent to the R&GS office for the authorised signature. This office liaise directly with the Bursar, who signs off on contracts, only contracts that come through the R&GS office will be signed.
- Ethical Approval – It is the awardee's responsibility to notify the secretary of the Ethics Committee should they require ethical approval. This should be carried out immediately following a letter of offer. The material required for presentation to the Ethics Committee is as follows:
  - Copy of the application;
  - The applicant should describe why they feel the research project requires ethical approval;
  - The applicant should describe how they intend to adhere to the ethical policy of the university;
  - In each case the applicant should also refer to the ethical policy for specific documentation that may be required.

Setting up business unit numbers – Following contract signature the R&GS office will forward all information to the Research Administration Office. The awardee may then contact this office directly to set up a business unit number from which the grant may be spent.

## 1.6.3 Teaching Buy-Out

Certain research funding schemes allow for the PI to apply for funding to allow themselves (or other permanent staff), to be sequestered from normal University duties (i.e. teaching), in the performance of the research. Such sequestering may be required for the successful awarding of the research funding and the awarding of research funding with associated teaching buy-out occurs from time-to-time.

No additional remuneration will occur to staff over and above that received in respect of the original contracted fulltime salary. This is in keeping with the framework agreed with the HEA, under the *Universities Act 1997*.

Thus all teaching buy-out must be negotiated with one's own Department, with the Department taking receipt of the awarded teaching buy-out to fund the replacement teaching for the bought-out individuals. Such arrangements must take place before the commencement of the research. No dispersing of the awarded teaching buy-out funds will be made (either to the Department or individual), if no documented substituting arrangements have occurred during the period of the research award.

## 1.7 Research Project Amendments

If unforeseen circumstances occur e.g. due to illness, and a research project cannot be completed within the contracted period, it may be possible to agree a change with the funding agency. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to contact the funding agency as soon as the problem arises. Most agencies require a formal 'Project amendment' form to be signed both by the PI and the University before agreeing to changes. The R&GS office must be informed of the intention of the PI to request such changes.

## 1.8 Research Project Management

The office will run project management courses when required covering issues such as:

- Personnel management and communication skills;
- Project control and monitoring systems;
- Scheduling, cost control, financial management, and reporting requirements.

Information about the Office of Research and Graduate Studies is available at <http://www.may.ie/research>

## 2 Technology Transfer

The technology transfer side of the Research and Graduate Studies office aims to offer assistance with any commercialisation that may result from a research programme. The University has various policies and agreements in place for all researchers within the university. See:

[http://www.may.ie/research/commercialisation/commercialisation\\_policies.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/commercialisation/commercialisation_policies.htm)

### 2.1 Patenting

1. The office will offer assistance in preparing an invention disclosure form, which is the first step in the universities patent process. The patents committee will approve patent applications and offer financial assistance where possible.
2. The office will work with the patent lawyers and the applicants in submitting a patent application.
3. The office will assist in so far as is possible with licensing of patents and suitable agreements will be drafted.

4. The university patent and licensing policy is to be located at:

[http://www.may.ie/research/commercialisation/inventions\\_patent\\_policy.html](http://www.may.ie/research/commercialisation/inventions_patent_policy.html)

### 2.2 Campus Companies

1. The office will offer assistance in preparation for a campus company and acquiring funds from Enterprise Ireland for preparation of a business plan and mentoring.
2. The university will endeavour to locate suitable space for campus companies. The future aim is to build a business incubation unit on campus.
3. The universities policy on campus companies is located at:

[http://www.may.ie/research/research/commercialisation/commercialisation\\_policies.html](http://www.may.ie/research/research/commercialisation/commercialisation_policies.html)

### 2.3 Maynooth Campus Enterprise Board

The University has recently set up the 'Maynooth Campus Enterprise Board' (MCEB) to assist in evaluation of potential campus companies and to advise the R&GS office and the university on aspect of commercialisation and technology transfer. Present members of the board are:

## List of Members of Maynooth Campus Enterprise Board

Internal	Prof. John G. Hughes Dr. Frank Mulligan Dr. Jason Twamley -----	President Vice-President Dean Research and Graduate Studies Technology Transfer Officer
External	Ms. Leonora Bishop Mr. Damian Callaghan Mr. Tony Courtney  Mr. Donal Dalton Mr. Michael Donnelly Dr. Jos Evertsen  Ms. Una Halligan  Mr. Mark Horgan Ms. Claire Lynch Mr. Michael Mullally Mr. Brendan O’Sullivan	Business Development Chiroxia Ltd Intel Capital Manager Campus Enterprises, Enterprise Ireland CEO Kildare County Enterprise Board Director Growcorp Manager Trade and Innovation Policy, Forfas Manager Gov. and Public Affairs Hewlett Packard Director Mentor Capital Director Trade and Customs KPMG CEO Millennium Park Director East Region, IDA

### 2.4 Facilitating Company Interaction

- The office will work with individuals to strengthen industrial linkages.
- The office can consult with the IDA in generating new industrial collaborations with overseas companies.
- The office works with Enterprise Ireland in generating new industrial collaborations with Irish companies.

## 2.5 Agreements Related to Technology Transfer

The office will work with individuals in negotiating, vetting, signing and writing agreements for various research projects etc. Some examples are:

- Consortium agreements
- IP agreements
- Non disclosure agreements
- Disclosure agreements
- Materials transfer agreements
- Shareholders agreements
- Licensing agreement

For all enquiries regarding any aspect of Technology Transfer, please contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies: [pgdean@may.ie](mailto:pgdean@may.ie)

## 3 Research Administration Office (RAO)

The Research Administration Office provides institutional support with the financial aspects of research management.

This office offers assistance in conjunction with the R&GS office at the pre-award stage. However, the main thrust of the support available from the office takes place once research funds are awarded to the University. The following pages outline in greater detail the assistance and support the office provides.

Further information and enquiries can be obtained by contacting:

Cheryl Forde, Research Administration Officer: [Cheryl.Forde@may.ie](mailto:Cheryl.Forde@may.ie)

### 3.1 Pre Award Stage

#### 3.1.1 Proposal Checking

All applications properly submitted to the R&GS office will be reviewed. The Research Administration Office will assist in providing clarification on all aspects relating to the preparation of research budget proposals. The specific terms and conditions relating to the research sponsor and/or the funding programme must be adhered to.

### 3.1.2 Budget Amendments

When the Sponsor requests a revision to the submitted costs, this must be performed in consultation with the Research Administration Office.

### 3.1.3 VAT

Section 199 of the Finance Act 2001 has been amended. The effect of the amendment is, from the 01 September 2001 the supply of research services by educational bodies is no longer an entirely exempt activity, but, in certain circumstances, is subject to VAT. In view of this, the University must assess the VAT implications of all potential “supply of research services” to sponsors. The Research Administration Office will arrange the necessary assistance and advice on fulfilling VAT compliance. Further details can also be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners at: <http://www.revenue.ie>

### 3.1.4 Overheads

Where there is a defined contribution towards overhead e.g. SFI 30%, EU 20%, EPA 20%, then the overhead charged in the budget submission must be in line with the **maximum** allowed.

In instances where the overhead contribution has to be negotiated, the Research Administration Office will advise on the appropriate rate to include in the proposal.

## 3.2 Post-Award Stage

The main support from the office takes place once research funds are awarded to the University.

The following is a list of the main services provided:

- Setting up research accounts/business units;
- Preparation of Financial Claims to Research Sponsors;
- Recording of research income and expenditure;
- Dealing with and responding to general research administration queries and/or issues;
- Processing Research Contract Appointments and Scholarship Exemptions under Section 193, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

- Training and support of the designated administrators on the Web based financial reports;
- Uploading and updating the budgetary details and general information on the Web based financial reports.

### 3.2.1 Setting up a New Research Account/Business Unit

Once the required documentation is forwarded from the R&GS office a new business unit for the new research award is assigned.

### 3.2.2 Research Account Codes/Business Units

Each new research award is assigned a unique six-digit identification code. Each Department and/or Institution has an assigned three-digit prefix. For example in the Biology Department all research projects commence with the digits 125. The next three digits, which are assigned, are part of the unique identification code that relates to that specific research account/business unit. Once this number is activated the Principal Investigator (PI) may commence spending from the research award. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all invoices and expenses vouchers are correctly coded to the relevant business units.

### 3.2.3 Operating the New Research Account/Business Unit

The PI should process all expenditure related to this account through the designated business unit. All research expenditure is reimbursed through the General Accounts Office. All invoices are processed through the Creditors Office. Further details on the procedures involved and the relevant forms that should be filled out are available at: <http://www.may.ie/service/finance>

### 3.2.4 Accessing your Financial Information On-Line

All financial information on each business unit is available through RAO Web based reporting system. This information can be accessed through the designated administrator in your department.

All information is on-line and is at most 24 hours in arrears. Detailed transactions reports can be downloaded by the administrator for you, which will give a more detailed breakdown of the expenditure. The budget information that is available through the summary reports gives the PI a clear indication of the funds they have left to spend under the relevant budget headings e.g. pay, consumables, equipment.

As part of the budget monitoring process, it is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that they monitor their expenditure on a frequent basis.

### 3.2.5 Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI has financial signing authority for the research award and, accordingly, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that fund expenditures:

- are in support of the research project named in the award;
- occur in a timely manner within the award period;
- comply with all terms and conditions of the award;
- do not exceed the funds available.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is critical that the PI does not make commitments beyond the termination date of the award or the limits of the award funding. The University cannot accept responsibility for support of grant-paid employees beyond the termination date of the award, or where the budget has been exhausted prior to the award ending period. Therefore, it is important that no commitments be made beyond the funding period.

If project expenditure is in excess of the available award funds and no other source of income to fund this excess exists, then the PI and their Department shall be financially responsible for absorbing these expenditures.

It is also the responsibility of the PI to ensure compliance with all applicable University policies including:

- Overhead policy
- Procurement policy
- Hiring/personnel policies
- Expense reimbursements policy
- Travel allowances policy and
- Insurance.

Further details and information on the above policies can be obtained from:

[http://www.may.ie/research/research\\_policies/research\\_policies.htm](http://www.may.ie/research/research_policies/research_policies.htm)

<http://www.may.ie/service/procurement>

<http://www.may.ie/service/personnel>

<http://www.may.ie/service/finance>

### 3.2.6 Responsibilities of the Research Administrator

Some research contracts may have a budget provision for a research administration position. In such instances, this person will play a major role in facilitating the PI in fulfilling their financial responsibilities for the specific research award. In particular this individual will be required to:

- monitor all expenditure transactions and movements relating to the research contract on a regular and timely basis so as to ensure that budget commitments are adhered to;
- ensure that the academic is fully briefed on the current financial status of the research contract at all times;
- assist the Research Administration Office in the preparation of financial claims to the research sponsor;
- liaise with the Research Administration Office in relation to research administration queries and/or issues when they arise.

### 3.2.7 Preparation of Financial Claims to Research Sponsors

All financial claims that are required as part of the terms and conditions of the Sponsor, are prepared by the Research Administration Office in consultation with the PI. Once the claim is finalised, it is signed by the Bursar. This is then forwarded to the PI for submission with the technical report to the Sponsor.

### 3.2.8 Research Contract Appointment Forms

When the PI wishes to make a new appointment they must fill out a Research Contract Appointment Form. This form must be fully completed and returned to the Research Administration Office, where it will be processed. At this stage the office will issue the details to the Personnel Office, so that a contract can be issued where applicable. In addition the remuneration details will be forwarded to the Salaries Office so that the new appointee can be set up on the salary system for payment.

The Research Administration Office must receive this form not later than the 10 working days prior to the proposed date of appointment. In addition it must also be received not later than the first day of the month, in situations where it is proposed that the individual be paid in that particular month.

This form can be obtained from the Personnel Office Website or directly from the Research Administration Office. Additional information about this form is available at:

*<http://www.may.ie/service/personnel>*

### **3.2.9 Section 193 Tax Exemptions**

Research staff employed on research contracts and studying for a higher degree, may be entitled to a tax and PRSI exemption. The relevant application form can be obtained from the Research Administration Office. This Research Administration Office will process all applications and determine their eligibility. All eligible applications will be forwarded to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. Further information can be obtained from:

*<http://www.revenue.ie>*

## Notes

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