

EXTERNAL FUNDING APPROVAL PROCEDURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this revision of the External Funding Approval Procedure is to incorporate the changes in approval following the move to a School structure on 1st August 2008.

Flowcharts to accompany the procedure are also attached to give more detailed information.

The concept of the External Funding Approval Process is that all externally funded projects should:

- Be subject to governance checks re Insurance, Data Protection, Ethics, Creditworthiness, Health and Safety, and Contract Terms/IPR
- Adhere to financial guidelines and costing should be checked within the School/Faculty/Service.
- Have a formally recorded approval route and the approval process should be completed before the contract is signed, a work order accepted or work commences.

1. Scope of the Procedure

The External Funding Approval Procedure details the internal approval process required by the University (UCLan) before all requests for external funding (including outline bids and expressions of interest which commit UCLan to a project or include costings indicative of final costs) are finalised and the support that is provided to aid the process. It does not cover:

- projects which only have “in kind” transactions (unless UCLan is a partner or has contractual liabilities);
- Bids relating to educational provision e.g. additional student numbers; franchising/licensing of educational provision (“G” coded projects);
- Business Services Ltd (“L” and “M” coded) projects which are covered by the Commercial Income Generating Projects Approval Process.
- Outline bids or expressions of interest which do not commit UCLan to a project or include costings indicative of final costs

2. The Basics

All requests for external funding whether they be research, consultancy, commercial or non-commercial IGA, course development, corporate or travel require internal approval before they are submitted to the external funding source. This is the case even where UCLan is a junior partner in a collaborative project, or where the project is an individually negotiated contract for services.

Each Faculty or Service will have a nominated central contact, normally located in the Faculty Office. The External Funding Team, Knowledge Transfer Service (KTS) will be the nominated contacts for Services and for corporate bids. This contact point will provide front line support to academics relating to the internal approval of externally funded projects.

Where a project is developed within the Services, the Head of Service is responsible for the operation of the procedure and support will be available from the External Funding Team, Knowledge Transfer Service.

For all Research projects ("X" coded) and non commercial education related projects ("T" coded) approval levels will be:

Faculty Structure

- Head of School. Refers all EU* bids, International bids over £100k and bids with a total project cost over £250k to the relevant Dean. Head of School is responsible for deciding whether to submit and sign off all other bids.
- Dean. Refers all EU* bids, International bids over £100k and bids with a total project cost over £500k to the Executive Director of Finance†. Dean is responsible for deciding whether to submit and sign off all other bids with a total project cost between £250k and £500k.
- Executive Director of Finance† reviews the wider financial consequences of and signs off all EU* bids, International bids over £100k, and all other bids over £500k. Such bids to be directed to the Executive Director of Finance via the Head of Resource Planning.

Service Structure

- Head of Service. Refers all EU* bids, International bids over £100k and bids with a total project cost over £250k to the Executive Director of Finance†. Head of Service is responsible for deciding whether to submit and sign off all other bids.
- Executive Director of Finance† reviews the wider financial consequences of and signs off all EU* bids, International bids over £100k, and all other bids over £250k. Such bids to be directed to the Executive Director of Finance via the Head of Resource Planning.

PLEASE NOTE the amounts above relate to the total project cost including any share to partners or match funding and not just to the share that UCLan will be receiving.

3. Authorisation prior to Project Submission/Contract signature

To minimise bureaucracy a two stage process is available with two forms: Submission and Contract Approval. This allows the bulk of governance checking to be performed prior to contract approval rather than prior to submission of a formal tender.

The nominated contact does not authorise the proposal but advises those that are responsible for authorising the proposal on which checks have been performed, any outstanding issues, special circumstances etc. The applicant and authoriser confirm that they support the submission of the project to the external funding source.

Note: where a project spans Schools/Faculties/Services there is an obligation to inform and obtain consent from all participating areas.

Prior to Submission

- Applicant writes the bid and liaises with nominated contact to obtain internal approval for submission to the external funding source
- Contact checks whether the bid is to the EU, has “corporate aspects”, and if yes, refers to central specialist for input and advice

- If applicant, Head of Centre, Head of School, Head of Service or Dean identifies any areas of potential concern re contractual terms, data protection, IPR, insurance, ethics or health & safety that may affect project definition or costings refer to central specialist for advice (NOTE: the Head of School/Head of Service/Dean may agree that the bid be submitted prior to the advice being received).
- Contact confirms that the costings have been calculated correctly. For Service projects the review of governance and costings is performed by the Lead Participant with the assistance of the External Funding Team, Knowledge Transfer Service.
- If Funding Source requires Ethics approval prior to submission forward to School or Faculty Ethics Committee
- Head of Centre, Head of School/Service, Dean and Executive Director of Finance† reviews the proposal and confirms whether the application should be submitted in accordance with the approval levels set out in the previous section.

Application successful/prior to contract signature

- Contact assists with internal approval for contract signature
- Forward application to Ethics Committee if it has not received prior approval. Contact goes through insurance, data protection and health & safety checklist with applicant, if areas of concern identified specialist advice sought.
- If the contract is over £50k and the total external income due to UCLan has changed by more than 20%, the contact rechecks the costings referring to corporate specialists/Executive Director of Finance where necessary. For Service projects the review of governance and costings is performed by the Lead Participant with the assistance of the External Funding Team, Knowledge Transfer Service.
- Forward draft contract/offer letter/grant agreement to Faculty or Service commercial contact for review (contractual terms and IPR).
- Head of School/Head of Service/Dean/Executive Director of Finance† authorises and signs in accordance with the approval levels set out in the previous section.

4. Contract Approval and Signature

The University's contract process must be followed in relation to the approval of the terms and conditions of all externally funded projects. Contracts are to be signed in accordance with the University's Financial Regulations.

This means that contracts of £250k and above cannot be signed off within the Faculty/School/Service but must be forwarded in accordance with the agreed contracts process.

5. Implementation Date

The new procedure is effective from 1st August 2008. It will be internally audited and included in the Internal Audit Schedule in order to identify any:

- staff training needs or clarification of the process
- improvements required in the procedure
- breaches and corrective actions

* EU means all projects submitted to a European Commission funding source including Structural Funds (e.g. ESF/ERDF), Framework and non-framework projects

† Or designated person