

PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR FUNDING (UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021)

1. SCOPE OF THE PROCESS

The School of Mathematical Sciences (SMS) pre-award procedure described below applies to applications by SMS staff to external funders for research funds (grants, fellowships) as well as funding applications by external candidates who will join SMS if the application is successful. The procedure does not apply when no funds will be transferred to QMUL¹ or where the funder is QMUL itself. The key contacts within SMS are the Deputy Director of Research (DDoR) and the Research Manager (RM).

2. KEY STEPS AND TIMELINES

The key steps involved are:

- (1) **Initial contact:** In order to express your interest in applying for a funding scheme, please contact the RM. This should ideally be done at least **6 weeks** before the call deadline (or intended submission date). We may not be able to support applications where the initial contact is less than 4 weeks before the funder’s deadline. The RM will have a discussion with you and set the ball rolling with regards to costing etc.
- (2) **Internal Peer Review process:** The requirements for internal peer-review are as follows:
 - Internal peer review is not mandatory if at least one of the following hold: i) the value of the award² is less than £50000, ii) the proposal is a “resubmission” to the *same* funder within a 24 month period; iii) the PI of the application is based elsewhere.
 - We require **one** internal peer-reviewer if at least one of the following hold: i) the value of the award is between £50000 and £100000, ii) the scheme is a postdoctoral *fellowship* application by an external candidate with the supervisor (PI) at QMUL (e.g., MSCA Fellowships).
 - We require **two** internal peer-reviewers in all other cases.

Please have a draft³ of the proposal of the application ready to send to the internal reviewers around **4 weeks** before the funder’s deadline or intended submission date (and send the draft to the RM and the DDoR at the same time). *The internal peer-review process will be overseen by the DDoR.* We encourage peer-reviewers to give feedback in any form they find convenient (e.g., email, annotated pdf). However, we need a record of the comments, so purely verbal feedback is not appropriate. Applicants can coordinate the peer-review process if they prefer but please forward the peer-reviews to the RM and DDoR as soon as they are received.

- (3) **Final draft and approval:** The applicant needs to send the following documents to the RM and the DDoR at least **8 working days** before the deadline.
 - A final (or near-final) complete draft of the full application including final costings.
 - A short (one paragraph) response to the peer-review feedbacks, mentioning the changes made and any significant suggestions not incorporated.

Following receipt of these documents, if everything is satisfactory, the DDoR will approve the proposal on the Worktribe system. Once the proposal has been approved, the applicant shall go ahead and **submit the application** online at least 3 working days before the deadline.

The table below summarizes the internal deadlines (in terms of days/weeks before funder’s deadline) for the key steps described above.

What	By when	How
Initial Contact	at least 6 weeks before	Contact RM
Send for peer review	4 weeks before	Directly or via DDoR/RM
Near-final draft + response	8 working days before	Send to DDoR and RM
Final submission	3 working days before	Online + send final draft to RM

¹This can happen if the staff member is a “project partner” or if the money will be directly handed to the staff member without involvement of the University.

²Here and elsewhere, the value of the award refers to the total amount expected to be awarded by the funder if the application is successful; this will usually be less than the Full Economic Cost of the proposal.

³This draft *must* include the main research document (“Case for support” or similar) of the application, and should ideally also include other required supplementary documents if possible.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE ABOVE TIMELINE

All funding applications from a staff member within the School of Mathematical Sciences (including cases when the staff member is a co-I) require input and consideration from key staff within the School and the University. In particular, all significant grant applications have resource issues, and these need to be negotiated and ultimately approved by the School Management Team (SMT). It is crucial and mandatory that the process and timeline described above is followed. This requirement may be relaxed at the discretion of the DDoR in special circumstances, e.g., when a call goes out very late.

4. THE INTERNAL PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

A named investigator in the proposal cannot be an internal peer-reviewer. In cases where two internal peer reviewers are required, it is **strongly recommended** that one of the reviewers have expertise close to the applicants, and the other be whose expertise is somewhat far. For fellowship applications by external applicants that are supported by an SMS staff member (where the staff member is not a named investigator), it is allowed (and expected) that the supporting staff member is one of the peer-reviewers.

The aim of the peer-review process is to improve the quality of the proposal and, therefore, increase the likelihood of its success, while keeping workloads reasonable. It is important that applications submitted from the School be of high quality because if an institution submits too many unsuccessful applications they may have sanctions imposed on them by the funder.

5. HEAD OF SCHOOL APPROVAL

HoS approval will be required in all cases where PI costed time is more than 30%.

6. SHARING OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

It is School policy that successful proposals are shared with colleagues willing to apply for funding. If you are applying for funding, the RM will be able to share any successful previous proposals to the same scheme with you. Furthermore, by applying, you give your consent that should the application be successful it may be shared with future applicants without asking for your permission.

7. DEMAND MANAGEMENT

For certain schemes, there may be a demand management procedure in place which limits the number of applications we are able to submit to a particular call. The demand management process is managed centrally, and for such schemes Expressions of Interest and CVs will be required. Internal deadlines of calls to which demand management applies will be circulated to the School by the RM.

If no demand management is in place, we will usually support all applications that pass our standards and follow the process. It will therefore often occur that several staff members will be applying for the same grant or their applications going to the same panel.

8. RESEARCH SUPPORT FUND

Please consider whether you may be eligible for supporting funds provided by the Faculty. This is usually for New Investigator Awards or other “special circumstances”. RM can provide you with details about this. If Faculty Research Support is approved, this will need to be incorporated into your proposal.

9. HOST ORGANISATION STATEMENT OR HoS SUPPORTING LETTER

Some applications (Fellowships, New Investigator Grants, ...) require a Host Organisation Statement or a letter of support from the Head of School. The RM will support you with this and provide a starting template.

10. AFTER SUBMISSION

At some later date after the submission, if applicable, respond to initial reviewer comments. The RM and the DDoR can support you in this process. When you know whether your proposal is successful or not, let the RM know. This is so that the award can be transferred to QMUL, or to talk about other possibilities for the same research project.