UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Grant Application Process Workflow

Identify Funding Opportunity

- Funding opportunities are listed on the Research Office notice board and Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) Funding calendar, announced through the FHS infomailer, identified through Research Professional Africa, or through individual funder sites.
- Establish and confirm individual and UCT eligibility
- Convene a research team to cover all areas of expertise required to carry out the project

Establish Internal Process and Deadlines

- Establish internal submission deadlines, relative to the funder's deadline, for institutional review and signoff
- FHS C1 form – submit 3 working days before the internal RC&I deadline or funder's deadline (when to submit a C1)
- RC&I submission – applications requiring institutional approval or submission must be submitted to RC&I 5 working days before funder's deadline (C1 submitted 3 working days before RC&I deadline)

Request Supporting Documentation

- Institutional (UCT/FHS/Departmental) letter of support (per funding opportunity requirements)
- Obtain letters of support from co-applicants (may need institutional support in addition to individual letters)
- Ensure personal CV/NIH biosketch is up-to-date (follow opportunity formatting guidelines)
- Obtain co-applicants' CV/NIH biosketch (follow opportunity formatting guidelines)
- Request subaward information (budget and justification, etc.), if applicable

Compile Research Proposal and Budget

- Get the funding guidelines, read the guidelines, adhere to the guidelines
- The proposal generally consists of three main sections: The text (abstract, aims, background, methods etc.), the budget and supporting documentation – detailed breakdown in "Generic Grant Proposal Information" (*under development*)
- Draft the research proposal allowing as much time as possible for co-applicants to review before the **internal** submission deadline
- Develop research budget in consultation with your Senior Finance Officer (prepare budget justification)

Submit Application

- Upload all application components to funder's online system OR email full application to funder (follow funder guidelines)
- Submit online – funders such as Wellcome Trust and the NIH require institutional approval of applications. When submitting through the funder's online portal the application is first routed through UCT's RC&I office for final submission and is not submitted directly to the funder. NRF applications are similarly first routed through UCT's Research Office for final submission.

Identify Funding Opportunity

- The UCT Research Support Hub notice board provides a list of current funding opportunities from both local and international funders. Additional detail provided includes the contact person for a call (either at the Research Office or the funder itself) and the application deadline. These funding opportunities are applicable more broadly to all UCT researchers.
- The FHS Funding calendar is a collection of funding opportunities applicable specifically to UCT FHS researchers. The listed opportunities have been screened to ensure the eligibility of UCT as an institution, please confirm your individual eligibility before applying. Queries related to the FHS funding calendar can be directed to Dr David Choveaux.
- The **FHS infomailer** is a mailing list updated daily with notices relevant to the Faculty of Health Sciences. New funding opportunities are regularly announced via this list. To subscribe to the mailing list:
    1. Go to https://lists.uct.ac.za/mailman/listinfo/hsf-info-all.
    2. Do the following on the hsf-info-all mailing list administration page:
        a. Scroll down to "Subscribing to hsf-info-all".
        b. Enter in your email address and name.
        c. You do not need to supply a password as one will be automatically generated for you upon subscription.
    3. Click Subscribe.
    4. Your subscription to the hsf-info-all mailing list will be confirmed by email.
- Research Professional Africa (RPA) offers access to the latest global coverage of research funding programs, as well as science and technology news and innovation policies. UCT researchers are encouraged to take full advantage of this **essential resource**, since the funding opportunities span the full spectrum of research disciplines and sponsors. You may contact the RPA administrator, Mr Paul Dantu (021 650 1954), to request an account or simply self-register and then sign in. The RPA Quick Start Guide can be downloaded for tips on how to use the service. Training sessions can also be arranged upon request to the administrator.
- Once a potential funding opportunity has been identified it is essential that **eligibility** is established, both institutional and individual. Be cognisant of the following:
    1. Institution:
        a. Is the opportunity open to foreign institutions (relative to the funder's location if the funder is not local)?
        b. Is the opportunity open to institutions in Low and Middle Income Countries (South Africa is currently classified upper-middle income)?
        c. Is there a limit on the number of applications accepted from an institution (an internal selection process will apply)?
        d. Is the opportunity targeted at specific institutions (e.g. Historically Disadvantaged Institutions)?
    2. Individual:
        a. Do you have the requisite qualification(s) and experience/track record to apply for the specific opportunity?
        b. Are you required to be a citizen or permanent resident of a specific country?
        c. Are you required to form specific collaborative partnerships with researchers in other countries/regions?
        d. Are you required to have a specific employment status and must this have been held for a minimum period?
- Should you be eligible to apply, the next important step is to **convene a research team** that covers all relevant areas of expertise required to execute the project. This is of particular importance if proposing a multi-disciplinary project; define your own strengths and compliment these with skills provided by collaborators. Insofar as possible, establish working relationships as early as possible with collaborators to ensure you can work together effectively (some funders will take into account your history of working with the proposed team).

Establish Internal Process and Deadlines

- Once an applicable funding opportunity has been identified and eligibility confirmed (both institutional and individual), **application deadlines** must be established. While the funder's deadline is of primary importance, the deadlines you work toward should be planned relative to UCT internal review and signoff processes.
- For **NRF opportunities**, the central UCT Research Office will announce an internal submission deadline to allow for internal review and administrative checks. This is generally 14 days before the NRF application deadline, but will be confirmed through an announcement from the central Research Office.
- For applications that are to be submitted to external funders (other than the NRF) FHS researchers are required to submit a C1 form **three (3) working days** before either the Research Contracts & Innovation Office (RC&I – see below) or funder's deadline (whichever comes first):
  - The C1 form (FHS002) serves to help manage risk (in terms of resource use, research ethics, health & safety, and finances) to the FHS before an application is submitted to an external funder.
  - Instances when a C1 form should be submitted can be found here.
  - For project budget review, ensure you approach your Departmental Finance Officer timeously for input and signoff of your budget. This is a critical component of the C1 process (the Finance Officer will complete a financial information form for inclusion with the C1).
  - It is important that the **project PI maintains responsibility** for the content of the C1 form and ensures it is submitted for internal review on time and with their sign-off. This process should not be handled by the finance officer assisting with the budget review. While administrative support staff may assist the PI with C1 completion, the PI should maintain oversight and responsibility for it.
- Applications requiring institutional approval (e.g. NIH, Wellcome Trust, Je-S linked applications) must be submitted to RC&I **five (5) working days** before the funder's deadline:
  - Online application systems provided by international funders (e.g. NIH, Wellcome Trust) are intrinsically linked to RC&I through a designated authority/representative who will receive email updates when an application has been prepared for submission.
  - By submitting your complete application through the funder's online system, it is first routed through RC&I for approval before being submitted to the funder.
  - **Adhering** to the internal RC&I deadline is essential to allow the Contracts Manager assigned to submitting your application adequate time to process the request.

Request Supporting Documentation

- Application components that typically take time to gather from relevant individuals are the supporting documents. These generally include institutional and personal letters of support, CVs, and subaward information. On occasion, funders may also request letters of support are obtained from a Ministerial official.
- It is recommended that letters of support (LoS) from collaborators (individual and possibly institutional as well) are requested, insofar as possible, well in advance of the **internal deadline** being worked toward. This will allow sufficient time to address any queries or amendments and allow time for the relevant official at the partner institution to review and sign the institutional letter of support (if required).
    - For an **individual LoS** indicate:
        - that you are aware of the project
        - that you are committed to the work that you describe
        - your role in the project and what you will bring to the team
        - how your participation in the project benefits your own research
    - Institutional commitments to be listed in the **institutional LoS** are often defined in the funding opportunity announcement. Examples include:
        - Substantiate the institutions' commitment to the proposed plan
        - Commit to overcoming any administrative obstacles to the implementation of the project
        - Commit to providing adequate staff, facilities, and resources needed for the success of the planned project
        - Commit to collaborate and share data as appropriate
        - If applicable – commit to supporting a career development candidate's salary at the end of the award period
- Funders typically require that you submit a copy of your **CV** as part of your application. This varies by funder and can range from preparing a 1- to 2-page summary CV, to completing an online CV, to preparing a CV in a specified format using a supplied template (e.g. NIH biosketch). Content to include in your CV will generally be specified by the funder. Under all circumstances ensure you <u>adhere to funder formats and restrictions</u>.
- In addition to a copy of your own CV as PI of the project, all <u>project collaborators </u>are often required to submit a copy of their CVs. As with the LoS, request that collaborators complete and return a copy of their CV to you well in advance of the internal deadline. This will ensure there is sufficient time to review and amend the content of CVs as necessary.
- In the event a **subaward** to a partner institution will form part of the overall project budget, request project costs from your collaborator(s) in advance of preparing the overall project budget. This will ensure there is sufficient time to agree on all requested costs and will allow the FHS Finance Officer assisting with your budget to factor in subaward costs appropriately.
    - In addition to the subaward costs, be sure to request a budget justification from your collaborator(s)
- You may also be required to collect additional documentation about your collaborator's institution, e.g. a description of their laboratories or institutional administrative details

Compile Research Proposal and Budget

- When initiating your proposal, a critical first step is to obtain the application guidelines provided by the funder. **Download** the guidelines, **read** the guidelines, **adhere** to the guidelines:
    - Respond to all sections of the application.
    - Adhere to any format restrictions.
    - Topics must be covered in the order presented in guidelines.
    - Use headings that correspond to the guidelines.
    - Refer to the funder's review criteria as well; these provide useful insight into what is considered by the funder to be the critical areas to address in the application.
- Funders will often provide a template for you to use for your application, whether it be online, as a Word document, or as a list of required section headings. The application will, however, generally consist of three main components: the **research strategy** (aims & objectives, background, methods, expected outcomes etc.), the **budget**, and **supporting documentation** (see page 5).
- To aid the process of compiling a project proposal, the FHS Research Office has compiled a "Generic Grant Proposal Information" guide that provides a detailed breakdown of the relevant sections of a proposal with advice on how best to address each section. The document can be found here (*under development*).
- When drafting your proposal ensure you manage your time based on internal deadlines (C1 form and RC&I – page 4) and not the funder's deadline. This is an important consideration to ensure you offer any co-applicants sufficient time to review the draft proposal and provide input (**Note**: When working with international collaborators, be sure to take time differences into account when requesting timeous feedback is provided)
- An often overlooked but **critical element** of your application (and the C1 form) is the **research budget**. This should be a well thought out component of the application and not compiled last minute. Budgets are crucial to an application as they are a key indicator of a project's feasibility and form a key consideration in the review process. For assistance with your research budget contact your Departmental Finance Officer who will be able to offer guidance on exchange rates, inflation, VAT, cost categories, and the inclusion of support functions.
- In support of your proposed budget be sure to include a **justification** for the requested costs. Be as thorough as possible with the justification, clearly indicating why the cost is required to complete the proposed project.

Application submission

- Once all application sections have been completed, all supporting documentation gathered, and C1 approval obtained, you are ready to submit!
- The submission process will either be through the funder's online portal OR via email. Funders generally no longer require a paper copy of the application to be submitted as well but be sure to **read the guidelines** to be certain of the submission requirements.
- If submitting the application via email and institutional approval of the application is required, contact Research Contracts at RC&I who will assist in assigning a Contracts Manager to your application. Be sure to have your C1 form approved or in the process of being approved prior to contacting RC&I as they will request assurance that Faculty has reviewed and approved your application (i.e. signed the C1 form).
- Submission of your application through an **online system** will, in most instances, first route your application via the RC&I for approval. Examples of this process are for Wellcome Trust and NIH applications. As indicated above, RC&I require that they first receive an approved C1 form before submitting your application to the funder. In these instances you will automatically be assigned a Contracts Manager to assist with submission of your proposal following final approval of your C1 form. You will receive an email from RC&I as the final step in the C1 process indicating the reference (IRMA) number assigned to your proposal and the name of the Contracts Manager assigned to facilitating your submission. Adhering to **internal deadlines** is thus **key** to ensuring a smooth process of submission.
    - Online submission of **National Research Foundation (NRF) applications** is similar to NIH and Wellcome Trust applications in that applications are first routed via the institution before final submission to the NRF. This process is however managed by the central Research Office and as such does not require an accompanying C1 form or contact with RC&I.
- **Following submission** of any application, be sure to check for a confirmatory email indicating the application was successfully received. This is generally a system generated response but it is important that you confirm application receipt. In the event a confirmatory email is not received be sure to contact RC&I (if the application submission is routed via them) or the contact person listed on the funding opportunity announcement.