

## Guidance notes:

# Internal Review of PGR Training Grant Applications

## Overview

As part of its commitment to increasing and diversifying postgraduate (PGR) training and research income, the University is implementing a formal process for the internal review of PGR training proposals. This is focused on improving the quality of such proposals and ensuring consistency of approach at an institutional level. The process will be carried out in conjunction with REO Research Development Manager PGR, who will provide support for the development of proposals in the usual way alongside finance and PGRE specialists (such as FDPI and PGRE teams).

The applicant will be responsible for identifying and approaching academic colleagues to undertake the reviews of their proposal. The responsibility for approving an application for submission remains with the Dean PGRE who will be made aware of whether an internal review process has been completed and consider this as part of the approval process. The internal review process is separate to any formal approval for the host institution contribution (HIC). Any HIC requests whether it is for an outline or a full submission require full USG approval prior to submission of the application.

## Scope

The Internal Review process requires applicants to seek feedback from **at least two** academic colleagues and the Deputy Dean PGT on both outline/EoI and full proposals where the University of Essex is the lead institution for the PGR training application, where **any** of the following criteria apply:

- Any PGR training application to: i). UK Research and Innovation Research Councils; ii). Leverhulme Trust; iii). MSCA Doctoral Networks,
- Applications to schemes identified to be strategically important by the PVC (Research),
- Schemes where the funder has a cap on institutional application numbers – institutional sifting and selection is required,
- Applications where there is a substantial resource implication for the University (e.g. Host Institution Commitment (HIC)).

The internal review process will operate alongside the internal sift processes we already have in place for applications to funding opportunities of strategic importance to the University, or where there is a limit on the number of institutional applications.

## Internal Review Process

1. The RDM PGR will provide a link in their email to the guidance document and review template, which are published on the staff webpages and advise on the process.
2. The RDM will support the development of the PGR training proposal in the usual way, providing advice on the development of the application, offering programme development support and feedback on successive drafts.
3. Once a full draft has been produced, the applicant should approach **at least two academic** colleagues to review it and inform the RDM PGR of the reviewers names. Colleagues applying are encouraged to speak with their Faculty Dean Postgraduate or Faculty Dean Research if they are unsure of a suitable reviewer to approach.
4. The applicant should forward the full draft proposal and review template to their selected reviewers.
5. Reviewers are asked to comment on the proposal's suitability for the scheme, and:
  - a. Vision of the Doctoral Centre or Doctoral Training Partnership;
  - b. Clear need for cohort training in the research area;
  - c. Clarity and accessibility of the proposal;
  - d. Training framework (including supervisory) and where relevant: Research in Practice, collaborative awards or industry links and placements;
  - e. Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategies as well as policies relating to Widening Participation;
  - f. Student allocation models including any HIC requested;
  - g. Consideration of capacity to deliver, research environment, facilities, equipment and any technical support needs.
6. Internal reviews should be completed and returned to the PI for consideration. The PI should forward them to the RDM PGR **no later than 10 working days** before the submission deadline.
7. The RDM will support the development of the application and review the final draft in line with usual practice. If, in light of all the feedback provided, and based on the scheme criteria, the RDM considers the proposal is not yet ready for submission, they will advise the REO Head of Research Development and Impact, who will provide a summary of the issues to the applicant and Dean PGRE for consideration. Final approval remains the responsibility of the Dean PGRE.

## Exceptions

It is recognised that there may be instances, for example when the funder announces a call with a short deadline, where truncating or not following the agreed process will be necessary. To seek an exception, agreement should be sought from the Dean PGRE and REO Head of Research Development and Impact.

## Contact

Any questions please contact the Research Development Manager PGR [kbadcock@essex.ac.uk](mailto:kbadcock@essex.ac.uk)