
Guidance on naming researchers in grant applications

Executive Summary

This document is intended to be used as a best practice guide when considering whether to name individuals in grant applications. It aims to achieve consistency between faculties and ensure we are treating people fairly and consistently. These guidelines are intended to apply to all types of research funder. However, this is not a policy document and there may well be circumstances which do not fit the situations described, for example this guidance does not cover the specific make up of contributors needed on some medical grant applications, nor does it cover scenarios where a PI is moving to Leeds and wishes to bring their research team with them. In such cases your local HR team can support you.

It is acknowledged that the purpose of naming individuals on grant applications is normally to increase the chances of a successful grant application. Other benefits include: demonstration of the University's commitment to retaining individuals; the protection of an individual's research ideas and knowledge relating to a significant contribution to a grant proposal and; demonstration of the high calibre of proposed staffing for research projects.

This document is not intended to investigate the strategic drivers for whether the University should be naming individuals. However, the 'fit' with the academic strategy should be considered when deciding whether an individual is named. In addition, the Procedure to support the employment security for staff on fixed funding or fixed term contracts, our recruitment processes and our commitment to equality of opportunity, fairness and inclusion should also be considered.

Background

There are two ways in which it is possible for the University to recruit named individuals to research posts, rather than going through the normal recruitment process. These are where:

- research fellowship funding is awarded to an individual;
- a named individual is included in a grant application.

When a Research Fellowship is awarded to an individual

In these situations, the advertising and communication of the fellowship will have been done by the grant awarding body.

The research fellowship is awarded to the individual and cannot be transferred to anyone else therefore, our normal advertising process will not be undertaken.

There are two scenarios relating to this:

1) The individual is already employed by the University on the same grade as their new fellowship

This would result in a change of research project and on most occasions a change in job title. As the individual is already employed by the University, no 'assessment' process is required.

2) The individual is not employed by the University or is currently employed but on a different grade

Validation: there is a need to ensure that the Fellow meets the criteria expected of a new appointee to the University of Leeds or the criteria expected at the higher grade.

The fellowship awarding body may have undertaken a stringent selection process that we are satisfied is of the same calibre as our recruitment process. It is the responsibility of the Head of School, in consultation with your Faculty HR Manager, to determine whether this is the case and if so, all that may be required is a local discussion (for example with the Head of School and Director of Research & Innovation) to explore how the individual can make a broader contribution to the School. It is important to note that other HR procedures, such as probation, do still apply.

If we are not satisfied with the process that has taken place, a validation discussion informed by a supporting statement and an academic CV should be arranged. This discussion may include the Head of School, an independent representative, an HR representative and the individual to determine whether the individual meets our criteria for appointment.

Grading roles: In all cases, a job description for the role will need to be supplied to your Faculty HR team, to ensure consistency of grading before the above stages are completed.

A named individual is included in a grant application

This is the most complex of the scenarios and the way forward depends on the nature of the contract of the named person and others in a similar position, as well as the contribution that the individual has made to the grant application.

1) Individuals who are not currently employed by the University or are employed at a different grade

Naming individuals in this scenario is not recommended because we are creating a new post. It would be difficult to justify why the individual was the best person for the role without undertaking our normal recruitment process.

In addition, we have specific legal obligations to people who already work here. For example, staff seeking redeployment should be given priority to apply for the post over other candidates.

However, there may be occasions where a researcher has made a significant contribution to a research proposal as part of an approved collaboration, perhaps as researcher co-investigator (for example, through a visiting relationship with the University). In these instances, the inclusion of the individual's research ideas and knowledge means that we would not be able to offer that work to anyone else. Where this is the case the Head of School in conjunction with Faculty HR, should give approval to this in advance of the grant being submitted.

In these circumstances, where individuals are not currently employed by us, a validation discussion informed by a supporting statement and an academic CV should be arranged, for example between the Head of School, and independent representative, an HR representative and the individual to determine whether the individual meets the appropriate criteria for appointment. Individuals who are currently employed by us but at a lower grade must go through the promotions process to be confirmed at the higher grade.

2) Individuals who are employed on a fixed term or open ended - fixed funded contract on the same grade as the new funding

In these circumstances, there is a difference between extending the work on the project that an individual is currently employed on and changing the research project.

If the funding is for an extension to the work that a researcher is currently employed to work on they can be named on the grant application. However, the individual must still be employed at the time of the commencement of the grant to be eligible and bridging funding to continue employment is not guaranteed in the event of any delay to the award of funding.

If the research project is a different one, we are creating a new role. In these circumstances we should not name an individual and we should advertise the role, following the University's usual recruitment processes¹. It may be appropriate to use the following standard wording in the grant application:

It has been identified that (PERSON) has the required skills to undertake this project. For this reason we have based the costings on their salary (£xxxxx). However, to ensure the University meets its obligations, the post will need to be advertised and (PERSON) will be encouraged to apply.

3) Individuals who are currently employed on an on-going basis or fixed term basis and who have had significant input into the authoring of a grant application:

Where a researcher has made a significant contribution to the research proposal, perhaps as researcher co-investigator, then the inclusion of the individual's research ideas and knowledge means that we would not be able to offer that work to anyone else. Approval should be sought from the Head of School in conjunction with the Faculty HR Manager, before the grant application is submitted. The individual's role and grade will remain unchanged.

Supporting the development of all staff is important and the chance to be involved in writing grant applications should not be unnecessarily restricted.

¹ Unless the circumstances in point 3 apply

Further information

For further advice, or to discuss individual cases please contact your research support office or your Faculty HR team.

If you require this document in an alternative format (for example braille, large print or e-text) please contact Human Resources at hr@leeds.ac.uk

Decision tree for when a named individual is included in a grant application

