

Completing a costing

- Contact your [School Finance Account Manager](#) for advice on all aspects of costing and pricing.
- Read your funder's guidelines carefully to see what costs are eligible for inclusion in the price.

When completing a costing you need to consider everything you might need to undertake your research, including the directly incurred, directly allocated and indirect costs. You will then need to check what your potential funder is willing to pay for. All projects should be costed using the online [Project Costing Tool](#).

- **Directly incurred costs** are directly attributable to the project and would not be incurred if the project did not go ahead e.g. research assistant salary, equipment, consumables.
- **Directly allocated costs** are costs that can be allocated to projects according to particular drivers e.g. Principal investigator time, lab space, etc.
- **Indirect costs** are not directly attributable to research projects but are still incurred. They include items such as library, central services and departmental administration. Without this infrastructure research could not go ahead.

The following items should be considered when costing a research proposal:

- [Staff costs](#)
- [Non-staff direct costs](#)
- [Space and facilities](#)
- [Indirect costs](#)
- [Inflation](#)
- [VAT](#)
- [Publishing Costs](#)

Staff costs

The total cost of employing a member of staff on a research project should include the following:

- Basic salary
- Yearly salary increments
- Employers' National Insurance contribution
- Employers' Superannuation contribution

The University's project costing tool is able to calculate these for you.

Make sure you include the costs of all staff on your project, for example:

- Existing Academic staff (including your time, and your co-applicants')
- Research assistants or other research staff
- Administrative/secretarial support
- Technical support
- Project Studentships
- Replacement teaching costs
- Casual staff (hourly rates)
- Consultancy rates (hourly or day)

Costing existing members of University of Bristol staff is easy. You can search for the individual on the project costing tool and it will access their salary information to calculate a charge. You will not be able to see this charge until the individual gives their consent. This is managed electronically on the tool.

Costing new posts can also be done using the tool. You will just need to know which grade, spinal point and pension scheme you wish the individual to be employed on. If you are unsure of any of these please contact the [School Finance Account Manager](#) for advice.

For all posts you will need to estimate the time the person will spend on the project over its duration. The project allows you to input time contributions in different units to suit you, e.g. hours, days, hours per week, and percentage. You can also put in different time periods to reflect different amounts of effort on a project at the various stages.

Student costs

When costing a student (typically a PhD student) you need to consider both the tuition fees and the maintenance costs. Some funders have set a fixed contribution towards these costs. The University's schedule of tuition fees can be obtained from the [Academic Registry](#).

London Weighting

If you are appointing a member of staff to be based in London you will need to include the London Weighting Allowance and this needs to be added in before you calculate the national insurance and pension contributions. Please contact the Faculty Finance Service Team details of the London Weighting Allowance.

Non-staff direct costs

Non-staff direct costs can include a huge variety of things including travel, consumables, dissemination, equipment, and recruitment costs. The project costing tool facilitates the input of all types of non-staff direct costs under a variety of categories. The tool defaults to spread the costs of each item evenly over the duration of the project. This is often appropriate for general consumables but items of equipment are usually bought in the first phase of the project so the expected date of purchase should be amended to reflect this. Otherwise inflation will be incorrectly applied.

Travel and subsistence

When costing travel try to make your figures as accurate as possible. Remember:

- Include rail/taxi transfers from the airport where applicable.
- Always use standard fares - you may not be able to get the discounted fares when you want to travel.
- Use the most appropriate, and safe travel for what you are doing.

Consumables

Consumable costs include items such as printer paper, postage, stationery, lab supplies, photocopying and computer supplies. Different funders have very varied policies on what consumables they will pay for. Check their guidelines carefully.

Many charities will only fund stationery and postage if they are central to the proposal methods, e.g. for epidemiology studies or surveys.

Ask your department administrator to advice on the costs of office supplies.

Dissemination costs

There are three main types of dissemination costs:

- Publication - indexing, editing, obtaining illustrations
- Reporting - for your funder, department and/or faculty
- Conference/seminar cost - organising and/or attending
 - venue hire
 - refreshments/catering
 - travel/subsistence for speakers
 - accommodation for speakers/delegates
 - printing of hand-outs/programmes
 - administration
 - equipment hire, e.g. projectors, screens etc
 - contact the [Conference Office](#) for help

There may be a range of other costs incurred if your project involves dissemination by film, television, radio or a website.

Equipment

This could include computers, or specialised research equipment. If you are purchasing computers please see the [Computing Service](#) for up-to-date costs for computers, software, peripherals and associated maintenance costs.

The University [Purchasing Office](#) can advise on the costs of equipment and the procurement process when necessary.

For all types of equipment, make sure you allow for any associated costs;

- Maintenance
- Insurance
- Installation
- Delivery/removal
- Depreciation

RCUK Changes to requests for equipment from 1st May 2011

On 1 May 2011, the following changes in how equipment is requested on Research Council grants will come into effect:

1. Increase in the threshold for individual items of minor research equipment from £3k to £10k (inclusive of VAT)
2. Further justification for all items of equipment costing between £10k and the OJEU threshold value (inclusive of VAT £121,588): Proposals must provide evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets plus a contribution towards the cost of the equipment.
3. Business case required for all items of equipment above the OJEU threshold value (net of VAT £101,323, inclusive of VAT £121,588): RCUK will decide the strategic location for these items and will potentially fund them at 100%
 - [Equipment funding - RCUK guidance](#) (PDF 253 Kb)
 - [RCUK Equipment funding on fEC Research Grants - Letter to UoB staff](#), 3 June 2011 (PDF,242 Kb)

Animal costs

If your project involves work with animals, you may need to consider the following:

- Purchase of animals
- Purchase of associated equipment
- Animal house and maintenance costs
- Home Office licence fees
- Experimental procedures

Costs can be calculated in collaboration with the Animal Service Unit directly via the facility function in [Project Costing Tool](#).

Space and facilities costs

Space and facilities costs are allocated to projects on the basis of the number of full time equivalent staff on a project. The project costing tool will add up all the time contributions of the individuals working on the project and multiply that total by the appropriate space and facilities rate. They are difficult to allocate per project. The space and facilities charge

covers the costs of the buildings, heating, lighting, security, existing equipment etc. Currently the University has two rates for space and facilities: one is for laboratory or clinical research and the other is for office or classroom based research.

Faculty	Agreed Rate
Arts	Office/Classroom
Engineering	Laboratory/Clinical
Medical and Veterinary Sciences	Laboratory/Clinical
Medicine and Dentistry	Laboratory/Clinical
Science	Laboratory/Clinical
Social Science and Law	Office/Classroom

Charitable funders are unlikely to contribute to a space and facilities charge.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are always incurred but they are difficult to allocate per project. They include costs towards the University's infrastructure to enable research to go ahead, e.g. library, central services and departmental administration. Indirect costs are calculated by multiplying the FTE on the project by the indirect cost rate. The indirect cost rate is the same for all types of research and level of staff involved.

Many funders, especially charities will not pay for indirect costs.

Inflation

Some funders (e.g. Research Councils and Wellcome Trust) will build inflation into your grant after it has been awarded.

Other funders expect YOU to build it in to your application before you submit. The University currently recommends a rate of 3.5% per year (this covers inflation and an allowance for future pay awards).

Value added tax (VAT)

Depending on who is funding your research and the types of research cost that you are applying for, some or all of your project costs may be liable for VAT. If you are unsure whether to include VAT, please contact the University VAT advisor, Jeff Kirkham (email Jeff.Kirkham@bristol.ac.uk).

If you are not including VAT in a price sent to a funder, always include the following statement:

"These costs do not include VAT. VAT will be charged if applicable."

Open Access Publishing Costs

Many funding bodies request as standard that the research they fund is published in open access journals. It is often possible to request the funds to cover these costs in your grant application, and you should check individual funding bodies rules and regulations for further information. The Wellcome Trust strongly advocates open access publishing and there are some centrally-held funds available to support this activity.

[Further information about open access publishing](#)

Converting the cost to price

Cost and price are not the same thing. The **cost** is a fact: it is all the resources (both direct and indirect) needed to complete the activity. The **price** of the activity is the amount eventually paid by the funder.

Different funders have different rules which dictate the price they are able or willing to pay for research. Ideally this price will be **at least equal** to the cost. Any funds secured over and above the costs will then enable further investment in the University research infrastructure.

Getting University approval

University approval is achieved through the online [Project Costing Tool](#). When complete the Principal Applicant should validate (this checks for obvious errors/omissions) and then submit the costing for University approval. This puts the proposal into the electronic workflow which allows your Head of School to review and approve it online. Their approval automatically feeds the proposal to the Faculty Finance Service Teams to authorise. The applicant can track their costing through the approval process by selecting 'proposals in the authorisation process' from the main menu in the costing tool.

Please allow at least two working days for this process.

Electronic Submission

If your application is being submitted electronically to the funder, for example through JeS (joint electronic submission), this should be done in conjunction with the University's tool. For many Research Council funding schemes submitted via JeS it is now possible to automatically upload costs from the project costing tool into JeS: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/support/funding/jesupload.pdf>.

More general information about the Electronic Submission process is available on the [Finance Services webpage](#).