EPSRC Strategic Equipment Bids

Until recently there was a two stage process for internal approval of applications for the EPSRC Strategic Equipment calls: the applications were first approved by the Schools and then by the PVC Research. This policy was put in place in Nov 2014, to rectify a problem that was identified: a number of applications for strategic equipment were submitted to EPSRC without the knowledge of the host departments and Schools, which resulted in the submission of multiple and unrelated bids to the same deadline. Some of the bids also requested financial or in kind contributions from departments or schools, which were difficult to approve without the oversight of all bids submitted for a particular deadline.

The University has recently reviewed the policy and concluded that the central approval of these bids adds an additional stage in the process, which is not strictly necessary. Therefore, from January 2018 the applications for EPSRC Strategic Equipment will only need to be approved by the Schools; the approval by the PVC Research will be no longer required.

School of Technology process for new bids to the EPSRC Strategic Equipment Calls as follows:

1. The Research Strategy Office informs the Technology RO Assistant Director, Lisa Wears, of the forthcoming deadlines for the EPSRC Equipment calls

2. Lisa Wears emails Heads of Department, copying departmental research administrators, with the information of the call, requesting the final applications (each with a letter of Support from the Head of School, see points 3 and 4 below) with a deadline usually one week before the external deadline.

3. If any School level financial contribution is required, PIs seeking any non-recurrent financial commitment from the School are advised to contact the School Finance Manager (email address: finance_manager@tech.cam.ac.uk) as soon as possible to discuss the eligibility of the requests and the amounts in question. It would be difficult to consider any financial request with less than 2 weeks’ notice. Requests for significant amounts exceeding £0.5m will require iterative negotiations with the PVC (Planning and Resources) and hence much longer notice.

4. PIs needing a letter of support from the Head of School are asked to email the School Office (email address: researchcalls@tech.cam.ac.uk) with a draft of the letter of support and a completed “Head of School Support Letter Request” with the necessary details (see Appendix A). Please allow for a minimum of 2 weeks for the School Office to check the draft letter and any financial commitment.

5. Departments will have their own internal deadlines for processing the applications, and PIs are requested to build in sufficient time to obtain School level buy in (be it financial commitment or letter of support) to meet the departmental and Research Office deadlines.

This process is summarised schematically below. A copy of this new process is on the School’s website:

[https://www.tech.cam.ac.uk/school/policies-and-guidance](https://www.tech.cam.ac.uk/school/policies-and-guidance)
Contact details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Contact Names</th>
<th>Email address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research call information</td>
<td>Shui Lam</td>
<td><a href="mailto:researchcalls@tech.cam.ac.uk">researchcalls@tech.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lisa Wears or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yi Jun Lim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Manager</td>
<td>Joanna Warmsley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:finance_manager@tech.cam.ac.uk">finance_manager@tech.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shui Lam

20 January 2018
A summary of the process is as follows:

EPSRC Strategic Equipment Bids:

- **Call Announcement**
  - Letter inviting applicants
  - PI to discuss any financial contributions with finance manager
  - HoS letter of support
- **Time scale**
  - at least two weeks
  - dependant on Department
  - one week
- **External Deadline**
  - RO approval
Appendix A

School of Technology Head of School Support Letter Request

Call Details: (call details to be entered as appropriate)

Please submit this completed form, together with a draft support letter, to researchcall@tech.cam.ac.uk by (deadline for submission)

Principal Investigator:

Department:

Names of any internal Co-Investigators (including department/institution):

External collaborators (including their University or organisation):

Title of the Proposal:

Value of grant application:

- If you are contributing to another institution’s bid, please state that and name the collaborating institution:

- If applicable please itemise what institutional contribution would be included in the support letter and where it is coming from, using the table below. The contributions listed need to be discussed with, and approved by both the Department and the School.

Please note that any contributions not itemised in this form will not be included in the support letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contribution and source (Department/School)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD studentships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buyout of PI’s time / teaching / admin duties by the Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional posts (e.g. Lecturer, Postdoc, Admin or Technical support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designated building space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment costs (including maintenance/technician’s time etc. - please itemise)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please state</td>
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Confirmation by the Head of Department/Deputy:
• If applicable, please itemise any investment already made that your proposal will benefit from, which can be included in the letter of support. For example, you may have access to the existing equipment, technical or administrative support, designated building or building space, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of investment and source (Department/School)</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</table>

Confirmation by the Head of Department/Deputy:

• If no contribution is to be included in the support letter, please sign below to that effect. In that case no Department / School approval and signature is needed.

   I confirm that no contributions are to be included in this support letter

Signed by PI: