

Working with and paying new and existing suppliers

Your research project may include work or services provided by external suppliers.

These might be GP Practices, charities, companies or other institutions.

Lots of Universities and Colleges are already on our purchasing system – OpeRA – but if we want to make payments to collaborators who may not have worked with anyone at the University before we will need to create a new vendor account for them so we can pay them.

The following is a process map to help you work through this.

1. Speak to the project administrator at the beginning of the project when you have a good idea of who you'll need to pay, how much you plan to pay them, and the timeline for payments. If they already exist on our system as an approved supplier then you can relax and go straight to the orange boxes.

2. If the supplier you wish to engage with isn't an approved supplier then you will be asked to get in touch with your contact – usually someone in their Finance department – to ask them to supply the following information:

- **Their company name**
- **Full address and post code of Company (practice address or Head Office address)**
- **VAT number if applicable**
- **Company Registration number (or GP number if a practice, or charity number)**
- **Finance Officer name, email and contact number for the person/team at their end who will be handling payments and raising invoices**

For BACS purposes we also need:

- **Bank/Building Society name**
- **Account name**
- **Sort code**
- **Bank account number**

Importantly, all this information has to be supplied on their company letter headed paper.

3. The project administrator will then use this information to complete an MDR2 form and Central Finance teams will run credit checks before approving them as a new vendor. **Approvals can take up to a month to be processed by the Accounts Payable Team so give yourself plenty of lead time.**

At the same time the administrator also needs to have an idea of how much we are likely to be paying them in total over the life of the project, and the dates by which you expect to have to make payments. You may have made agreements to pay them once the work is finished or in instalments, over the life of the project, for example.

4. As soon as they are approved and set up on the purchasing system we can go ahead and do business with them. We can only invite them to invoice us once we have supplied them with a Purchase Order (PO) number to include on their invoices. **The University have a strict 'No PO, No Pay' policy.**

When you are ready to invite the supplier to claim their payment/funding...

1. Your project administrator will need to ask some questions to allow us to create PO numbers – like description of services, or rate of VAT etc, so these will also be discussed in due course. At this stage you might decide to create a reducing PO, where a supplier might be invoicing us on a monthly basis for services like transcriptions or mailing costs. This saves lots of time for the project administrator!

2. When we are in a position to invite them to invoice us for services or work they have completed **we may need to attach a signed collaboration document to the PO request** to prove that the university agrees that we can pay them from the research funding. Check that this is in place – the RIS team should discuss this when the project is being costed up.

3. The research administrator will raise the PO number using all the information you have provided. Once the number is released they will share the PO number with the supplier and invite them to invoice.

4. The supplier provides the invoice, either as a one-off or a monthly bill, the administrator attaches it to the PO and the **Finance Team request payment**.