

Research Culture Week

Research Grant Application Writing for Success

Research Strategy & Development Managers
(RSDMs):

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Agenda

- Introduction to Research and Impact Services
- Research Grant Application Writing for Success
- Research development support
- How to contact R&IS
- Hear from some of Warwick's Early Career Researchers
- Q&A

Research and Impact Services

 Research
Grant Costings


 Research
Development

 Grant
Submission

 Research
Contracts

 Ethics &
Governance

 Research
Impact

 Research
Excellence
Framework (REF)

 Research
Systems & Data

 Statutory
Returns

 Programme
Management of
Institutional Funds

 Research
Income Planning

 Supporting
the University
Research
Strategy

Research Grants vs. Fellowships

Research grants

- Provide funding for focused research projects that may be short or long term, and may require a team approach
- Portion of time dedicated to the project
- Often include Co-Is/collaborators and may involve a larger group and support collaborations between institutions, disciplines and sectors
- May be open to any research topic (bottom-up) or be directed certain themes or issues set by the funder (top-down)

Fellowships

- Provide dedicated time to complete individual research project and to support growth
- Typically have a duration of 1 to 4 years, during which time the fellow is partially or wholly relieved from non-research duties
- Almost always open to any research topic (bottom-up)
- Schemes available for all career stages
- ECR opportunities may require working with a mentor

Choosing the right funding call

A good match increases success dramatically

What to evaluate

- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Readiness to apply
- ✓ Fit with your research area
- ✓ Funding scale vs. project ambition



Building a strong project foundation

Before writing, clarify the core elements:

- Research problem/gap
- Preliminary data/findings
- Hypotheses or aims
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Data
- Team
- Timeline
- Think about resources



Crafting a Compelling Narrative

A grant is not just a technical document – it is a persuasive story

Core narrative elements:

- Hook: why does the problem matter?
- Gap: what is missing in current knowledge or practice?
- Solution: what is your approach and why is it the right one?
- Risk mitigation: what contingency plans do you have in place?
- Data management plan: what and how will you share?
- Impact: who benefits and how?
- Capability: why you and your team?



Grant writing principles

- Balance between lay and expert reviewer
- Avoid jargon unless essential
- Novelty and excitement!
- Clarity beats complexity
- Avoid acronyms
- Readability
- Use signposting
- Make every section answer a reviewer's implicit question: So what?
- Review and revise



Planning your budget and resources

A budget is a strategic document, not an afterthought.

- Your project's budget should develop in parallel to the proposal narrative as it can influence what you are able to do.

Principles:

- Think carefully about what you need to do your project. Align every cost with each activity.
- Avoid padding or under-budgeting - reviewers look for value for money but will be sceptical if a project is too cheap!
- Be clear in your justification about why each cost is needed and cover all the costs.



Strengthening Your Proposal Before Submission

High-performing researchers treat grant writing as a team sport (even for fellowships and single-scholar projects).

Actions:

- Start early enough to revise multiple times.
- Seek multiple internal peer review.
- Ask experts and those working outside your field.
- Use R&IS and departmental research supports.
- Check compliance with formatting, page limits, and required documents.
- Review the assessment criteria.



Response to Reviewers

Reviewers are busy, overloaded, and often reading outside their exact expertise.

Reviewer psychology:

- They want to fund **good ideas**
- They are **risk-averse**
- They reward **clarity, feasibility, and alignment**
- Understanding, addressing and matching to **assessment criteria**

Response:

- **Be appreciative and professional** in tone throughout.
 - **Respond systematically**, addressing every comment clearly and directly.
 - **Provide concrete actions** (clarifications, revisions, evidence) rather than only explanations.
 - **Acknowledge misunderstandings** and show how you've improved clarity.
 - **Maintain a positive, constructive, and solution-focused tone**, even when disagreeing.



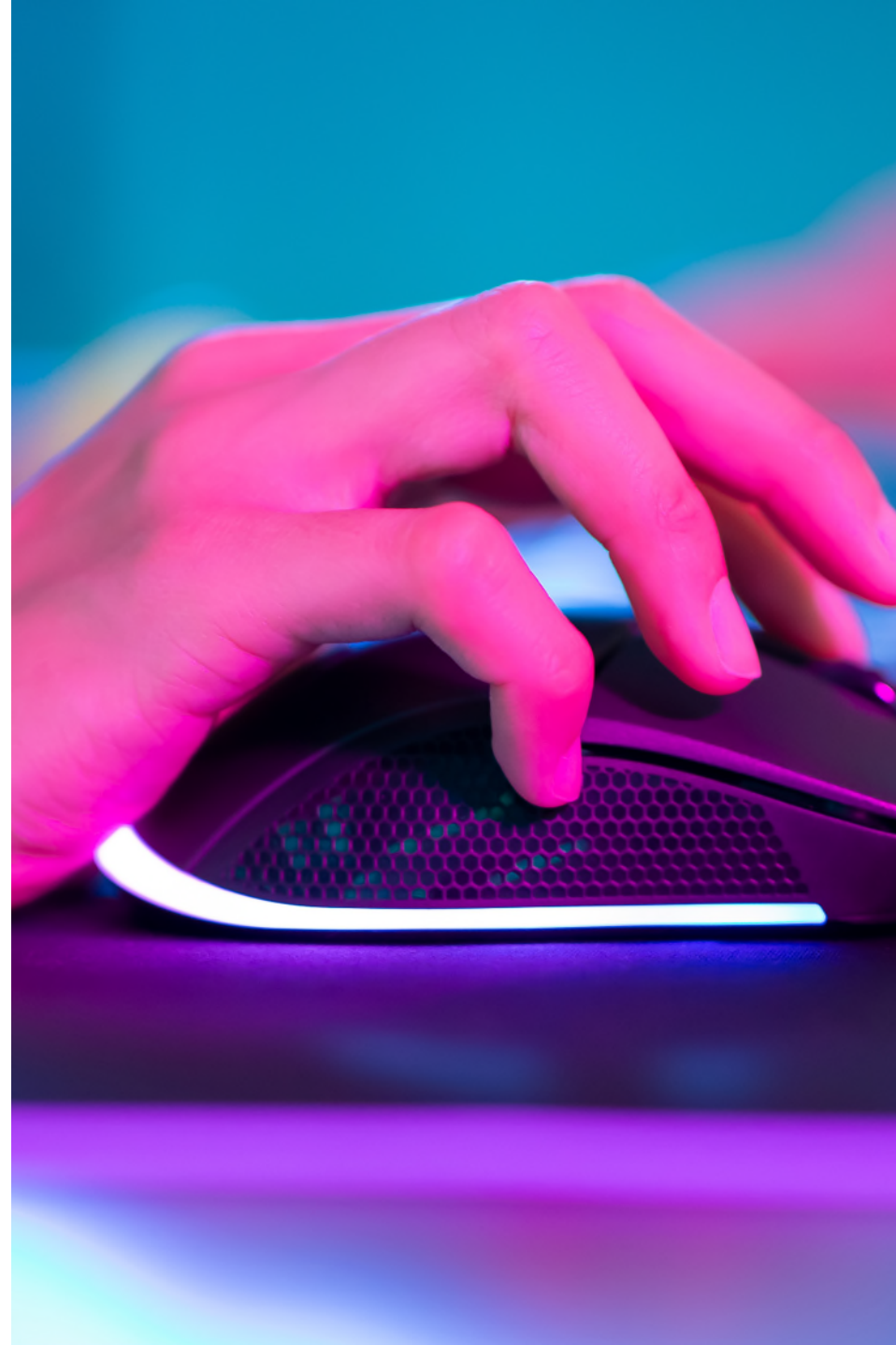
Final Checklist for a Fundable Proposal

- Strong alignment with funder/call priorities
- Clear problem and compelling rationale
- Feasible, rigorous methodology
- Risk mitigation and contingency plan
- Realistic timeline
- Clear impact pathway
- Evidence of PI/team capability and track record
- Carefully planned budget and justification
- Addressed all assessment criteria
- Compliance with all funder rules



Finding funding opportunities

- [Research Professional](#)
- [UKRI Funding Finder](#)
- [European Commission Funding and Tender opportunities](#)
- Government and Department websites
- Charity and Trust websites
- R&IS and Departmental research support teams



Research development support from R&IS



Horizon scanning, sharing funding opportunities and identifying suitable funding sources for researchers and Departments

Meeting with researchers to explore ideas and identify suitable funding opportunities

Support for bid development including proposal review and advice on how to approach your application

Facilitating internal peer review

Managing development of large/strategic bids and internal review/selection processes

Support for responses to reviewer comments and interview preparation

Development of research funding resources

Delivery of research funding and grant-writing training and events

Access to examples of successful applications and knowledge bank of funder insights

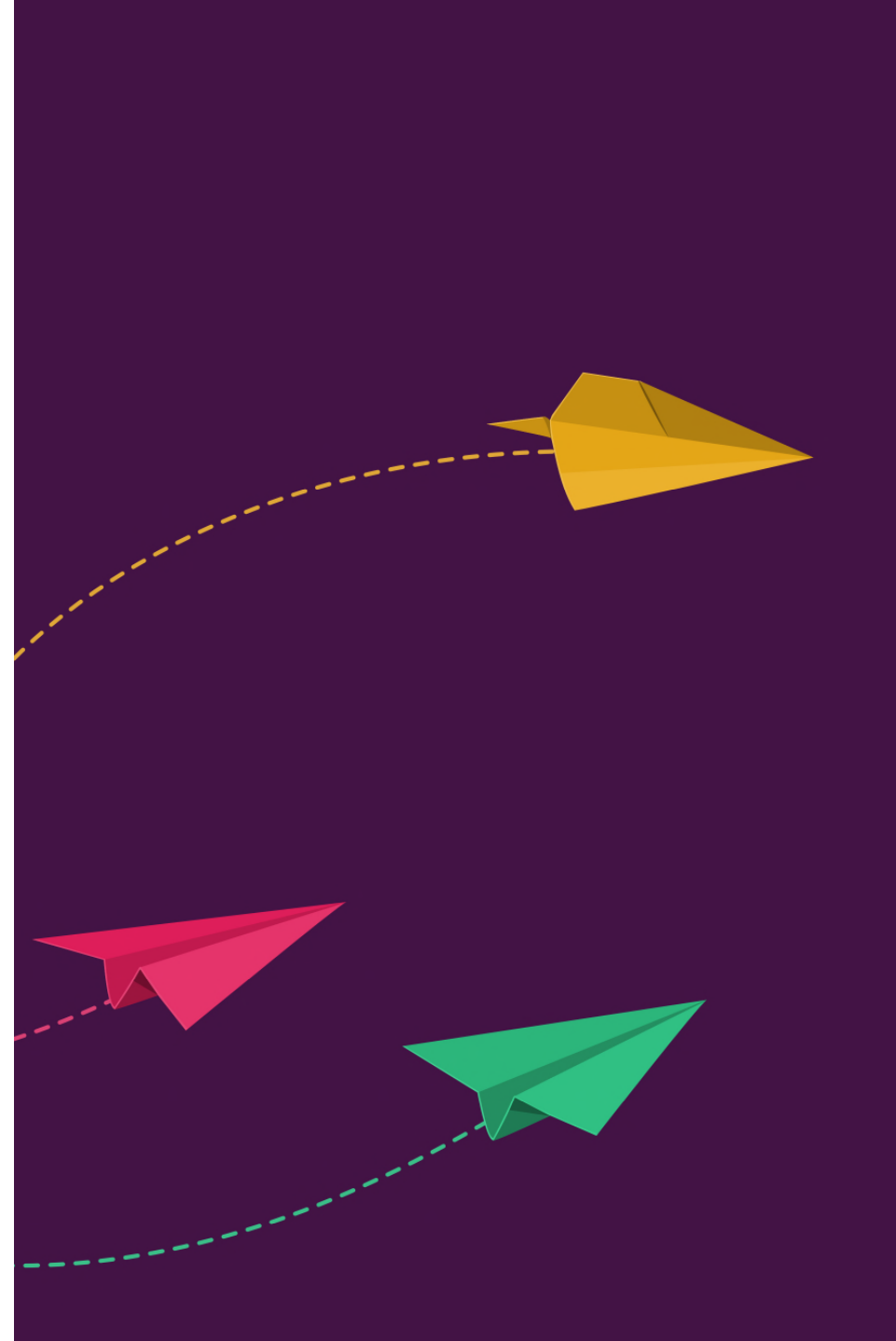
Liaison and relationship-building with key funders

Working across Departments at Warwick to support collaborations and interdisciplinary research

Support with PI responses to reviews and mock interviews

How to request support from R&IS

- Colleagues intending to apply for external grants should submit a RIS Notification of Intent (NOI) form as soon as they have identified a funding opportunity. NB some Departments have their own NOI forms.
- This enables R&IS teams to allocate support for costings and proposal development
- Early notification is important – this allows the team to advise on additional steps that may be needed, e.g:
 - Decision making frameworks for non-FEC funding
 - Due diligence on project partners
 - Liaison with partners for their costing information
- Early-stage discussions about funding opportunities are encouraged



Discussion with Warwick's ECRs

- **Dr Fabrizio Alberti, School of LifeSciences (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine)**
- **Dr Vittoria Fallanca, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance (Faculty of Arts)**
- **Dr Amrita Kulka, Economics (Faculty of Social Sciences)**



Research Grant Application Writing for Success



Please confirm your attendance and provide feedback by following the QR code. We value your feedback.

Thank you for joining us!

