

Definitions

Please refer to USC's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness.

Contract research: research project funded by an external organisation (not resulting from a competitive application scheme).

Externally funded research: research projects funded by organisations external to USC.

Grant funded research: research project funded from competitive research funding schemes.

Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC): The Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) controls the collection of higher education research data and is designed to ensure the Australian Government's research block grants are allocated in a fair and transparent way and to support the policy intent of the funding.

Line Manager: as per the USC Organisational Chart advised by USC Human Resources.

Research: as defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Researcher: all staff, HDR students, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows who engage in research activity under the auspices of USC.

Research Master: USC's research project approval system.

Research Professional: external website detailing competitive research funding opportunities.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Office of Research

FIRST APPROVED

12 February 2010

LAST AMENDED

25 March 2020

REVIEW DATE

25 March 2025

STATUS

Active

1. Purpose of procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Externally Funding Research – Academic Policy.

The procedures outline the requirements of USC staff to ensure that the externally funded research that occurs at USC this high quality and impactful. Also, to ensure the University is equipped to grow research income.

2. External research funding opportunities

The Office of Research provides information to relevant staff regarding competitive research grant opportunities; this information is disseminated in a timely manner to support staff with planning their workload.

USC also maintains an ongoing subscription to Research Professional, an online database of funding opportunities. Staff can access information directly from the Research Professional website.

Researchers may also receive contract research opportunities from organisations via their engagement work.

3. Authority for externally funded research

3.1 Researcher responsibilities

Researchers are required to enter the details of proposed, externally funded research projects into a Research Project Request in the Research Master system. This initiates the USC approval process.

Researchers must submit Research Project Requests for competitive grant applications (non-Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)) at least 3 weeks prior to the external funding scheme closing date, to enable sufficient time for review, approval and submission.

For ARC and NHMRC applications (and other major grant schemes, as determined by the Office of Research), Researchers are required to adhere to the internal timeline authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and published by the Office of Research

The Research Project Request requires the Researcher to upload an application for research funding according to the specific grant scheme guidelines, or a research proposal prepared in consultation with an external organisation for Contract Research.

Researchers upload a project budget as part of the Research Project Request, using the USC Research Budget Calculator. The project budget should be prepared in consultation with the Research Finance Team.

3.2 Line Manager responsibilities

The Research Project Request is reviewed by the Researcher's Line Manager who considers the feasibility of the proposal and compliance with HERDC specifications.

The Line Manager may provide suggestions to the Researcher to improve/revise the project.

The Line Manager approves the Research Project Request and will ensure that any risks and financial liability are appropriately mitigated and within the University's stated risk appetite.

3.3 Office of Research responsibilities

The Office of Research receives the Research Project Request via the Research Master system. The request is reviewed for compliance with HERDC specifications, compliance with grant scheme guidelines (if applicable), grantsmanship (if applicable) and USC's internal requirements.

The Research Project Request is recommended for review to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and final approval is granted if appropriate.

For grant funded research scheme applications, once final approval has been granted, the Office of Research works with the Researcher to ensure timely submission to the funding organisation, clearly indicating that the institutional contact for the application is the Director, Office of Research.

For Contract Research, the Office of Research works in partnership with the Researcher for the timely submission of the approved research project to the external organisation, clearly indicating that the institutional contact for the project is the Director, Office of Research.

4. Management of externally funded research projects

4.1 Research Project Agreements

The Office of Research liaises with the external/funding organisation on behalf of USC to negotiate an appropriate funding Agreement to govern the research project; this is done in consultation with the Research Legal Officer, the Researcher, and the Researcher's Line Manager.

When the terms of the Agreement have been agreed upon, the Office of Research seeks certification from the Researcher's Line Manager and facilitates the Agreement signing process. The Office of Research refers to the USC Delegations Schedule to ascertain the appropriate Officer of the University authorised to sign the document, depending upon the value of the contract.

The Office of Research prepares a hard copy of the Agreement, a memorandum detailing relevant information/recommendations for the appropriate USC delegate, and invites them to review and sign the document.

When the funding Agreement has been signed on behalf of USC, the Office of Research submits the USC signed copy to the funding/external organisation for execution.

4.2 Research Project Establishment

After the Agreement has been executed, the Office of Research enters the project/Agreement details in to the Research Master system, and completes the necessary project commencement administration:

- A request is sent to Information Management Services to create a new project file in USC's record management system. Once the new project file is created, the Office of Research arranges for the hard/electronic copies of the Agreement to be filed appropriately.
- A handover to the Research Finance team is undertaken to ensure the Research Finance Team assume post-award administrative responsibility for the project.
- A project commencement email is sent to the Researcher within seven days. The email contains relevant project information including a project account code and the Researcher's project/Agreement responsibilities, including intellectual property considerations of students (if required) and other non USC staff
- Reminder emails regarding project milestones are scheduled to be sent to the Researcher at timely intervals.
- A timely reminder email regarding the project completion is also scheduled.

4.3 Research Project Management

The Researcher:

- Complies with the terms of the funding Agreement.
- Ensures ethics approvals are obtained (if required).
- Ensures the research project is delivered on time, and within budget.
- If necessary, the Researcher informs the Office of Research that a variation to the funding Agreement is required and obtains approval from their Line Manager for this to occur.
- The Researcher notifies the Research Finance Team in writing when the research project has been completed.

The Researcher's Line Manager supports the Researcher to comply with the terms of the funding Agreement and deliver the project.

The Research Finance Team:

- Ensures invoices are sent to the funding organisation according to the Agreement payment schedule.
- Works with the Researcher to ensure expenditure occurs according to the project budget.
- Provides regular and timely project financial reports to the Researcher and School Administrator.

If required, the Office of Research works with the funding/external organisation to negotiate an appropriate Variation Agreement, in consultation with the Research Legal Officer and Researcher.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Conflict of Interest - Governing Policy
Enterprise Risk Management - Governing Policy
Externally Funded Research - Academic Policy
Externally Funded Research - Procedures
Financial Management Practices - Operational Policy
Fraud and Corruption Control - Governing Policy
Intellectual Property - Governing Policy
Intellectual Property: Commercialisation - Procedures
Intellectual Property: Student IP - Procedures
Management of Contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) - Governing Policy
Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures
Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy
University Consultancy Work - Operational Policy
University Consultancy Work - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

Externally Funded Research - Academic Policy