

**University of Birmingham**  
**Trusted Funder Policy and Guidelines**

**Introduction**

This policy outlines a 'trusted funder' process agreed by Colleges. It enables the staff recruitment process to start more rapidly following a research award notification from a specified list of our most frequent funding organisations.

**Background**

The timely start of grant-funded projects plays a key part in the achievement of the University's research ambitions. Feedback from academic researchers has indicated that current procedures with regard to the approvals required to recruit research project staff in particular are overly risk averse.

A major cause of delay to the start of recruitment can be the finalising of the funding agreement with the funder. There is a requirement for a research contract to be in place with the funder (or lead University where we are collaborating partner) before the project account can be opened by Research Finance, and while this control step protects the University from the risk of incurring expenditure which cannot subsequently be reclaimed from the funder, it introduces delays in starting the recruitment process. This policy eliminates this delay when an award is received from a 'trusted funder'.

**Policy**

The policy delegates authority from all Colleges to Research Finance for approving the start of recruitment to staff posts funded on grants when a formal offer notification is received from a funder on an agreed trusted funder list (see below). This delegated authority allows recruitment to commence in advance of the receipt of a fully signed funding agreement. The policy can also be applied in instances where we need to negotiate a contract with a Lead University which is in receipt of an award from one of the trusted funders.

The list of 'trusted funders' is:

- Research Councils
- Research England
- Cancer Research UK
- Department of Health (NIHR)
- The Wellcome Trust
- Arthritis Research UK
- British Heart Foundation
- Bloodwise
- Leverhulme Trust
- The Royal Society
- The British Academy
- The European Commission
- Innovate UK
- DSTL

Under the 'trusted funder' delegated authority from the College, Research Finance would need to be provided with a formal offer notification from a trusted funder. The following documentary evidence must be provided to Research Finance:

*Where UoB is the lead/sole award recipient:*

- A formal offer letter from the trusted funder.

*Where UoB is a collaborating institution:*

- A copy of the award letter from the trusted funder to the lead institution or a copy of the head agreement.
- A letter of intent from the lead institution stating the start date, duration and value of the award to Birmingham and the detail of all staff posts assigned to UoB (if this information is not fully itemised in the award letter to the lead institution)

All other pre-conditions for opening a research account need to be satisfied; for example, the completion of the ethics self-assessment form.

### **Recruitment and appointment process**

This policy is designed to minimise the delays in starting the recruitment process caused by taken to negotiate a formal contract with one of the trusted funders. However, the formal funding agreement must be in place to allow a member of staff to be appointed. While this policy allows for posts to be advertised prior to the conclusion of contract negotiations, it is advisable not to proceed to interview until the fully signed funding agreement is in place.

Any unrecoverable costs incurred by recruiting under the trusted funder framework before contract terms are agreed, for example where the funder subsequently withdraws their support for a project, will be charged to core College budgets.

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