Proposal for the Provision of Locally-based Research Programme Officers

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1. Introduction

At the Research Committee of Thursday the 8th of December 2011, a document on research funding diversification was presented and discussed. As part of that document possible mechanisms for expanding Research Development Office support at a local-level support were presented.

A further document concentrating on the development of these Locally-based Programme officers was presented at the Research Committee meeting of the 17th January 2012. This document builds upon the discussions to date and outlines an intended call for proposals for a number of such posts.

Draft Call for Applications for Locally-based Research Project Officers with post specification as outlined below

School(s)/TRIs are invited, either singly or in groupings to apply for a locally based Research Programme Officer, whose post specification is as indicated below.

Post Specification

Post Title:	**Research Programme Officer**
Post Status:	**Full Time for 36 months**
School(s)/TRI: For cost code purposes please designate a primary unit:	**Please fill in**
Location:	**Please fill in**
Salary:	**Administrative 2 Grade**
Closing Date:	**To be specified**

Job Title
The proposed title for the new role, as indicated above, is Research Programme officer (RPO).

Post Summary
The Research Programme Officer (RPO) will be a Research Development Office resource positioned locally who will work with the School's Director of Research/TRI's Director to develop and manage an implementation plan for the unit's research strategy. Particular emphasis should be placed on securing non-exchequer research funding especially Horizon 2020 funding .

The RPO will also work closely with the Trinity Foundation in supporting Philanthropic fund raising initiatives liaising, where necessary, with colleagues in the Research Development Office. In carrying out their duties, the officer will also liaise with other College Central Service providers (e.g. Contracts Office, Technology Transfer etc.) to ensure that all Central College procedures are adhered to in interactions with research sponsors, the EU Commission and Philanthropic funders.

The RPO will have cognizance of the College's research strategy and ensure linkages from the unit to the relevant thematic areas as they develop in College. The RPO will promote the funding opportunities advertised centrally with researchers within the School(s)/TRI where they are positioned, helping them to devise their career development plans (linking into mentoring systems as and when they are developed). In general, it is expected that the RPO will be active in opportunity identification, consortium building and networking activities and will provide a resource for the unit's staff in writing and submitting proposals.

Background to the Post
This is a new role intended to initiate and develop and respond to funding opportunities.

Standard duties of the Post

- In conjunction with Research Director(s), define and implement the School(s)/TRI strategy for participation in research grant funding initiatives and in particular EU research program grants.
- In conjunction with the Trinity Foundation, develop initiatives for Philanthropic fund raising.
- Identify EU and other funding calls complementary to the School(s)/TRI's strategic research objectives and promote these internally with researchers.
- Identify opportunities for researchers to coordinate projects and help establish the best partners for the consortia.
- Maximise the linkage of researchers to networks (eg COST) in order to help establish partnerships for proposals.
- Provide local advice on budgets and proposal structure and liaise with colleagues in the RDO, to ensure both consistency of advice and that College procedures are followed.
- Oversee and contribute to the writing of the non-scientific elements of applications being submitted from the school and maintain unit-based information on facilities that could be made available and a knowledge of national and EU policies relevant to proposal areas from their unit.
- Ensure feed-in to the development of work programmes for sponsors (where relevant) to ensure that opportunities for participation for their unit are maximised.
- Organise unit-specific information sessions (with participation from the RDO) and represent their school(s)/TRI at external networking events.
- Be involved in the delivery of centrally organised information sessions and support the central delivery of services, where required.
- Aid researchers in their School(s)/TRI to become more research active in line with the unit's strategy
- Manage relations with Ireland National contact points for all EU activity and appropriate Irish agencies in relation to projects it wishes to see established within the School(s)/units.
- Liaise with relevant College's central service providers, understand the College's policies and requirements for involvement in research funding schemes, and ensure such procedures as detailed by the College are adhered to in a timely manner.

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- Maintain a detailed understanding of all aspects of EU and national programs relevant to the remit of researchers in the School(s)/TRI.
- Provide support to researchers from a School(s)/TRI from research application up to and including contract signature.
- Develop a European profile of the School(s)/TRI and its activities.
- Aid in the development and writing of research related publicity material for the School(s)/TRI including press releases, website materials, newsletters, outreach materials and annual reports.
- Be a member of the School(s)/TRI research committee
- Feedback information to the central RDO about particular sponsor related issues with their unit(s) so that the Central RDO can put together a College position if necessary and lobby the sponsor for change
- Carry out any other research development related duties as outlined by the Director of Research

The RDO and contracts sections are working more closely together through the development of sponsor-based multi-skilled teams therefore maintaining sponsor relationship and sponsor intelligence as well as providing more in-depth sponsor support. The RPOs are intended to complement and add value to those supports on a local level and in particular to aid researchers to become more research active in line with the unit strategy, providing more individual in-depth support than is possible from RDO resources based centrally from the pre award stage in proposal structuring up to and including the contract signature stage.

It is not envisaged that RPOs would have a role in supporting the implementation phase (post award management stage of report writing and claims) of a given project. It is not within the remit of this post to carry out duties related to the educational remit of a School(s)/TRI (eg. Erasmus programme). It is intended that the role relates directly to the development of such proposals that would, if successful, be set up as research accounts in the College.

Funding Information:
The role is a fixed term contract for a period of 36 months. It is intended that College will provide co-funding for the salary costs for an initial period of 36 months. School(s)/TRIs making an application for such a post should indicate what level of matched funding they intend to provide. Preference will be given to applications which will fund some of the salary costs but in all instances the School(s)/TRI must be in a position to cover non pay costs (including but more limited to post set up and running costs, travel costs, workshop development costs etc) over the period of 36 months. After this period of time, it is expected that, subject to Key Performance Indicators being met, the posts should become self sustaining within the School(s)/TRI hosting the RPO. The Director(s) of Research is expected at the outset to ensure that the School's research implementation plan contains a budgetary plan to try to facilitate this.

<u>Job Grade:</u>

Administrative Grade 2: €46,204 €48,221 €50,304 €52,343 €54,466

- The cost to College would be the Gross plus PRSI plus 20% pension – (so could range from €60,412, starting point admin 2 to €71214 for top of the admin 2 scale). Administrative 2 grade is not considered to be a new entrant scale and the scale above is the correct scale to be referenced. 20% pension contribution is required for non-core funded posts,

Recruitment Process
The recruitment of the RPO will be carried out with the joint involvement of the RDO and the School(s)/TRI to which the RPO will be assigned.

Person Specification

Knowledge & Experience

- At least three years' relevant experience in work related to EU programmes, research programmes, especially those related to the fields of remit for the School(s)/TRI making the application.
- Demonstrated track record of success in grant preparation in above fields.
- A degree in a relevant discipline with an advanced degree preferred and preferably either research or research administration experience.
- Exceptional communication and presentation skills – both verbal and written. Written skills are of the highest priority for this post as the successful candidate will be expected to contribute to research proposal development.
- Experience in developing and managing budgets.
- A good understanding of the academic and industrial landscape in Ireland.
- A good understanding of the research funding environment in Ireland, Europe and further afield.
- Excellent organisational and task management skills together with the ability to work on a number of tasks simultaneously.
- Other skills to be agreed with the School(s)/TRI hosting the RPO.

Where will the Locally-based Research Project Officers be based?

The Locally based PROs will be primarily based in schools and/or TRIs (in a phased basis starting with a limited number of officers) with a proportion of their time also spent in the RDO. (Likely divide 80:20% although this may vary at the outset whilst new RPOs learn the processes/procedures of the RDO to avoid duplication of activity and maximise efficiency)

Reporting

The PRO will report in the first instance to the relevant Director(s) of Research and through the Director of Research to the Head of School(s) and in the second instance (dotted line) to the manager of the central RDO. PMDS, probation reports etc should be done by the Director of Research with the inclusion of the manager of the RDO.

Key Perfomance Indicators (KPIs)

It is expected that each School(s)/TRI will develop particular KPIs for the proposed post with cognisance that delivery of same must be within 3 years of the start of the post. The RPO is charged to work with the Director of Research to produce an implementation strategy (with deliverables) and measurement of performance should be aligned to those agreed deliverables. However, there are three modifying factors to be taken into account. Even with an implementation strategy in place, unless individual researchers buy into the implementation strategy the delivery of same will prove impossible. Secondly, the delivery of a strategy takes time and it may be difficult to judge results at the point in which these posts are meant to become self sustaining. Thirdly, there are likely to be changes in relation to

sponsors and their remits which may or may not adversely affect the ability to deliver the implementation strategy.

RPOs will be able to utilise RPAMS to see how their unit is performing in relation to the research implementation plan and can work with the Director of Research/Director to support corrective action where necessary.

Application Process – can put this into a template- Arial 11 font (or equivalent)

1. Name of School(s)/TRI(s) applying for a RPO:

2. Level of Funding that the School(s)/TRI(s) can provide to the salary funding of this post per year.

3. Application is made on the basis that School(s)/TRI must be in a position to cover all non pay costs (including but not limited to post set up and running costs, travel costs, workshop development costs etc) over the period of 36 months. Please confirm the level on non pay that the School(s)/TRI will be able to make available for this post per year.

4. Outline your School(s)/TRI(s) Research Strategy in brief and indicate where you see the RPO adding value in the further refinement and implementation of the plan (with the Director of Research). Indicate in particular any FP7/Horizon 2020 targets already set. (Max 1/2 page)

5. In order to measure the impact of such a role in your school(s), a set of Key performance indicators will be developed. For the purposes of this application, please outline at least 5 such potential KPIs that might be used in this regard. Should your School(s)/TRIs be awarded such a post, definitive KPIs will be developed between the School(s)/TRIs and the RDO within the first 3 months of the successful candidate taking office. Cognisance should be taken that delivery of same must be within 3 years of the start of the post. In all applications indicate what strategies the School(s)/TRI intends to employ to ensure that researchers in the School 'buy in' to the research implementation plan and hence to the deliverables. (Max 1/2 page)

6. Where more than one School/TRI is requested to host a RPO, please outline the reason for the clustering of School(s)/TRI and indicate what mechanism will be put in place to deal with the division of time across the various units. (Max ½ page)
In all applications please outline what internal management structure will be put in place to bed the RPO into the units staffing structure. (Max ½ page)

7. Please outline where the RPO will be physically located

8. Please indicate why it would not be possible for the School(s)/TRIs to fund such a position independently of this call for applications.(max ½ page)

9. Outline whether or how the 3 year post might become self sustaining after the initial 3 year period of seed funding from the College. (Max 1/2 page)

<u>Signatures:</u>
By providing your signature below, you are confirming that should your application for a RPO be positively reviewed that:
- The matched funding indicated above will be made available by the School(s)/TRI for this post and that
- You accept that the job specification of the RPO will be as outlined above

- You can host the RPO in the location as outlined above
- The relevant Director of Research(s)* will work with the RPO and will act as their direct line manager in the manager outlined in the application

* where a TRI does not have a Director of Research then the Director of the TRI will determine the most appropriate person to whom the RPO will report in the first instance

Signature of Director of Research (if more than one school involved, please provide signatures of all Directors of Research). Electronic signature(s) please

Signature of Head of School (if more than one school involved, please provide signatures of all Heads of Schools). Electronic Signature(s) please

Date:

Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

Closing Date:

All applications should be sent to

Dean.of.reseach@tcd.ie by close of business on ???

For this call an application will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

1. It is received by the Dean of Research's office before the deadline as outlined above.

2. The application is complete and has all required signatures present.

Only eligible applications will be reviewed by the review panel.

A panel consisting of the Dean of Research, Manager of the RDO, Associate Director of TR&I and the 3 Deans of Faculty and a member of HR will meet to review the applications and rank them. It is envisaged that 3-4 positions will be supported but the exact number depends on the level of matched funding made available by School(s)/TRI.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria as outlined below (which link directly from the application form)

1. The Level of matched funding to be made available by the School(s)/TRI and possible sustainability of post (feed-in from Question 2, 3 and 9) – 5 marks max

2. The expected impact that an RPO post would make within the School(s)/TRI (feed-in from Question 4, 5 and 8) -10 marks max

3. The appropriateness of the management Structure (feed-in from Question 6) - 5 marks max

The Dean of Research's office, on behalf of the panel will convey the panel results to the head of school(s) associated with an application. The panel's verdict will be final.

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