

Research Funding Support and Internal Deadlines Policy

Purpose

The School of Physics provides a high level of pre-award support to its Principal Investigators (PIs). However, increasing demand has placed significant pressure on the capacity of that support.

This policy sets out the internal timelines for research funding applications that require support from the Research Funding Manager. To maximise the quality and competitiveness of applications, researchers are expected to engage with the Research Funding Manager well in advance of funder deadlines. Early engagement allows adequate time for proposal development, budget preparation, compliance checks, and institutional approvals.

While every effort will be made to support all applicants, the level of support that can be provided will depend on adherence to the timelines set out below.

All timelines in this policy are calculated back from the funder's submission deadline. Note that the Research Office may set its own, earlier internal deadline (for example, for institutional sign-off or limited-submission schemes). Where it does, that earlier deadline takes precedence and the timelines below should be counted back from it. Where a deadline falls on a weekend or public holiday, materials should be provided on the preceding working day.

The Research Funding Manager will inform all PIs about the submission deadline as soon as the call has been launched and will upload the details of the funding programme to the School of Physics funding site (<https://www.tcd.ie/physics/funding/>).

Internal Timeline for Funding Applications

1. Initial Contact (At Least 8 Weeks Before The Submission Deadline)

For standard grants, PIs seeking support must make initial contact with the Research Funding Manager no later than **8 weeks before the funder's submission deadline**.

The initial discussion should cover:

- The funding opportunity, including scheme eligibility and requirements;
- The proposed research idea and its fit with the call;
- Potential collaborators and partners (academic and non-academic);
- Anticipated resource and budget requirements, including any co-funding or matched-funding requirements;
- Any anticipated compliance, ethics, data protection, or contractual considerations.

Researchers are strongly encouraged to engage earlier wherever possible, particularly for large, collaborative, or industry-partnered applications, which typically require longer lead times.

EXCEPTION: Pre-Application Screening for ERC, URF and Other Large Schemes (At Least 10 Weeks Before the Deadline)

Applications to the European Research Council (ERC), the Royal Society–Research Ireland University Research Fellowship (URF) and other large or highly competitive schemes are subject to an additional screening step before the School will support them. The School will approve only those applications that fall within its research priority areas. Each prospective applicant's CV and proposed project will be assessed against these priorities, together with practical fit: the availability of suitable research facilities, laboratory and office space, and confirmed interest and commitment from a prospective host PI within the School. Anyone intending to apply to these schemes should therefore contact the School's Research Funding team at least **10 weeks** before the submission deadline.

If the PI does not make contact with the Research Funding Manager by the 8-week (or 10-week) deadline, support will not be provided unless the Head of School agrees to an exception in writing (see below).

2. First Draft (At Least 6 Weeks Before the Deadline)

A substantive first draft of the proposal must be provided to the Research Funding Manager at least **6 weeks before the submission deadline**.

At this stage, the draft should clearly set out:

- Research objectives;
- Methodology and work plan;
- The project team and collaborators, including their roles;
- Expected outcomes and impact.

The Research Funding Manager will provide feedback on proposal structure, competitiveness, and alignment with the call's objectives and evaluation criteria.

3. Complete Draft and Preliminary Budget (At Least 3 Weeks Before The Deadline)

A complete draft application, together with a preliminary budget, must be provided to the Research Funding Manager at least **3 weeks before the submission deadline**.

At this stage:

- All major application sections should be completed;
- Costings should be sufficiently developed to allow detailed review against the funder's rules;
- Required supporting documents (e.g. letters of support, CVs, and partner commitments) should be identified and requested;
- Any potential compliance issues should be flagged.

4. Final Proposal and Budget (At Least 2 Weeks Before the Deadline)

The final proposal and final budget must be provided to the Research Funding Manager at least **2 weeks before the submission deadline**.

This period will be used for:

- Institutional compliance checks;
- Verification against funder requirements;
- Budget validation;
- Final amendments;
- Internal approvals and authorisations, including Head of School sign-off where required.

Final documents received after this point may not receive a full compliance review, and timely submission cannot be guaranteed.

HoS Timeline Exceptions

Exceptions may be considered by the HoS where:

- A funding call has been announced at unusually short notice;
- The opportunity is of strategic importance to the School or the institution;
- Other exceptional circumstances apply, such as illness or unforeseen personal circumstances affecting the applicant.

Any exception will be at the discretion of the HoS in consultation with the Research Funding Manager. Requests for an exception should be made in writing to the HoS, copied to the Research Funding Manager, as early as possible.

Late Engagement

Applications that do not meet the timelines above, but where support is nevertheless approved by the HoS, will be supported on a **partial and best-efforts basis only**, subject to available capacity.

In such circumstances, the Research Funding Manager cannot guarantee:

- Detailed review of proposal content;
- Budget optimisation;
- Completion of compliance checks;
- Internal approval processing;
- Timely submission before the funder's deadline.

Where demands on the service coincide, priority will be given to applications that have met the internal deadlines set out in this policy.

Responsibilities of Principal Investigators

Principal Investigators are expected to:

- Engage with the Research Funding Manager at the earliest opportunity;
- Meet the internal deadlines set out in this policy;
- Respond promptly to requests for information or documentation;
- Provide proposal drafts that are sufficiently developed for review;
- Allow adequate time for institutional approval processes;
- Notify the Research Funding Manager promptly of any changes to the application, project team, or intended submission date.

Failure to meet these expectations may limit the support that can be provided and may put the timely submission of the application at risk.