Policy Title:	Policy on Managing Research Grants & Contracts
Description:	The purpose of this Policy on Managing Research Grants & Contracts is to provide clear guidelines on the internal processes that staff are required to follow in relation to applying for research funding from external sources.
Author (Position):	Director of Research
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Policy on Managing Research Grants & Contracts

1 Context

Research performing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) need to target external funding sources to bolster research activity. The research funding landscape is very competitive and is populated with diverse calls, requests for tenders, and other funding release structures, some of which recur on an annual basis and some of which are once-offs. Marino Institute of Education ('The Institute', MIE) has increased its capacity in relation to research funding procurement with the establishment of a Research Office (RO). This office works to support academic staff in identifying and applying for research funding. A significant role of the RO is to provide staff with upskilling in relation to grant and tender writing as well as support in the project management and administration of successfully awarded grants, contracts or projects. The RO will issue alerts on open calls to staff members.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy on Managing Research Grants & Contracts is to provide clear guidelines on the internal processes that staff are required to follow in relation to applying for research funding from external sources. These processes have been designed to: (1) ensure that all such applications are of sufficient quality to be competitive; (2) ensure that the Institute's reputation is not compromised; (3) ensure that the application for funding aligns with the Institute's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles; (4) ensure that there is minimal financial exposure or risk; and (5) ensure that the Institute is be able to service the grant/contract/tender to the satisfaction of the external body awarding the funding. This policy pertains to project-based research activities that have an element of external funding; it does not seek to address the pursuit of research funding through individual fellowships or scholarships, nor does it seek to limit or govern an individual researcher's academic freedom.

3 Benefits

3.1 Staff will have clarity on the process for applying for research funding.

3.2 Staff will be aware of the supports available to them in relation to research funding procurement

3.3 The Institute will continue to be competitive in securing external research funding.

4 Principles

4.1 If a funding opportunity does not align with the Institute's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles, it should not be pursued.

4.2 If a funding opportunity requires significant co-funding support from the Institute, a strong business case must be made for pursuing the opportunity.

4.3 If a funding opportunity poses an ethical or reputational risk, it will not be sanctioned by the Institute.

4.4 If a singular, top-down funding opportunity is being targeted by two or more individuals in the Institute, the President, with input from the Registrar and Vice President (Academic Affairs), the Director of Research, the Vice-President for Education & Strategic Development, the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services, the Heads of Department involved, and the RO, will adjudicate on whether or not multiple applications can be submitted.

5 Definitions

5.1 **Grant:** funding awarded to support specified activity.

Tender: awarded following a competitive commercial process.

Call: request for funding proposals issued by funding bodies.

Top-down call: request for funding proposals to address a specific issue (topic, scope, and expected outcome are pre-defined).

Bottom-up call: request for funding proposals to address a broad spectrum of topics, usually but not always within thematic areas.

5.2 Funding Application Process

5.2.1 All full-time staff of the Institute are encouraged to identify external funding to support research activity. The funding and research activity must be broadly relevant to the individual's role with the Institute. If a funding opportunity is identified, it should firstly be brought to the attention of the individual's Head of Department to complete an initial assessment of relevance and feasibility. Following this, the opportunity should be logged with the RO. The same process should be applied if a staff member is approached by another institute to submit a joint application as part of a consortium.

5.2.2 Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed research (50%)
- Impact (20%)
- Future Potential and Sustainability (30%)

Applications need to achieve a minimum of 60% to be considered.

5.2.3 With the agreement of an individual's Head of Department, funding applications up to €5,000 can be made without having to develop a strategic and financial case for the application. Applications in excess of €5,000 must be assessed by the applicant in conjunction with the RO to determine whether the opportunity should be pursued. The RO can refer applications in excess of €5,000 to the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services for a financial feasibility review. All applications in excess of €10,000 are automatically referred by the RO to the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services. All tenders, regardless of budget size, will be referred to the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services.

5.2.4 It is acknowledged that it may not always be possible to submit a fully completed project application/proposal to the RO for review a week in advance of the submission deadline. However, the researcher is strongly encouraged to submit a draft that accurately reflects the anticipated final draft at least a week before the submission deadline. A draft budget must be submitted to the RO for review a week before the submission deadline.

5.2.5 Funding applications involving staff costs and/or co-funding must be signed-off on by the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services and the RO.

5.2.6 All applications being submitted on behalf of the Institute will require official sign-off from either the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services (as legal representative of the Institute) or by the President (as chief executive of the Institute). Some applications will specify the seniority of the signatory. Applications may require endorsement from members of the Institute's Governing Body[1] in addition to the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services or President. In these instances, the RO will liaise with the

[1] See Code of Governance and Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE

Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services to manage this process.

5.2.7 If an application is being submitted via a funding portal (e.g. EU Participant Portal, eTenders), the submission process should be made through the RO, which maintains institutional accounts for these portals. This does not apply to applications that have to be completed online (e.g. SCoTENS and the Teaching & Learning Enhancement Fund).

5.2.8 When submitting responses to tenders, particular consideration needs to be given to Value Added Tax (VAT) as well as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services and RO will provide support in relation to these matters.

5.2.9 All final submitted applications – regardless of budget - must be provided to the RO on the same day as the application was submitted.

5.2.10 The Institute retains the right to not support funding applications that haven't followed the process outlined above.

5.3 Successful Applications

5.3.1 The RO should be notified of the outcome of a submitted application, successful or unsuccessful, as soon as the notification is received. Equally, if the RO is notified of the outcome, it too has the responsibility of notifying the staff member responsible for the application as soon as the notification is received.

5.3.2 Following notification of a successful outcome, the respective Head of Department should be informed promptly. The RO will inform the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services.

5.3.3 If the successful application involves co-funding or staff costs, the RO and the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services will liaise with the staff member leading the application to plan next steps. If the application will result in a requirement to hire new staff, the Director of Human Resources will be informed.

5.3.4 Following notification, a contract or grant agreement is likely to be issued by the funding body. This type of documentation should be submitted to the RO for review. All contracts or grant agreements need to be signed either by the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services or the President.

5.3.5 The RO will liaise with the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-President for Professional Services to provide remittance details to manage the funding. The RO will request that an internal Expenditure Code be created to manage income and expenditure associated with the project.

5.3.6 In the event of a member of staff who is lead on an externally funded project leaving the Institute, the project remains with the Institute. This does not apply to individual scholarships or fellowships (e.g. IRC, ERC); these remain with the individual (unless otherwise stated contractually).

5.3.7 Once the lead staff member has received notice of a successful outcome, he/she should immediately notify the Marino Ethics in Research Committee (MERC) to begin the process of applying for ethical approval for the project.

6 Responsibility

The onus is on the individual submitting the application to acquaint themselves with the policy. The Director of Research is responsible for addressing instances where the policy has not been correctly followed.

7 Related Documents

7.1 Ethics in Research Policy

7.2 Procedure for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

7.3 Guidelines on GDPR for Research Purposes

7.4 Good Research Practice Policy

7.5 Lone Researcher Guidelines

7.6 Code of Governance

7.7 Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE