

External Funding: Principles and Practices

Why funding

Ideally we need funding to pursue interesting ideas that contribute to science and society

Pragmatically funding helps secure a healthy financial situation for the Department enabling the realisation of other ambitions

Individually funding is part of the working life of academics in the contemporary university, with an important bearing on career development. Working with funding is a craft that needs to be learned, taught and nurtured just like publishing and teaching

Funding types and research organisation

There are a range of different types of funding offered by various organisations. Some focus on innovation, others on excellence; some fund infrastructure or travel, others blue skies research. Research projects can be organised in a variety of ways: you can apply for funding as an individual researcher or as a member of a collaborative group (from SDU or multi-institutional), as an early career researcher or senior scholar, as Principal Investigator (PI) or collaborator; your topic can be new or a new version of an on-going application.

The individual scholar's ambitions and scientific approach inform the selection of funding sources, along with those of their research group. There is an ongoing dialogue between research groups, individual scholars and the Research Support Office (RSO) about grants which will best meet individual, group and departmental goals. To increase your chances of success, it is essential to ensure a good alignment between your profile and research design and the funder's aims, objectives and eligibility criteria.

The scale and complexity of a project has implications for the process of developing the research grant application. The next section describes an ideal-typical process that should guide every grant application. Following these guidelines will make securing support from the Department and the RSO more likely and ultimately improve the quality of the application.

DBM researchers work with collaborators throughout SDU e.g. in Human Health or through the Faculty's Clusters. Additionally the Department has a number of international collaborators outside SDU. If DBM researchers are not the PI on a project, then the review process is typically driven by external schedules and work flows.

The ideal typical process – large application (> DKK 1M) with a DBM scholar as PI

- The Department *expects* applicants to seek peer feedback by sharing a draft with, or giving a presentation to, their research group, when floating new ideas or elaborating existing proposals
- The Department *expects* the PI to involve a relevant scholar (internal to SDU or external) not immediately in the domain of the application in the feedback process, to ensure a coherent application which can be appreciated by a multi-disciplinary panel
- The Department *expects* that the Research Group Leader (RGL) is informed of larger grant applications in good time
- The Department *expects* that for larger projects the PI agrees a schedule for writing the application with their RGL and organises activities and workload accordingly with the RGL's assistance e.g. the PI should not be responsible for major tasks up to the application deadline (like starting a new course Sept 1st with an application deadline Oct 1st)
- The Department *expects* that applicants for grants over DKK 1M initiate the application process in a timely manner for the purposes of planning e.g. teaching allocation, agreement on buy-out applied for, securing co-financing from the Department, budget approval and support from the RSO. (This will depend on whether it is a new application or a revision of a previous application)

- For applications with a budget exceeding 1M DKK, the applicant is *encouraged* to invite one or two peers and RSO to provide a review and discuss the application in a subsequent meeting. The applicant is responsible for arranging this, possibly with the help of their RGL

In addition to supporting the planning of the application process, RSO provides application reviews focusing on meeting the funder's requirements and optimizing the quality of the application.

The Head of Department, Research Group Leaders and RSO take a strategic, coordinated overview of DBM's funding applications by:

- ensuring that the grant proposal, researchers' track records and the composition of teams are a good fit with the funder/funding programme
- allocating incentives (e.g. writing retreats for applications > DKK 1M and Excellence grants, funding to support networking activities)
- making support resources available (e.g. workshops on writing grant proposals, profiling of successful funding applications in the last 3-5 years, pre-submission feedback from colleagues with funding evaluation panel experience)

Table showing responsibilities in the external funding identification and acquisition process

Who	Responsible for	How	When
Scholars	Developing, maintaining, implementing and delivering on a personal funding acquisition strategy	Sharing applications within RG & with external colleagues, EDD, regular dialogue with RGL & RSO	Ongoing, as a key part of career development, EDD annually
Research Group Leader (RGL)	Setting Research Group (RG) strategy, monitoring activities	Ongoing dialogue with RG members - including EDD, informed by data from RSO	Regular RG meetings/seminars, Employee Development Dialogue (EDD) annually
Senior Scholars	Mentoring	Sharing experience, involving early career researchers in networks & grant applications	Proactively, when opportunities present themselves
Head of Department (HoD)	Acting as primary point of contact, setting Dept vision & strategy	Liaison with Deans, other HoDs, LG, RGLs, informed by data from RSO	Regular meeting cycles
Leadership Group (LG)	Coordination of Dept funding strategy	Regular meetings, sharing info on applications, identifying cross-group opportunities	Ongoing
Research Support Office (RSO)	Informing/enhancing Dept grant identification and acquisition process	Providing data, info on funding opportunities, feedback, reviewing applications, training and advice	Regular input to HoD, LG, RG meetings and dialogue with RGL & RG members

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: EXTERNAL FUNDING BUDGET APPROVAL DEADLINES

Roadmap for budget preparations:

When	What
20 working days before deadline	All information required from researcher, submitted according to funder's terms & conditions/budget preparation schedule. Initial approval by HoD
10 working days before deadline	Budget ready for approval by HoD and Financial Services (FSØ)
4 working days before deadline	Final budget ready, including all details and approval by HoD and FSØ

Appendix 2: RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE DEADLINES

Research Support assists applicants in planning the application process as well as finishing the application. In order to ensure sufficient time to inform the application process and provide reviews the following timeframes *for initiating contact with Research Support* should be considered.

PI in large consortium applications (5+ partners) or Large PI-centered projects (e.g. ERC)	<p><i>Optimal:</i> Initiate contact and begin preparations 8-12 months before deadline.</p> <p><i>Minimum</i> (after which RSO can only guarantee to provide a simple/technical review): 3 months before deadline</p>
Partner in a consortium application, coordinated elsewhere	<p>Coordinator should be in charge of writing the application, not requiring significant input from the partner. Research Support can always assist with administrative details.</p> <p>For review of (smaller) narrative parts of the applications: 2 weeks before deadline.</p>
PI in a research project (e.g. DFF, including research stay, national and private foundations etc.)	<p><i>Optimal:</i> Initiate contact and begin preparations 4-6 months (not including vacations) before deadline.</p> <p><i>Minimum</i> (after which RSO can only guarantee to provide a simple review/technical): 2 weeks before deadline</p>
Smaller projects, private foundations	<p><i>Optimal:</i> 2-3 months before deadline</p> <p><i>Minimum</i> (after which RSO cannot guarantee to provide a review): 1-2 weeks before deadline, depending on size and content. Ask if in doubt.</p>