Claims Process Information for Partners

Introduction

As a project lead, Leeds is ultimately responsible for all partners' costs on a project as well as their own. Leeds may be audited on a project by a funder or other external auditor at any time, including after a grant has finished.
During an audit, Leeds must provide evidence of all staff and research costs directly incurred on the project and also show that the costs were incurred within the funder's terms and conditions. To comply with audit requirements, and so we are prepared to be audited at any time, we ask partners to keep records of all costs incurred (e.g. receipts, invoices etc. More details in 'Evidence' section below).

With the exception of overheads, only costs incurred directly on the project can be reimbursed to partners.

For the first claim on any project, evidence for all costs claimed must be provided along with the statement of expenditure and invoice. The partner's contact in the Faculty Research and Innovation Office (FRIO) at Leeds will advise what evidence is required to be sent to us on subsequent claims.

In line with our main funder terms and conditions, we will usually expect partners to send claims to us quarterly in arrears. More details about this will be in the annexe of the collaboration agreement signed when setting up the grant.

Leeds will require expenditure evidence to be sent at the same time as the statement of expenditure. Once the evidence has been checked against the statement of expenditure and awarded budget (a process called reconciliation), the invoice can be submitted, and the claim will be paid.

The University's default position is to pay invoices on 30-day terms, from the date of the invoice. There may be some delays to payment if there are queries on the statement of expenditure, or if your organisation is still being set up on the Leeds finance system. It can also take a number of days for funds to reach your bank account once paid from the Leeds bank account. Therefore, **the overall time it takes for funds to reach your bank account from the time an invoice is submitted to Accounts Payable can be at least 4-6 weeks**. It is important to take these timeframes into account when planning expenditure on the grant.

Types of cost categories

- Staff costs: these are costs that relate to people employed at your organisation who have carried out work on the project. These can include salaries, hourly wages and employer on-costs such as pension contributions.
- Non-staff research costs: these are costs such as travel or consumables, which are not related to staff but have been incurred while working directly on the project.
- Overheads: if overheads are funded on the project, these will be a flat rate % of certain costs and do not need to be evidenced. Overhead costs do not relate directly to the project but can refer to shared facilities, estates and indirect costs. However, if an individual item such as computer equipment were paid using the overheads budget, we would require evidence for this. The individual item will not be reimbursed but would be covered by the flat rate % paid on that claim.

The exact costs you can claim from the project will be detailed in the project budget.

Payment process

1. The partner submits the Statement of Expenditure and requested evidence to the FRIO and project team. The FRIO will confirm the exact contact details to use.

2. The FRIO will check the Statement of Expenditure and evidence, speaking with the partner if there are any further questions.
3. Once the FRIO has reconciled the claim, they will approve the Statement of Expenditure and instruct the partner to forward the invoice to Accounts Payable for payment, with the FRIO copied into the email. The invoice must have the correct Purchase Order number on it otherwise it will not be paid. **If you are unsure of your Purchase Order number, please contact your FRIO to confirm this before you submit an invoice.**
4. The FRIO will arrange for the Purchase Order to be goods receipted so the invoice can be paid on the next available payment run. From this point, the funds may take 2-3 weeks to reach your bank account because there is only one payment run per week.

Evidence

Where possible, we require the evidence to be in English so we can verify what the funds were spent on. However, if any evidence is provided in local language, the details of the costs on the Statement of Expenditure should summarise what the cost is, as well as why the cost was incurred. Further information can be provided to the FRIO by email if there is not enough room on the Statement of Expenditure.

Staffing costs

We need to show that staff who are working on the grant are formally contracted to their employer. We also need documentation that shows staffing costs so that these could be independently verified by an auditor. In order to fulfil these requirements, we ask that for each staff member on the project, you provide:

- A copy of their employment contract.
- Dates of work on project, hourly rate in local currency and number of hours worked during that period on the project.
- Evidence of hours they are contracted to work by their employer, if not included in the employment contract.
- Evidence of their current salary, if not shown in their employment contract. This could be shown on a payslip, screenshots of the HR system, or on personnel records with a grade/level and a table of organisation pay rates.

For example, here at the University of Leeds we are also bound by the funder's rules and in an audit we would be able to provide employment contracts to an auditor, demonstrating that a particular person was a university employee. We use SAP software for accounting and HR. In SAP we can look at a person's personnel record and show (for example by taking a screenshot) the grade and spine point that the person is currently on; the university publishes the rates of pay for all grades/spine points so we can evidence how much per annum a particular individual is paid. The employment contract will show the total hours that the person is contracted to work so we can demonstrate how the hourly rate is calculated (annual salary divided by annual hours for example). From the hourly rate and timesheets we can then demonstrate how we calculated the amount charged to the project for that person.

Non-staff research costs

Non-staff related costs should be evidenced using receipts or invoices from the original place of purchase. The receipt or invoice should be itemised with details of what was purchased. A credit card receipt cannot be accepted. When a receipt or invoice is scanned in (for instance, to be emailed to us), please check the details on the scan can still be read.

This is the same for individual items paid for using the overheads budget such as a laptop or stationery. This would not apply for general utilities, estates or indirect costs covered by the overheads.