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**QR FU**

# Research Capacity Transformation scheme: POLICY Document

## summary and purpose

* 1. A key aim of our BU2025 strategy is to enable a step change in Bournemouth University’s (BU) research performance, including the development of sustainable research teams. To achieve this, BU is investing in the research teams of the future through the Research Capacity Transformation Scheme.
  2. This initiative provides funding for clusters of match-funded postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and postdoctoral research fellows (PDRFs) for three years.
  3. This open competition invites BU academics to bid to develop a research team of world-class PGRs and PDRFs, which will become the beacons of research excellence by which BU is known in the future. Each cluster will comprise a minimum of 2 PGRs and 2 PDRFs to a maximum of 5 PGRs and 5 PDRFs. Applications will open in February 2022 for a September 2022 start, with a second round opening in autumn 2022 to commence the following academic year.
  4. We are anticipating investing in 20 positions in round 1 and 10 positions in round 2.

1. **PURPOSE OF FUNDING** 
   1. BU recognises that postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers are critical to a high performing research environment. Working under the direction of academic research leadership, they provide academic staff with research capacity, which enables the production of research outputs, strengthen research impact, and increase grant bidding. Crucially, funding is available for clusters of PGRs and PDRFs, as opposed to individual appointments. This will enable **BU to invest in and develop sustainable, high performing research teams.**
   2. Therefore, the Research Capacity Transformation Investment Scheme will invest in 10 PDRFs and 10 PGRs in 2022, across 2-5 clusters, with funds for a further 5 PDRFs and 5 PGRs available from September 2023. This investment in PDRF posts and PGR studentships will be strategic, focusing on building capacity to undertake cutting-edge research securing external research funding. A cluster hiring approach will be used to appoint inter- and/or multi-disciplinary teams of PDRFs and PGRs that focus on a common theme to create “clusters” undertaking strategically important and targeted research.
   3. Applicants will bid for clusters to create a research team, from a **minimum of 2 PDRFs and 2 PGRs to a maximum of 5 PDRFs and 5 PGRs** in any given cluster. The clusters need to build critical mass in areas of research strength and provide a team-based, fused experience for PDRFs and PGRs that is anchored in one or more existing high performing entities, such as Research Centres or Institutes. Applications must include external match-funded partners for the PGR studentships.

### Expectations of Postdoctoral Research Fellows and cluster leads

* 1. This scheme is part of BU’s strategy to support the development, retention and career progression of ECRs and aims to attract PDRFs from the most promising recent PhD graduates and early-stage ECRs. They will be offered **3-year fellowship awards** working in areas that will take forward BU’s research agenda, during which they will:
* demonstrate their ability and desire to pursue fused academic careers at BU
* receive high-quality training, development and mentorship from high-performing members of the Professoriate
* submit grants and produce outputs as part of the wider output of the research entity to which they are aligned.
  1. High-performing PDRFs at the end of their 3-year fixed-term contract should be retained wherever possible, either though successful application to academic positions at BU or through securing external funding to continue the PDRF positions. There is an expectation that cluster leads delivering research grants will ensure the employment of PDRFs is sustainable, greater external funding for PGRs is secured, and talented individuals are both attracted and retained through this scheme.

### Expectations of Postgraduate Researchers and cluster leads

* 1. BU aims to attract highly qualified and engaged PGRs from recent graduates or individuals with additional relevant research experience. They would be offered **3-year match-funded studentships**[[1]](#footnote-2) for projects aligned to research areas of the overall team, during which they will:
* be supervised by high-performing academics with a track record of research, and overseen by members of the Professoriate
* receive mentorship and supervision from the PDRFs as part of a cohesive honeycomb that collectively drives forward a strategic research growth area
* be recruited in line with the criteria set out in the BU Match-Funded Studentship Allocative Process**[[2]](#footnote-3)**
* be expected to complete their doctoral research within 4 years *(with three years of funding, plus an additional year unfunded, although this remains under review).*
* abide by BU PhD Studentship Terms and Conditions.

### Wider benefits of the scheme

* 1. The investment in clusters of PDRFs and PGRs is intended to ensure BU is more effectively resourcing a high-performing cohort of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers and is building the pipeline of the next generation of leading academics. Furthermore, this scheme aims to support BU to evidence the delivery of successful research cohorts and the development of interdisciplinary researchers, which is a common requirement from external matched funders, such as the UKRI and Leverhulme Trust.
  2. We anticipate that, through supporting such research clusters, BU will allow PDRFs and PGRs to benefit from a cohort identity and, where relevant, interdisciplinarity. Such clusters will encourage safe spaces for debate and will establish a collegiate ethos that will nurture creativity and generate synergies between individual research projects and strengthen BU’s capability to apply for large interdisciplinary funding investments that build capacity (such as Doctoral Training Centres). They also make a significant contribution to the vibrancy of BU’s research culture. The research development funding will enable the PDRFs and PGRs to engage with both internal and external conferences and seminars and support active research seminar programmes to develop strong research cultures in high-growth areas.

1. **key principles of the scheme:**
   1. The Scheme with start formally in September 2022. Applicants will bid for clusters to create a research team, from a minimum of 2 PDRFs and 2 PGRs to a maximum of 5 PDRFs and 5 PGRs in any given cluster.
   2. Applications will need to come from established, high performing research teams, typically an Institute, Research Centre, or REF Unit of Assessment. They will need to demonstrate they are a cohesive research team and have existing research strengths through the following indicators:

* % of members who are PIs on awarded grants in the past three years
* % of members who are Co-Is on awarded grants in past three years
* % of members who are PIs on submitted applications in the past three years
* high-quality and impactful outputs, i.e. in line with the REF criteria as 3\* or above (refer to [Annex A](https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1447/ref-2019_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf) of REF guidance)
  1. Applications must also:
* demonstrate how they align to the [BU2025 Research Principles](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU2025%20Principles%20Underpinning%20Research%20development.docx), including investment in Humanities and the Social Sciences
* demonstrate how they deliver strategic research growth, including a business plan which details income targets, research outputs and contribution to society
* demonstrate collaboration with external bodies and include match-funders for the studentships
* demonstrate how studentships meet the eligibility criteria as set out the BU Match-Funded Studentship Allocative Process[[3]](#footnote-4)
* provide a robust business case to demonstrate how the cluster will grow research income to a point whereby there is sufficient return on investment to ensure that the area is self-sustaining (i.e. attract enough external funding to sustain future PGR and postdoctoral researcher costs).
* articulate how they will manage the cluster on a day-to-day basis, including how any poor performance of any team members will be addressed.
* articulate which Faculty will host the cluster and demonstrate Faculty support to do so.

### Evaluation of performance

* 1. Critical to the success of the scheme is ensuring that there are clear measures of success and continuous plans for evaluation, with prompt action taken in the event of poor performance. To ensure that there is appropriate ongoing evaluation, cluster leads will be required to produce a quarterly report (inclusive of an internal funding pipeline) to be reviewed by the most relevant SIA Steering Group.
  2. The reviewers, supported by data provided by RDS, will be tasked with reviewing the reports and making a recommendation to RPMC as to whether the cluster can proceed as is, proceed with recommendations (as defined by the reviewers) or go into enhanced performance measures. If RPMC concurs with the latter category, it will be the responsibility of the Faculty Leadership teams to implement performance management and/or propose a change of cluster leadership to RPMC.

## Applications process and criteria

* 1. To apply for one of the clusters of PGRs and PDRFs, applicants must first complete the expression of interest form in Appendix 1 of this document. Applications that are successful in the first round are required to complete the full application form detailed in Appendix 2 of this document.
  2. As detailed within section 3 of this policy document, the criteria against which review panels will make their recommendations are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I | Demonstrable concept for interdisciplinary strategic research growth, aligned to BU’s strategic priorities for research growth |
| II | Potential for societal impact |
| III | Extent to which the cluster is part of a high performing research team, evidenced by:   * % of members who are PIs on awarded grants in the past three years * % of members who are Co-Is on awarded grants in past three years * % of members who are PIs on submitted applications in the past three years * High-quality and impactful outputs |
| IV | The extent to which the proposal aligns to [BU’s Research Principles](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU2025%20Principles%20Underpinning%20Research%20development.docx), including investment in Humanities and Social Sciences |
| V | The extent to which studentships meet the eligibility criteria as set out the BU Matched-Funded Studentship Allocative Process[[4]](#footnote-5) |
| VI | Articulation of how the cluster will be managed on a day-to-day basis, including how any poor performance of any team members will be addressed. |
| VII | Clarification of which Faculty will host the cluster and demonstrate Faculty support to do so. |

## Assessment Process

* 1. The allocation of funding will be overseen by a review panel comprising the Studentship Funding Panel and two representatives from each of the four SIA Steering Groups. The review panel Chair and Deputy Chair will be nominated by the DVC. All proposals will be sent to the panel for review in advance of the panel meeting.
  2. To minimise the burden of developing a full application form, colleagues are first invited to develop a brief expression of interest (EoI). These will be reviewed by the panel ahead of the full application process.
  3. To ensure there is timely progress, Research Development & Support and the Doctoral College will manage the funding application process 2022, with oversight of the recruitment process. The indicative timetable for the 2022 allocation and recruitment is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Action |
| **Monday 7 March 2022** | **Closing date for submission of EoIs (see Appendix 1) at 12 noon** |
| Monday 21 March 2022 | Successful applicants invited to provide a full application form (see Appendix 2)  Unsuccessful applicants notified |
| **Monday 25 April 2022** | **Closing date for submission of full applications at 12 noon** |
| w/c Monday 16th May 2022 | Successful outcomes announced and recruitment to commence  Unsuccessful applicants notified |
| June 2022 | Recruitment to close |
| July 2022 | Interviews and selection |
| From 1 September 2022 | Successful PDRFs to start (*funding available from 1 September 2022)* |
| From 26 September 2022 or 23 January 2022 | Successful PGRs to start (*funding available from 26 September 2022 with alternative start date of 23 January 2023)* |

## Review Process

* 1. Applications should be submitted on the relevant form (to be drafted) to (to be decided) by Monday 21 March 2022 at 12 noon.
  2. The applications will be reviewed by the Panel which will comprise members of the Studentship Funding Panel and the SIA Steering Groups. The Panel will be asked to score the application against the key principles of the scheme as set out in Section 3. They will be as to score each criteria using the following scoring matrix:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Rating** | **Comments** |
| 5 | Excellent | The proposal demonstrates a current level of excellence, with clear pathways for building on this in the future |
| 4 | Good | The proposal has considerable merit and future potential |
| 3 | Satisfactory | The proposal has merit but is not of a consistently high quality and/or is limited in future potential |
| 2 | Fair with some weakness | The proposal has merit but notable limitations |
| 1 | Weak | The proposal is below satisfactory |

* 1. The Panel will give each application a score out of 50, based on the criteria outlined below which are equally weighted, with each criterion carrying a total possible score of 5: Any application scoring less than 40 will not be recommended for consideration by RPMC.
  2. For those applications scoring above 40, the Panel will also be asked to select one of the following recommendations for each application:

1. Proposal aligns to the scope of the scheme and is sufficiently well articulated for the proposal to be to be considered by RPMC.
2. Proposal requires further refinement and should be invited to revise and resubmit.
3. Proposal requires further refinement and alternative mechanisms for support should be sought.
   1. Applicants will be notified by email as to the outcome of their applications within five working days of the RPMC meeting where these are reviewed, and applicants will be given the date of this meeting upon submission.

## Appeals Process

* 1. Applicants will be eligible to make an appeal when the decision not to support their application is communicated to them. The only acceptable grounds for appeal are procedural error or perceived bias; appeals on the grounds of academic judgement are not permitted.
  2. The deadline for submitting an appeal is five working days from when the email which communicates the outcome is sent. Appeals must be made to the Senior RDS Manager and appellants should make a case clearly setting out the reason for the appeal and provide evidence for this.
  3. Upon receipt of an appeal the Senior RDS Manager/Heads of Doctoral College will undertake a review to assess if the appeal is eligible (and will not review whether the grounds for appeal are strong). The Senior RDS Manager/Heads of Doctoral College is responsible for acknowledging receipt of the appeal and confirming the next steps with the appellant.
  4. If the appeal is eligible, the Senior RDS Manager/Heads of Doctoral College will forward it to the Chief Operating Officer for review. The Chief Operating Officer is a member of the University Executive Team and is independent of the review panel. The Chief Operating Officer must review the documentation and decide to accept or reject the appeal and the decision will be communicated to the appellant by the Senior RDS Manager.

### Scheme monitoring and evaluation

* 1. The scheme is monitored and evaluated by the Senior RDS Manager/Heads of Doctoral College with reports supplied to the scheme Sponsor (Deputy Vice-Chancellor). This will include ongoing Equality Impact Analysis. An annual report will also be written and presented to RPMC.

## Communications and engagement plan

* 1. The table below sets out how this call will be communicated within BU.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Key message** | **Communication tool** |
| All BU staff | Details of EoI call | BU internal staff |
| All BU staff | Announcing launch of call | BU staff intranet, BU This Week, BU Research Blog |
| All BU staff | Announcing launch of call | BU This Week message |
| Executive Deans, Deputy Deans (R&PP) and Heads of Department | Announcing launch of call – cascade to staff | Email |
| All BU staff | Faculty briefing session from RDS and Doctoral College (one per Faculty – open to all) | MS Teams |
| Support sessions | Open sessions for colleagues to attend for Q&A | MS Teams |
| Communications to relevant strategic partners e.g. UHD | Opportunity available | Email |
| All BU staff | Reminder of closing date of call | BU staff intranet, BU This Week, BU Research Blog |

## Responsibilities

* 1. The initiative sponsor is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The operationalisation of the call is led by the Heads of the Doctoral College and Senior RDS Manager.
  2. On the event of a successful award, cluster leads have responsibility for delivery of the cluster as planned. The cluster lead will have responsibility for meeting the reporting requirements.

## FAQs

#### What can I request?

Each proposal should contain a request for a minimum of 2 PGRs and 2 PDRFs, to a maximum of 5 PGRs and 5 PDRFs.

#### Do I have to find a match-funding partner for the PGR element of the scheme?

Yes. You must be able to produce evidence of external partners providing match-funds at the full application stage.

#### Why can’t I request funding for one PDRF or one PGR?

This scheme is intended to provide investment into research teams, rather than discrete pockets of activity.

#### What type of proposal is likely to be supported?

It is recommended that you review the criteria against which applications are assessed against to ensure that you demonstrate how your proposal meets the criteria.

Colleagues are reminded that reviewers of concepts are likely to be from a wider range of disciplinary areas. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you write your proposal is a way which is clear for all to understand and avoids highly technical or discipline specific language.

#### 1.5 I’m still confused. Where do I go for help?

If you send your query on to [researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk), your query will be directed to an appropriate colleague to respond.

# APPENDIX 1: Expression of interest form

Before completing this application form, please ensure that you have read all the relevant guidance (including the policy document) and information available on the *Staff Intranet.* For additional queries, please email [researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Research programme title** | Please provide a succinct title which encapsulates your overarching research concept to which your proposal will align |
| **Interdisciplinary thematic research areas** | Please outline the areas of interdisciplinary research your research cluster will advance. You may wish to refer to the scope of the SIAs, which can be found on the [staff intranet](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/Scope%20slides.pdf). |
| **Team members** | Please detail who will be involved in developing the cluster, including who will lead and the Faculty that will host the PGRs and PDRFs, if successful. Please also detail which research entities (e.g. Institutes, centres, clusters, UoAs etc) the cluster aligns with. For data to demonstrate the strength of the team members, as the criteria requires, please email [researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk). |
| **Cluster details** | Please detail how many match-funded PGRs (a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5) and how many PDRFs your proposed cluster will include (a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5) |
| **Indicative match-funded partners** | Please detail the match-funded partners that you anticipate providing letters of support on the application form. |
| **Summary of concept** | Please detail a summary of the programme of research proposed for this research concept (indicative word limit of 500 words) |
| **Potential for societal impact** | Please detail the potential for societal impact (indicative word limit of 250 words). |

# Appendix 2: FULL Application FORM

# Research Capacity Transformation Scheme: application form

Before completing this application form, please ensure that you have read all the relevant guidance (including the policy document) and information available on the *Staff Intranet.* For additional queries, please email [researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk).

### Overview of proposed programme of research associated with the investment cluster

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Research programme title** | Please provide a succinct title which encapsulates your overarching research concept to which your proposal will align |
| **Area(s) of SIA scope** | Please detail which areas of the primary SIA scope this concept will advance. Details of the scope can be found on the [staff intranet](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/Scope%20slides.pdf). |
| **Principal Investigator & Co-Investigator(s)** | Please articulate who will lead this initiative and how other team members will enable its development |
| **BU team members** | Please include details with whom you will collaborate at BU, including any development opportunities that this will offer |
| **Cluster details** | Please detail how many match-funded PGRs (a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5) and how many PDRFs your proposed cluster will include (a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5) |
| **Match-funded partners** | Match-funded partners are an essential for PGRs |

### 2. Programme of research activities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Concept and plans for strategic growth.** | Please detail the overarching research concept that investment in additional research capacity will deliver. Include an indicative plan for external RKE bidding and/or (where appropriate) additional income generating activities arising from this proposal (750 words – although bidding plans can be included as a template if helpful). |
| **Impact** | Please provide details as to the potential transformative societal and economic impact from the investment. You may find it helpful to refer to the summaries of impact case studies submitted to REF2014, which can be found [here](https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/). 500 words. |
| **Research team** | Please provide details of the research team delivering this proposal. please email [researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchcapacitytransformation@bournemouth.ac.uk) for the required data, a minimum of two weeks ahead of the closing date.   * *% of members who are PIs on awarded grants in the past three years* * *% of members who are Co-Is on awarded grants in past three years* * *% of members who are PIs on submitted applications in the past three years* * *High-quality and impactful outputs (typically 3\* or above in accordance with REF criteria)*   500 words. |
| **Research principles** | Please describe the extent to which the proposal aligns to [BU’s Research Principles](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU2025%20Principles%20Underpinning%20Research%20development.docx), including investment in Humanities and Social Sciences. 250 words. |
| **Management** | Please articulate how the cluster will be managed on a day-to-day basis, including how you will adhere to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/research-environment/research-concordat/concordat-support-career-development-researchers) and address any performance issues arising. 250 words. |
| **Support for proposal** | Please detail which Faculty will host the cluster and demonstrate Faculty support to do so, such as time allocation. Letters of support, for example, from your Head of Department and Deputy Dean for Research & Professional Practice can be attached as an appendix. |

### 3. Individual PDRF projects within the research programme

*Please include a brief overview of the project for each PDRF to undertake*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of postdoctoral researcher project** | The title of the project which the PDRF will undertake. |
| **Summary of project** | 250 words. |
| **Academic outputs** | 250 words. |
| **Societal impact** | 250 words. |

### 4. Individual PGR projects within the research programme

*Please include a brief overview of the project for each PGR to undertake*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title of postgraduate researcher project** | The title of the project which the PGR will undertake. | | |
| **Summary of project** | 250 words. | | |
| **Academic outputs** | 250 words. | | |
| **Societal impact** | 250 words. | | |
| **Details of Supervisory Team** | 1. | Name | Faculty:  Internal / External:  Number of current PGRs: |
| 2. | Name | Faculty:  Internal / External:  Number of current PGRs: |
| 3. | Name | Faculty:  Internal / External:  Number of current PGRs: |
| Please explain the rationale for the selection of the supervisory team | | 100 words |
| **Details of Matched Funder** | Name | |  |
| Details of in-kind contributions. | | 100 words |
| Has the match funder accepted the standard BU Studentships Terms and Conditions and IP Agreement? | | Yes / No – requested further negotiation (this will delay the start date of the studentship) |
| Due Diligence attached | | Yes / No |
| Letter of Support attached | | Yes / No |

1. PhD Studentships are offered on a full-time basis only; with stipend 36 months and full fees will be waived by the lead faculty for 36 months . From 37 months onwards, candidates will automatically be transferred to Continuation Status and will be liable for Continuation Status fees. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [BU PhD and MRes Studentships 2022 Allocative Process Final.pdf (bournemouth.ac.uk)](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU%20PhD%20and%20MRes%20Studentships%202022%20Allocative%20Process%20Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [BU PhD and MRes Studentships 2022 Allocative Process Final.pdf (bournemouth.ac.uk)](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU%20PhD%20and%20MRes%20Studentships%202022%20Allocative%20Process%20Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [BU PhD and MRes Studentships 2022 Allocative Process Final.pdf (bournemouth.ac.uk)](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/BU%20PhD%20and%20MRes%20Studentships%202022%20Allocative%20Process%20Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)