University Research Risk Management

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Overview

- Mechanisms for managing risk in research and knowledge transfer

- Defining Responsibilities

A Reminder of the Objective

- To undertake high quality research to enhance knowledge

- To disseminate / apply the results widely / appropriately

- To do so ethically, legally, and within agreed policies and terms

Thoughts on Accountability

- You cannot inspect quality in; it has to be built into the product / process

- Promote good practice in research, management and administration

- But, potentially, the greater the burden of regulation / legislation, the less effort is put into promotion of good practice

Thoughts on Accountability

- Simplification and harmonisation of rules, policies, terms and conditions
    - Greater chance of compliance
    - Lower cost of achieving and assuring compliance
- Framework of policy, rather than highly detailed prescription

A Selection of Mechanisms Used to Manage Risk and Provide Accountability

- Review processes (e.g. concepts, proposals, partnerships)

- Project risk assessment and approval process

- Governance processes for human (ethics and sponsorship) and animal research

- Systems with adequate data capture and categorisation

- Policies (e.g. misconduct, conflicts)

- Audit processes

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Audit Processes

- External financial audit

- Internal audit

- Departmental reviews

- Funding Assurance Programme

- Quality Assurance and Validation

- Project-specific audits

- Funding Council "single conversation"

Consequences of Failure

- Research Council sanctions

  - Late Starting Certificate   >42 days   5%
  - Late final report or statement   >3 months   20%

                                                        >6 months   100%

- QAV sanctions

  - Reduced institutional cost rates

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Benefits of Audit

- Getting operational change to happen

- Providing evidence for investment decisions

- Advice on processes

- Improvement of understanding

- Co-operation in managing risk

Who's Responsible for What?

- Investigators

- Academic Managers

- Professional Support Staff

Responsibilities of the Investigator (1)

Research Leadership and Quality	The creation of an environment in which high quality research is undertaken, in a collegiate and supportive fashion. The provision of suitable direction to enable productive research, along with controls to ensure quality.
Management of Project Staff	The recruitment and development of members of the team (employees and students), and their direction and supervision in delivering against research targets. Management of partners and collaborators against agreed plans.
Financial Management	Appropriate use of resources within the terms of the funding agreement and within the University's policies and procedures.

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Responsibilities of the Investigator (2)

Health and Safety	Ensuring an environment in which the risks to staff and participants have been assessed and are appropriately managed.
Reporting, Dissemination and Publication	Providing appropriate reports on progress to the funder and others as required. Ensuring results are suitably disseminated, exploited, and published.
Research Governance	Ensuring good research practice, and adherence to any relevant legislation, regulation, or policies.
Contractual and Project Management	Recognising and meeting the contractual obligations of the funding. Ensuring that the project is undertaken in a timely fashion, against an agreed plan.

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Responsibilities of Professional Support (1)

Administrative
- Ensuring proposal meets funders requirements
- Liaising with, and co-ordination of, partners
- Supporting team meetings, partner meetings, and meetings with funders / customers
- Publicity and marketing

Financial
- Costing and pricing of proposal
- Procurement
- Charging of costs to appropriate accounts
- Provision of relevant statements and alerting to over- / under-spends
- Support of audit processes

Staffing
- Administering the appointment processes
- Ensuring induction and PDR processes are undertaken
- Maintaining a training plan

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Responsibilities of Professional Support (2)

Environment
- Ensuring working environment meets relevant health and safety procedures
- Support of equipment, etc.

Reporting
- Provision of material for reports and presentations
- Ensuring reports meet funder requirements

Commercial
- Contract development and negotiation
- Assistance in making proposals commercially relevant
- Identification of results that can be protected
- Identification and support of potential exploitation routes

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Responsibilities of Professional Support (3)

Project Management

- Maintaining a project plan
- Providing alerts for required actions
- Risk assessment and management
- Liaison with funders / customers
- Support of forward planning

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Summary

- Creating the right conditions for good performance and good practice

- Use of both supportive and directive mechanisms

- Bilateral audit mechanisms

- Clarity of responsibilities