SOP 42: Applying for a research grant and gaining Trust approval of grant applications.

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Author:	Chantal Sunter	
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IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL USERS OF THIS SOP TO ENSURE THAT THE CORRECT VERSION IS BEING USED

All staff should regularly check the Research & Innovation Webpage for information relating to the implementation of new or revised versions. Staff must ensure that they are adequately trained in the new procedure and must make sure that all copies of superseded version are promptly withdrawn from use unless notified otherwise by the SOP Controller.

The definitive versions of all Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust SOPs appear online. If you are reading this in printed form, check that the version number and date below is the most recent one as shown on the RIG webpage:

https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/research-our-hospitals

The Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust wishes to acknowledge York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust who gave permission to adapt their templates in the development of these SOPs.

Version History Log

This area will be updated with details of all changes made to the SOP whether due for full review or not.

Version	Details of Change	Date Implemented
1.0	Original SOP	04/11/2025

This SOP will be reviewed every three years unless changes to any relevant legislation require otherwise

Related Documents:

SOPs:
SOP 15: Research studies involving Sue Ryder SOP 24: Project Review SOP 26: Service Evaluations SOP 27: Obtaining Sponsorship for non-CTIMPs & CE-marked medical devices SOP 29: Writing a Protocol SOP 38: Monitoring and oversight of Sponsored Research Studies
Other documents:
Researcher's toolkit GHNHSFT Intellectual Property Policy Guidelines 02 - Using the non-CTIMP template protocol Guidelines 27 – Costing Grants

Glossary

GHNHSFT	Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
RIG	Research, Innovation and Genomics
CTIMP	Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product
IP	Intellectual Property
MHRA	Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
HRA	Health Research Authority
REC	Research Ethics Committee
CI	Chief Investigator
PI	Principal Investigator
GCP	Good Clinical Practice
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
NIHR	National Institute for Health and Care Research
AMRC	Association of Medical Research Charities
C&C	Capacity and Capability
EOI	Expression of Interest
RA	Risk Assessment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
DD	Due Diligence
AI	Artificial Intelligence
PPI	Patient and Public Involvement
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
SoECAT	Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template
RRDN	Regional Research Delivery Network
RDN	Research Delivery Network
AcoRD	Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development
SRP	Sponsorship Review Panel

Contents

1. Introduction, Background and Purpose

Staff and students within the Trust may wish to seek funding for grants to support their research projects.

Applying for research funding is an extremely competitive process and most major grant schemes only fund about 20% of applications. Good advice on the application, both scientific and administrative, will increase the chance of success. In addition, securing external research funding impacts on the responsibilities and resources of the Trust. As such, any staff member applying for external funding to support research activity to be conducted within the Trust must involve the Research, Innovation & Genomics (RIG) Department. The application will need to be signed off by the RIG department and depending on the level of funding applied for, will also need to go through other Trust governance processes including financial governance.

It should be noted that the preparation of a research grant is an extensive and iterative process. Ideally there should be a worked-up protocol, costings etc before the call is announced which can be tweaked to align with the call. The deadlines between calls being published and submission is often v tight for a standing start.

This SOP provides the process to gain Trust approval to submit research funding applications. It provides you with a step-by-step checklist for achieving success in this process.

2. Who should use this SOP?

- All members of GHNHSFT staff (including trainees and students) who are thinking of applying for grant funding to support a research project or service evaluation of any description.
- Members of the RIG Department and other relevant Trust departments who may be involved with supporting the development or review of research applications.
- Finance staff involved in developing and reviewing grant applications.
- Trust Leadership committees who are responsible for final authorisation of applications

Members of the GHNHSFT RIG department, should reference this SOP to support GHNHSFT staff through the application process as required.

3. When this SOP should be used

Those considering applying for grant funding should contact the RIG department as early as possible, this may be before a suitable funding source has been identified. This SOP should be read alongside other relevant SOPs and guidance specified in the "Related Documents" section as detailed earlier in this SOP

4. Process for Development of and Approval of Grant Applications.

The staff member with a research idea should contact the GHNHSFT RIG Professional Services Team on ghn-tr.researchgrants@nhs.net to inform them that they are planning a research project and thinking of applying for research funding. If any of the following information is already available, they should include it:

- Name of Lead applicant
- Details of other stakeholders (co-applicants ++)
- Expected study sponsor
- Grant funding body
- Grant call information (link and deadline date)
- Working title of application
- Specialty area
- Expected amount to be applied for
- Draft documentation worked up so far (including project plan for application if available)
- Ethical approval requirements
- IP considerations

The Research Grant support team will acknowledge receipt of the email and arrange an initial informal meeting with you to discuss your ideas and potential application in more detail. This will include assessment on whether the proposed application can be completed in the timescale available. The following staff members will be involved in the meeting;

- RIG Director, and/or RIG Business Manager,
- RIG Professional Services Manager, and/or Academic Services Manager,
- Research Matron

Following this initial meeting, RIG will link you in with Library and Knowledge Services to support you with a literature search if this has not already been completed. RIG will then introduce you to

the key departmental contacts for separate discussions about the plans for statistics, finance, PPI, IP etc At this point you will also be linked with representatives of any supporting departments to be involved in the project, e.g. digital, radiology etc

4.1. Identifying a funder and reviewing their guidance

If you have not yet identified a source of grant funding the following may help:

- UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/
- NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) https://www.nihr.ac.uk/research-funding/funding-programmes
- AMRC (Association of Medical Research Charities) https://www.amrc.org.uk/Pages/Category/member-directory?Take=20

The RIG department can help you identify other funding sources.

Please check that you are eligible for funding call for which you are considering applying. The RIG department can help you to understand the guidance and requirements if you are unsure. **It is really important that you familiarise yourself with the particular requirements of your grant funder as early as possible even if you have applied previously because there are often subtle changes in the guidance.**

4.2 Draft your application

Applying for grant funding may be a one or two stage process. You may initially be required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI). You should still contact the RIG department if you are thinking of submitting an EOI.

A grant application will typically require you to complete a number of sections including a protocol or research plan. Please refer to *SOP 24: Project Review* which has information on developing a proposal and *SOP 29: Writing a Protocol*, that will provide guidance. Please also refer to the checklists in the appendices to this SOP which will ensure you consider all aspects of grant development.

You may be asked to provide letters of support from collaborators and the Trust, you should allow plenty of time to obtain these. Up to date research CVs will be needed for key collaborators / co-applicants.

The RIG department will review your application and advise on structure, content and formatting.

Many funding bodies require you, your co-applicants to set up an account with their grant application system to enable you to complete the application, confirm support and submit online. Please ensure you check and do this at an early stage in the application. The Research Grant support team can assist with this process if required and will ensure that authorised signatories also have accounts if needed.

At this stage please also highlight any additional documentation or approvals that will be required for submission of your application. These may include but are not limited to:

- Letter of support from an executive lead in the host organisation.
- Letters of support from collaborators
- Electronic or other sign off from specified departments, e.g. Finance
- Project plan / GANTT chart
- Flow charts

4.3 Costings and Finances.

It is important to have finance involvement throughout the application process; there is dedicated finance support within the RIG department.

You must ensure that you calculate the costs for all aspects of the project and funders have differing rules on what costs you are permitted to include in your application. Guidance for costing grants is available from NIHR here and from UKRI here but it is important to check guidance of individual funders if applying elsewhere. Please refer to *"Guidelines 27 – Costing grants"* and the checklist in Appendix 2 of this SOP for additional helpful information.

To obtain Trust finance sign off on grant applications, detail on what the costings cover will be required even if a detailed breakdown of costs is not required by the funder at EOI or first stage. It is important that sufficient time is allowed to allow appropriate review by senior staff.

4.4 Required Approvals and timeframes

All grant applications will require approval and sign-off by RIG regardless of amount. This is done via the Sponsorship Review Panel which meets on an as-need basis. Please refer to *SOP 27: Obtaining Sponsorship for non-CTIMPs & CE-marked medical devices* on how to apply for sponsorship in principle, prior to submitting your grant application. As part of this RIG will need

confirmation via email from the applicant that their line manager and managers of any departments that will be impacted

Grant applications will not be considered valid if they have not been completed with support from RIG and projects could be delayed if RIG are not involved in the development process. Therefore, it is vital that there is continuous engagement throughout your grant application development process with regular meetings with the allocated RIG grant team. This will enable assurance and early identification of additional support requirements. RIG will seek approval from the Head of Corporate Finance prior to seeking sign off at Executive Level

Governance checks required prior to any grant submission:

Check required	Amount	Route
Applicant Department Head (or equiv) Head of any departments that will be impacted (e.g. radiology)	All grants	Confirmation email via lead applicant
RIG	All grants	Sponsorship Review Panel (SRP) including Head of Corporate Finance. Director of RIG
Executive Level	Up to £5 million	Director of RIG Director of Finance Director of Safety / Medical Director
Trust Leadership and Committees	£5 million and above	Trust Leadership Team (TLT) Finance & Resources (F&R) Committee
Trust Board	£25 million and above	Trust Board

For applications over £5 million, Trust leadership level meetings are held monthly but approvals must be sought in the correct sequence. Papers for each approval level must be submitted 8 working days in advance of the meeting. Dates of meetings and paper deadlines for Trust Leadership Team (TLT), Finance and Resources Committee (F&R) and Trust Board can be found

on the Corporate Governance pages on the Trust Intranet. It is important to consider the deadlines for these meetings when planning the grant application and to build in time for feedback and potential resubmission.

Where you are planning to apply to funding calls with a very tight announcement to deadline timeframe (i.e. a few weeks), please inform the RIG Research Grant support team of this information as soon as possible to check that it will be feasible to apply, whilst still ensuring appropriate governance checks.

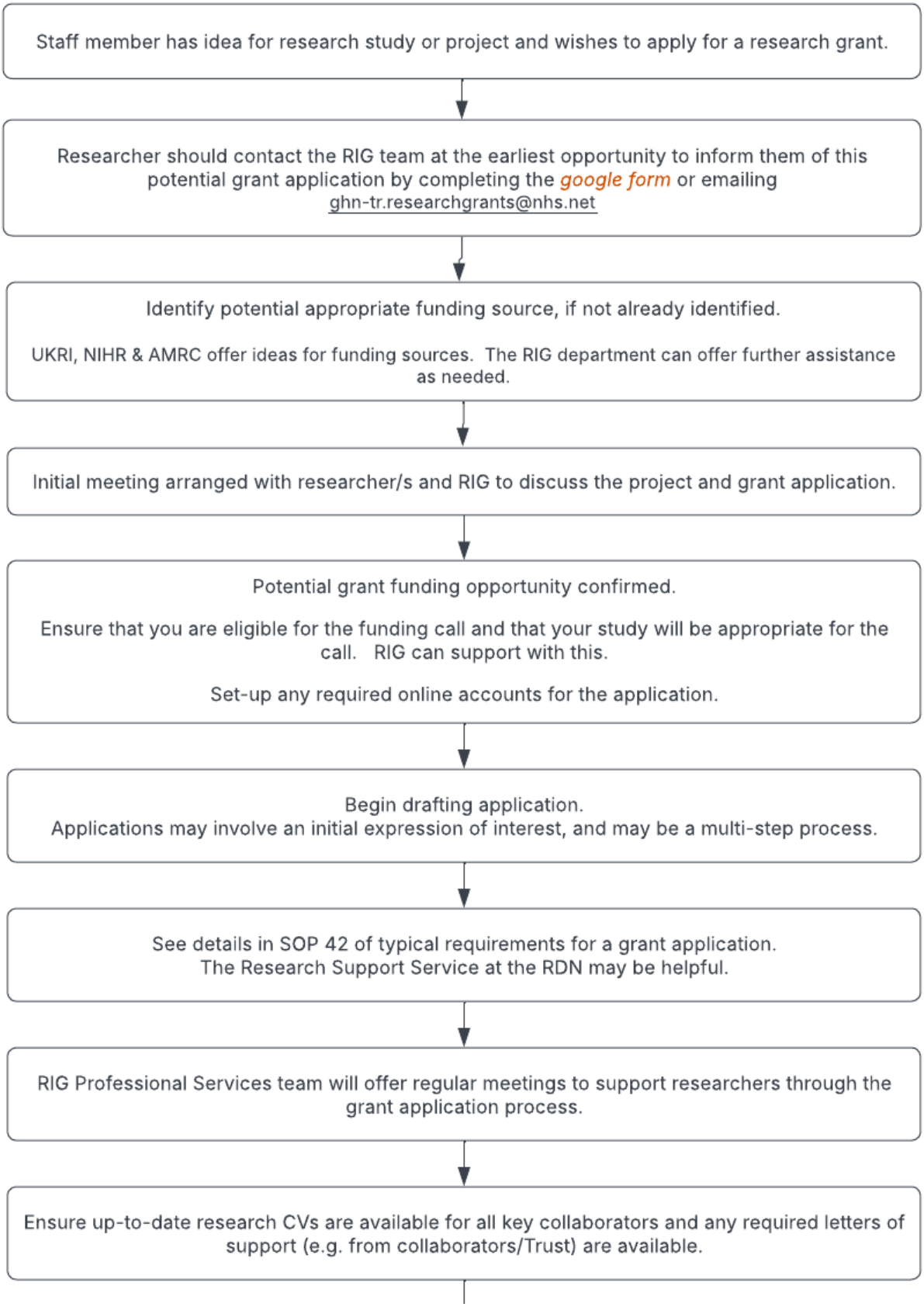
5. Notification of outcome following governance checks

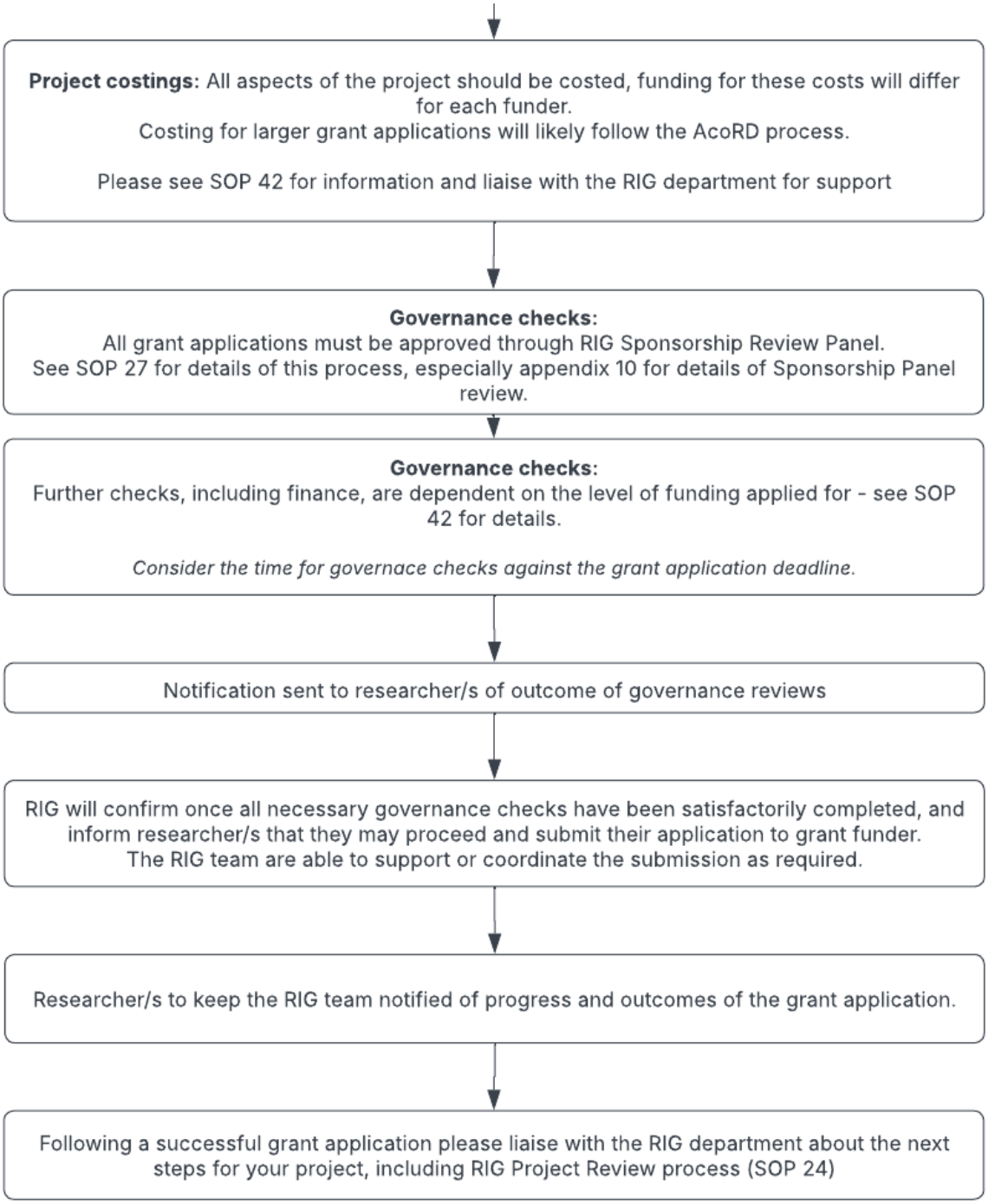
Following review at each stage of the governance checks, applicants will receive notification that their application was reviewed and the outcome. Where additional information is requested to satisfy the governance check, the details of this, timeframes and mode of reassessment (email or meeting) will be advised.

Once governance review has been satisfactorily completed at all applicable levels, the applicant will be informed that they have approval to proceed and submit.
If Executive level support is required in the form of a letter, this will be provided at this stage.

Following submission of the application, there may still be a requirement by the funder for electronic approvals to be completed post submission but before the deadline date. It is important to build in time for these additional post-submission approvals before the deadline date. Please note that if the relevant governance checks have not been carried out then this may delay or prevent the valid submission of your application

Appendix 1: Flowchart of grant application steps




Project costings: All aspects of the project should be costed, funding for these costs will differ for each funder.
Costing for larger grant applications will likely follow the AcoRD process.
Please see SOP 42 for information and liaise with the RIG department for support
Governance checks:
All grant applications must be approved through RIG Sponsorship Review Panel.
See SOP 27 for details of this process, especially appendix 10 for details of Sponsorship Panel review.
Governance checks:
Further checks, including finance, are dependent on the level of funding applied for - see SOP 42 for details.
Consider the time for governace checks against the grant application deadline.
Notification sent to researcher/s of outcome of governance reviews
RIG will confirm once all necessary governance checks have been satisfactorily completed, and inform researcher/s that they may proceed and submit their application to grant funder.
The RIG team are able to support or coordinate the submission as required.
Researcher/s to keep the RIG team notified of progress and outcomes of the grant application.
Following a successful grant application please liaise with the RIG department about the next steps for your project, including RIG Project Review process (SOP 24)

Appendix 2 – Checklist of things to consider when calculating the costs of the project to be included in the grant application

The items below have been categorised in different ways to try and support the grant development. Therefore it will appear that some have been duplicated. E.g. travel will be listed in study set up, study delivery and there is also a separate travel category that lists all the different types of travel. This is not an exhaustive list and not all items will be relevant to all applications. It is important to establish what is eligible for funding as schemes differ especially when applying to charities.

Study Set Up / Management / Coordination

- CI time and oversight
- Trial management / Coordination
- Trial administration
- Protocol development, ethics application and associated documentation preparation*
- Management of resources*
- RIG set-up costs
- IT hardware
- Statistical support
- PPI/E and the Steering Committee travel and expenses
- Study registration costs
- Publicising the study (communications campaigns including social media & resources)
- Publication costs
- Conference Costs
- Travel
- Archiving costs
- Development of data collection tools (e-CRF) and randomisation systems
- Licences for software packages

*could be carried out by a trial manager

Travel and subsistence

- Participants
- Staff
- Monitoring
- Steering committee or other staff meetings
- PPI activity related travel and subsistence
- Promoting the study (to promote it or disseminate results)

PPI/E costs

- Travel / subsistence
- PPI rep costs including but not limited to:
  - Attending meetings / focus groups
  - Reviewing and providing feedback on design of study
  - Reviewing and providing feedback on patient facing materials and patient journey
  - Attending workshops
  - Attending events to promote the study or disseminate results
- Room hire and associated equipment hire
- Refreshments at meetings
- Equipment purchase

Study Delivery

- Number of sites
- Set-up cost for individual sites
- PI time at each site
- The interventions and procedures involved
- The time taken for each intervention and the frequency of visits
- The number of participants
- Type of resource required (nurse, doctors, research support staff etc) ito undertake each activity and banding / grade
- Purchase of devices for trial
- Consumables for procedures involved
- Transport of samples
- Requirements for scans, data entry, Case Report Form completion and trial coordination. Database and on-going support costs.
- Requirement for any equipment or facility use. Does equipment need purchasing or renting? (maintenance costs for equipment). Costs of monitoring equipment such as monitoring for freezers etc? Do rooms need to be hired?
- Travel costs (staff and participants) and participant refreshments
- Travel for site GCP monitoring (does an overnight stay need to be included)
- Training needs beyond GCP

Staffing

- Chief Investigator / Project Lead
- Co-applicants
- Trial manager / coordinator
- Trial administrator (clinical and /or office based)
- Statistician
- PPI Lead
- Research matron
- Research delivery staff – nurses / AHPs / trials officers
- Research intervention staff e.g. physio

Other

- Randomisation service
- Clinical Trials Unit service
- Tissue Bank (or brain bank) costs
- Health Economist services
- Lab services
- Scan reading services
- Equipment
- Pharmacy
- IT, Software and licensing
- IP Costs
- Data extraction costs

Appendix 3 – Checklist of approvals to be completed

Check / approval required	Amount	Route
Applicant Department Head (or equiv) Head of any departments that will be impacted (e.g. radiology)	All grants	Confirmation email via lead applicant
RIG	All grants	Sponsorship Review Panel (including Head of Corporate Finance) Director of RIG
Executive Level	Up to £5 million	Director of RIG Director of Finance Director of Safety / Medical Director
Trust Leadership and Committees	£5 million and above	Trust Leadership Team (TLT) Finance & Resources Committee (F&R)
Trust Board	£25 million and above	Trust Board

Notes

- RIG must be involved with development of grant to ensure sign-off.
- RIG Finance Management Accountant must be involved with calculating the costs of the project.
- Sign off by Head of Corporate Finance before Director of Finance sign off via RIG.
  (RIG Finance Management Accountant & Head of Corporate Finance both sit on SRP but must have been involved / had sight of prior to SRP)
- Director of RIG sits on SRP, if they are unable to attend they must provide additional approval following successful SRP.
- Additional post-submission authorisations may be required by the funder to validate successful submission; please ensure time is built in to ensure these are completed prior to the deadline.

Appendix 4 –Template email granting approval to submit:

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Study Title:

RIG Ref:

Thank you for submitting your draft grant application to the Research, Innovation and Genomics (RIG) Department at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Your project was reviewed by RIG on the following dates: dd/mm/yyyy *[and dd/mm/yyyy]*, and documents reviewed are detailed at the end of this letter.

I am able to confirm agreement from the Trust for you to submit your proposed grant application to <*insert Funder name*> under the <*insert call*>. Please be aware that following your submission, the funder may require additional automated authorisations from departments within the Trust to validate your submission prior to the funding call deadline. Please ensure that you allow time for this.

If the funding call has a multi-stage application process, please note that you will need to involve RIG and secure RIG approvals for any subsequent stages of your application.

If you are successful in securing funding there are a number of additional steps before your study can begin, including but not limited to contracts, Project Review Group, full sponsorship approval and the HRA process. RIG can advise you on this process and the steps required beyond this when you reach that stage.

We would like to acknowledge the time and effort required in putting together a grant application and wish you the best of luck with your submission. Please do keep us informed of your progress including any feedback, should your application not be successful.

Please contact the RIG Department (ghn-tr.glos.riprofessionalservices@nhs.net) if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

RIG Professional Services Manager

Final documents reviewed:	Version
List all documentation received as part of the final approval to submit	