



University
of Dundee

Estimating your time on a project using Full Economic Costing (fEC)

This document has been created to help researchers estimate the time they may spend on a research project. It does not have to be completed but is available to use if required.



Under fEC the University can claim reimbursement for the time of institutionally funded Principal (PI) and Co-Investigators (CI) allocated to projects. The institution must not under or over-recover such costs since the process will be audited against TRAC returns (based on research timesheets that academic staff already complete).

The following rates are typical from analysis of past grant applications:

6-7 hours (PI and CI) for 1 Post Doc Research Assistant (PDRA) or researcher supervised per week

10-12 hours (PI and CI) for 2 PDRAs or researchers supervised per week

15-17 hours (PI and CI) for 3 PDRAs or researchers supervised per week

18-22 hours (PI and CI) for 4 PDRAs or researchers supervised per week

You are advised to use these rates wherever appropriate.

If you feel these rates are inappropriate for your specific research project please discuss with RIS. For all research projects you must be able to justify your time (PI and CI) in the application.

Some factors to consider which will determine the time required for a research project:

- whether acting as the principal investigator or a co-investigator;
- the experience of the Research Assistants employed and training required;
- previous experience with this type of project, methodology, or techniques;
- the number of partners involved in the project;
- the extent of supervision of Post Graduate Researcher Students;
- the number of Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators;
- approval required e.g. ethics submissions;
- whether the type of equipment has been used before in similar projects;
- the number of papers that may be written as a result;
- the administrative requirements of the funding body (progress reports etc);
- how the work is planned (for example the number of qualitative interviews in social sciences, and who is to do them).

During the project the work could develop in a variety of ways, not planned at the outset, meaning the actual time can vary considerably from original estimates.

- if there is a problem or set-back the research project, examples of variance; will require more time than originally estimated;
- similarly, if the work is proving productive or is close to making a real break-through then more time might be spent;
- new researchers may take longer to do the work than more experienced staff;
- other external factors e.g. clinical academics' time is often dependent upon the patients being recruited for research work;
- time after the formal programme of work has finished, while the report/s are being completed;
- the potential for publication and the number and type of papers etc produced (and the associated work of proof-reading, edit and review) is generally not known at the start of the project.



Estimating the amount of time on a research project

	Year 1 Hours	Year 2 Hours	Year 3 Hours	Year 4 Hours	Year 5 Hours	Year 6 Hours	Total Hours
1. Planning stages							
Time for travel to and meetings with collaborative partners to establish research proposal after award (do not include time preparing funding applications)							0.00
Recruitment of research staff including preparing adverts, interviews and dealing with University's People Team on contracts of employment							0.00
Initial Briefing of Research Assistants working on the project including updates and meetings with partners as required							0.00
2. Ongoing work							
Administration – dealing with project paperwork and administration, writing up lab books, interim reporting to the project funders, and dealing with invoices and costs through University Finance department							0.00
Training & Supervision – of PGR Students, PDRA and other Research Assistants during the life of the project. Estimate weekly time x 44 weeks (fEC year) (note 1)							0.00
Meetings – with co-applicants and with collaborators (note that travel time should be included, especially if meetings are overseas or involve overnight stay)							0.00
Research work – being actual time spent on research work carried out by you as part of the project. See guidance notes on previous page for further help							0.00
Conferences / seminars – attendance at relevant events including travel time							0.00
Preparation and submission for specific approvals e.g. ethics (UoD or NHS), MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority) or MTAs to get materials or tissue samples required							0.00
Recruitment of patients/healthy volunteers if needed for the project							0.00
3. Dissemination and Finalisation							
Writing up of research carried out, including working with the Research Assistants on writing up their activities (note 2)							0.00
Compilation of specific conference papers, articles, presentations to be given on the research (note 2)							0.00
TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note 1 – fEC is based on 1650 hours per annum “normal” i.e. 37.5 hours per week working over 44 weeks. So if a task would routinely take 2 hours per week, then the yearly total to be used is 88 hours.

Note 2 - for Research Council applications time spent on supervision of PGR students should not be included in the fEC calculation.

Note 3 – For Research Council Applications only writing up and dissemination activities during the life of the research project should be included in the fEC calculation.