<p style="text-align:center">November Newsletter</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Update on Progress with Full Economic Costing</p>

Time Allocation Schedules

Collection period one spanning August and September is now complete. There were a small number of difficulties experienced with the web form, many of which were resolved simply by updating the version of the browser being used.

All Heads of Departments have now received their departmental report and should have returned the signed and annotated form, although 44 are still outstanding.

The number of staff who have registered the link between staff number and user id is 2515.

We are still in the process of collating the information for collection period one, but the early indications are of a return rate of 60%, which is short of the audit requirement of an 80% return across all University departments.

Research Councils Requirements

The Research Councils published their joint initial requirements for their grant application processes at the end of September, and have undertaken a series of regional seminars during October. These requirements largely reflect the broader Government requirements, which we have to apply to all research funding. They have taken the opportunity to harmonise some areas of policy and process across the Councils.

The Councils are continuing to work on the details, with the target of producing their new application form by June 2005. Applications will be on this new form, under the new requirements, from 1 September 2005.

Project Costing, Pricing and Approval

In a similar vein to the Research Councils' changes, the University's internal processes will have to change, in order to capture the additional information required, and enable the calculation of full economic cost. The pricing of the project will be separated from the cost, which we have not always done in the past.

The sort of additional information that will be required includes the academic time being spent on the project, the specific space to be used, and the details of any facilities. We will also be including other areas of information that now need to be captured because of external requirements, in particular relating to research governance.

As well as the costing and pricing process, we will also be looking at the approval mechanism, including the levels of delegated authority to sign off and submit applications.

In the fullness of time, we plan for this new process to be web-enabled, but this is not going to be possible in the short term.

We are currently having discussions around the University on these issues, and plan to finalise the new Project Approval Form (PAF) by the end of the year, for introduction early in the New Year.

Audit Requirements

The University's approach to and progress on full economic costing is subject to a formal audit process. We had our external audit in June, which confirmed those areas where we had not yet met the minimum requirements. There were no surprises, given our planned work programme. We hope to have completed the necessary policy and development work by November, so that Internal Audit can carry out the follow-up process, and confirm our compliance with the Government's requirements. This will allow us to use the new methodology for costing all research projects from early 2005 onwards.

IMC/KS
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