

Including visa costs for research staff on research grant proposals

Guidance for Investigators

Introduction

From 1st January 2021, all EU and non-EU citizens wanting to live and work in the UK will require a visa <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>. The University's guidance for recruiting managers can be found [here](#) as part of the [recruitment and selection guidance](#). The University's guidance on Immigration and Visas can be found [here](#).

The UK immigration system which determines overseas applicants' rights to enter and work in the UK includes charges for:

- Certificates of Sponsorship
- Visa applications for prospective employee and their dependents
- The immigration health surcharge.

The University's [visa expenses policy](#) permits Schools to reimburse visa costs on behalf of employees and their dependents but **only** where grant funding is available and allowed as an eligible cost. Please note that visa costs are not eligible with all funders or funding schemes (see Annex I), please seek advice from your [Research Development Manager](#).

It is usual practice for the University to only cover the cost of the Certificate of Sponsorship (see section 5 [in this guidance](#)).

Inclusion on research grant applications

A number of institutions pay the cost of visas for incoming research staff. As these costs are considerable, this can be attractive to potential applicants. The cost of a visa application and immigration health surcharge can vary depending upon individual circumstances, which won't be known at the time of the grant application. It is therefore recommended that £1300 (£650 for visa application and £650 for immigration health surcharge) is included in grant applications as in the majority of cases this will be sufficient to cover the costs. The University will cover the cost of Certificates of Sponsorship.

Costing guidance

Investigators who are including a full-time unnamed PDRA (or named PDRA who is a non-UK national without settled status) on their research grant application should include **£1300** (where the funder allows) to cover the cost of a visa application (£650) and immigration health surcharge (£650) as part of their staff recruitment costs. For UKRI applications, visa application costs but not the immigration health surcharge, are an eligible cost so **£650** should be included as part of the recruitment costs. Some funders, including UKRI, will allow the visa costs to be vired to other directly incurred costs if they are not required for their original purpose.

Timelines

Visa applications will extend the time required to process a new employee and must be factored into the recruitment process. Current guidelines from UK Visas and Immigration are that a visa application will take up to 8 weeks, in addition to the advertising and appointment process. Therefore, unless the start date is determined by the funder guidelines, please allow **at least 4 months** from the funding outcome to the start date of the relevant staff member.

Annex I Funders and visa cost eligibility

For funders not listed below please seek advice from your Research Development Manager.

FUNDER	VISA COSTS FOR RESEARCHERS ELIGIBLE?	COMMENTS	LINK TO GUIDANCE
UKRI	Yes for cost of visa application for staff working 100% of their time on the project. Immigration health surcharge not eligible	Costs can be incurred prior to the start of the grant provided that it does not precede the date on the offer letter.	
British Academy Post-doctoral Fellowships	No		https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/postdoctoral-fellowships/guidance-notes-2020/
British Heart Foundation	No		https://www.bhf.org.uk/for-professionals/information-for-researchers/how-to-apply/grant-costing-guide - see line "Recruitment"
Leverhulme Trust	Yes	Will pay direct to ECF awardees. For other schemes visa costs should not be included as part of the application budget; they will	https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/salary-costs

		be reimbursed following appointment of the member of staff.	
Met Office	Yes	Visa costs incurred prior to start of the project can be invoiced as part of the first payment point	
Royal Society (University Research Fellowship, Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship)	Yes	Will cover costs for applicant and dependents	https://royalsociety.org/-/media/grants/schemes/URF-Scheme-Notes.pdf
Wellcome Trust	Yes	Will cover costs researchers whose salary is funded on the grant. Will also cover dependents	https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/costs-granholders-can-claim
EU Funding			
Horizon Europe	No	Visa costs cannot be included in the budget but will be covered by the Indirect costs	

ERC	Yes, provided they are incurred after the start of the grant	Claims can only be made for costs incurred following the start of the grant. Therefore, direct costs should be included for PDRAs who are employed after the start of the project. Visa costs for PIs and PDRAs who start at the beginning of the grant are expected to be covered from the Indirect costs
Marie Curie Actions	Yes	Visa costs for the Fellow are covered by the "Research, Training and Networking costs". Visa costs for any dependents (if appropriate) need to be covered from the mobility/ family allowance budget which is paid directly to the Fellow as part of their remuneration package.
EIT Food	No	Visa costs cannot be included in the budget but will be covered by the Indirect costs

Version control

Version	Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date
1.0	RES	Annually	Kirsty Withers	March 2021
2.0	RES	Annually	Kirsty Withers	May 2021
3.0	RES	Annually	Kirsty Withers	Jan 2022