

# EQUIPMENT



# RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- This presentation
- Process maps as handouts
- EPSRC staff

Theme contacts

[EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk)



# CONTENTS

- **Background and rationale**
- Below £10k
- Between £10k and £121,588
- Over £121,588
- Hints and Tips
- Equipment sharing initiatives

# BACKGROUND

From 01 May 2011, changes in how equipment is requested on Research Council grants came into effect across RCUK. In response to:

- the Wakeham Review, which highlighted the need for increased efficiency in research funding
- the reduction in capital budget by 50% across the Research Councils.

# WHAT THIS MEANS: MAXIMISING USAGE

- Equipment should not be standing idle
- Equipment should be used for the highest quality research
- Therefore:
  - Being used by one research group for 100% of the time is OK
  - But if there is spare capacity this should be shared with other key researchers via appropriate access mechanisms

# WHAT THIS MEANS: APPLYING TO EPSRC

- Consider whether EPSRC is the right body to apply to for funding of equipment
- Is there equipment available elsewhere:
  - in your university?
  - in your region?
  - nationally?
  - at mid-range facilities?
- Can another funder provide the equipment?
- Can your university or project partner provide the equipment?

# THRESHOLDS

- Below £10k
- Equal to or over £10k and below £121,588
- Equal to or over £121,588

## Notes:

- £121,588 chosen as it is the OJEU procurement threshold
- Values are inclusive of VAT
- Apply to individually capitalisable assets, rather than by accumulating the value of a number of assets
- EXCEPT where individual assets are clearly intended to be used together as a combined asset.

# INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

## Exception:

- Will not need to be co-funded or go through the strategic equipment process
- Will be funded at 100% FEC, although EPSRC reserves the right to request institutional contributions in exceptional circumstances

## Definition:

Research that is wholly or mainly focussed on creating a novel instrument that will either

- enable research capability not available using any existing instrument,
- or will substantially improve research capability beyond what currently exists in a way that opens up significant new scientific opportunities

## Examples:

- construction of a wholly new instrument from its basic components
- the substantial modification of an existing instrument
- integration of two or more existing instruments into a new combined one

## Note:

Panels will be asked to comment specifically on whether the case has been made that equipment is for instrument development

Other equipment requested on the proposal not related to the instrument development will be subject to EPSRC's rules for equipment







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## BELOW £10K

- Should be included in proposals for individual research projects
- Will be paid at 80% FEC
- Include in Other Directly Incurred costs on JeS
- If VAT and/or Import Duty do not apply, a value of zero should be entered in these fields.



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## BETWEEN £10K AND £121,588

- Individual items of equipment in this range should be included on proposals for individual research projects
- Identify proposed contribution to the cost of the equipment (from university or other sources)
- Contributions of the order of 50% of the full cost of the equipment will be expected
- EPSRC reserves the right to negotiate the percentage contribution

# BETWEEN £10K AND £121,588

## **Joint proposals:**

Applicants/research organisations/project partners agree amongst themselves:

- the levels of contribution from the different organisations
- the ownership and hosting arrangements

## **Peer review:**

- Reviewers will be asked to comment explicitly on the viability of any proposed access arrangements, the university or third party contribution and overall value for money
- Panel will take this into account when ranking



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# OVER £121K: BACKGROUND

Capital budget is limited so EPSRC is primarily funding equipment over £121k :

- where the equipment will benefit a range of research
- to ensure maximum usage
- to encourage a culture of equipment sharing

This could include:

- Research across a number of HEIs
- Research across a number of departments within a single HEI
- Both existing and potential research projects

# ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

- Process aims to separate the assessment of research projects from the assessment of equipment
- If a research proposal is inextricably linked to an equipment proposal then if one is unsuccessful, the other must be withdrawn
- Ideally a research proposal should discuss contingency plans for if associated equipment is not funded and vice versa which will mean that one can proceed without the other
- Goal is to minimise the number of cases where there is the risk of double jeopardy



## OVER £121K: OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

- Individual projects incorporating requests for equipment costing £121,588 (incl. VAT) or more will no longer be accepted.
- Separate business case for each piece of equipment
- Recurrent costs to support maintenance and usage of equipment can be requested
- Outline stage – CONTACT US FIRST
- Full proposal judged by a Strategic Equipment Panel
- Interviews
- **NOT** subject to demand management
- Resubmissions at EPSRC's discretion

# EQUIPMENT ACCOUNTS

- An account will be opened for an institution when the first piece of equipment to be located at that institution is funded.
- Any additional equipment funded at the institution will be added to the account.
- It is expected that the equipment accounts will be held by a senior member of the institution (e.g. pro-Vice-Chancellor).
- EPSRC may wish to discuss with the account holder about the exact timing of the capital spend. A grant condition to reflect this will be added to the account.
- Specific grant conditions in relation to reporting, and to ensuring access to the equipment to benefit a range of research, will also apply.

# WHAT IF MY RESEARCH PROJECT IS DEPENDENT ON A PIECE OF EQUIPMENT?

- A case for an item of equipment supporting an individual research project **CAN** still be submitted where there is a genuine requirement for dedicated equipment.
- The decision process for the individual research project and the equipment will be linked. The final decision on whether the research project goes ahead is taken **AFTER** the outcome of the strategic equipment panel is known.
- Contact EPSRC as early as possible to discuss a suitable timeline for assessment of the research project and the business case.
- The equipment business case will be judged in competition with the cases for equipment that will underpin a range of research.
- Where feasible, a contingency plan for the research project (e.g. making use of existing older or shared equipment) should be identified.

# WHAT IF I WANT EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT A RANGE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES?

- A case for a piece of equipment that underpins a portfolio of research can be submitted through the strategic equipment process – akin to previous `Multi-project equipment` scheme
- Do **NOT** need to give details of a specific research project
- Clearly explain:
  - the research that would be enabled by the equipment
  - the strategic importance of the equipment
  - how the university will support the associated research group(s).
- Describe national picture and explain why the applicants are best placed to manage the shared equipment.
- Mechanisms for maximising usage within the research group, across institution(s) or across the UK should be detailed.

# WHAT IF I ALREADY HAVE THE EQUIPMENT?

- Funding to support maximising the usage of equipment which has been provided from other sources, such as manufacturers or industry, or equipment that is already at an institution, can be applied for.
- Resources such as:
  - Staff to maintain equipment, run access process, support and train users
  - Consumables
- Funding for research projects will **NOT** be supported via this mechanism..
- Proposals for this type of support will be judged in competition with those for items of equipment and should address the same criteria.

# DEADLINES & MEETING DATES

<b>Draft business case sift meetings</b>	<b>Full equipment case submission deadline</b>	<b>Strategic Equipment Interview Panel</b>
October	December	January
January	March	April
April	June	July
July	September	October



## EQUIPMENT FUNDED SO FAR (October 11)

- Tesla vector magnet – University of Sheffield
- Confocal fluorescence microscope with associated correlator – University of Glasgow
- Dilution refrigerator – University of Oxford
- High energy, high repetition rate, ultra-short laser amplifier – Heriot Watt
- 100fs/1ps tunable laser system – University of Sheffield

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# HINTS AND TIPS

- Talk to EPSRC contact first about your plan
- Check whether the same or similar equipment is available either in your institution or elsewhere (e.g. colleagues, collaborators)
- Work out a process for managing access for shared equipment. How will you decide who gets access, how much access?
- Discuss with the host institution what charging model you will need to use
- Check on availability of equipment – what are the lead-times? What procurement process will you have to use?

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# EQUIPMENT SHARING

## **Engineering Instrument Pool**

Over 60 portable research instruments available free of charge for short-term use.

## **Laser Loan Pool**

Commercial laser systems and diagnostics for researchers to carry out laser experiments at their own institutions.

## **Equipment database**

Find out what equipment is available to use in the UK and share your equipment.

## **Xchange Portal**

XChange is an online portal where the UK academic sector can buy and sell equipment that has become surplus to requirements.

## **Asset Registers**

Universities developing these with the aim to get an agreed taxonomy. EPSRC will also use the same taxonomy.



# CONTACTS

Generic questions and submission of draft business cases -

**[EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk)**

Infrastructure – Susie Douglas

Physical Sciences – Emma King or Martin Sweet

ICT – Diane Howard or Matthew Ball

Engineering – Michelle Lascelles or Joanna Coleman

Maths – Philippa Hemmings

Healthcare Technologies – Helen Hunt

Digital Economy – Richard Bailey

Manufacturing – James Fleming

Energy – Neil Bateman

# APPLICATION PROCESS 1

- Talk to us
- Email a draft two-page Business Case (per item of equipment) outlining the strategic need for the equipment to [EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:EPSRCEquipmentFunding@epsrc.ac.uk).
- Internal sift using criteria:
  - Is the research area or areas that the equipment will underpin a priority to EPSRC?
  - How much similar equipment is currently available to the research community?
  - What is the scope of the research that would benefit from this equipment? Community co-ordinated requests will be viewed favourably.
- Business cases can be linked with covering letter

# APPLICATION PROCESS 2

- Full proposal through JeS, account holder as PI
- Single case for support, with multiple business cases if required
- Strategic Equipment Panel interviews
- Criteria:
  - Quality, importance and breadth of the science enabled.
  - Plans to maximise the usage of the equipment
  - How the equipment will be sustained and managed after any current research funding ends, with reference, as appropriate, to institutional strategy in this area
  - Management of access to equipment
  - Resources and management, including efficiency and affordability of running costs
  - Other sources of support

# CASE FOR SUPPORT

- Track record (2 pages)
- Case for support (6 pages):
  - Expansion of the 2 page business case
- Pathway to impact (2 pages):
  - Expansion of the "ensuring maximum value" section of the draft Business Case
- Justification of resources ( 2 pages)
- Work plan (1 page):
  - Including timescales for procurement and installation
- Quotations
- Business case(s):
  - Attached as technical assessment, reflecting feedback from sift panel



# Q & A