UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

TOP TIPS GUIDE

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY SCOPE, DELIVER AND MANAGE YOUR CONSULTANCY PROJECT

This practical guide will help you to set-up and manage your consultancy project to ensure smooth and efficient delivery with maximum impact.

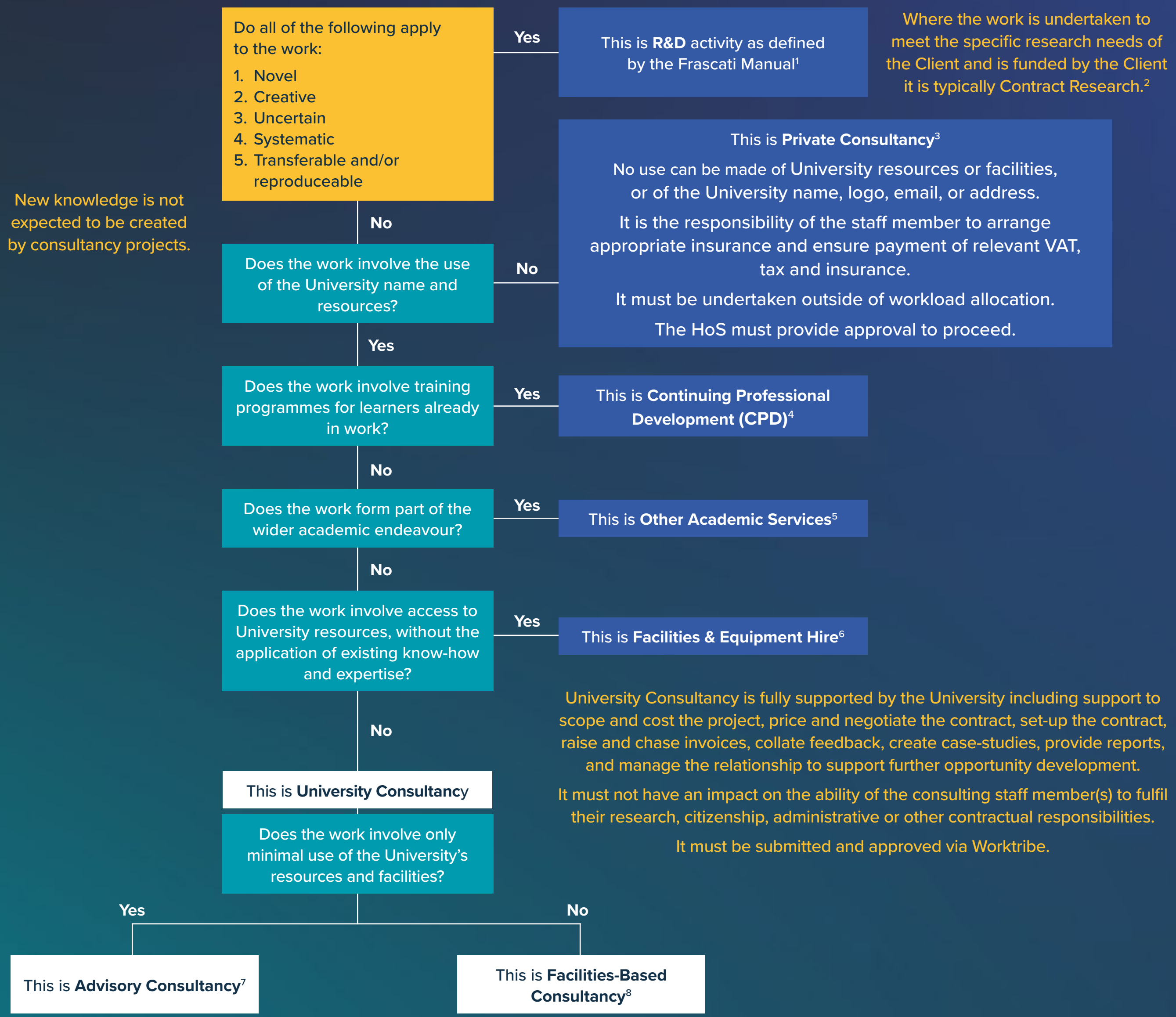
CONTENTS

1

CONSULTANCY OVERVIEW

As defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), consultancy is the provision of expert advice and work which, while it may involve a high degree of analysis, measurement or testing, is crucially dependent on a high degree of intellectual input from the higher education provider to the Client (commercial or non-commercial) without the creation of new knowledge.

Work type decision-making flow diagram



[1] **R&D** is defined in the Frascati Manual, which defines 5 criteria to be met, at least in principle, every time an R&D activity is undertaken. The manual also lists types of activities that are normally excluded from R&D, including: scientific and technical information services; testing and standardisation; feasibility studies; specialised health care; policy-related studies; programme evaluations; purely R&D financing activities; and indirect supporting activities.

[2] **Contract Research** is defined by HESA as work undertaken by the University to meet the specific research needs of an external partner.

[3] **Private Consultancy** cannot include the use of the University name or resources, such as laboratories, meeting rooms, offices, IT equipment or internet access, databases, IP, or admin support. The contract and all fees are agreed between the individual and the Client without University support. The individual is responsible for arranging appropriate insurance, including but not limited to professional liability and indemnity cover. The individual coordinates invoicing and retains payment and is responsible for any relevant VAT, personal tax, and national insurance payments. Private consultancy is not incorporated into the workload allocation model.

[4] **CPD** is defined by HESA as training programmes for learners already in work who are undertaking the course for purposes of professional development/up-skilling/workforce development.

[5] **Other Academic Services** are those which form part of the wider academic endeavour, including, but not limited to teaching, authoring, reviewing or editing of academic textbooks or journal articles, acting as a member on a committee, honorariums, media appearances, and external examining.

[6] **Facilities & Equipment Hire** is defined by HESA as the use of a higher education provider's specialist facilities and equipment by an external party with the purpose of supporting their business. The use of the equipment and facilities will not require the application of existing know-how and expertise.

[7] **Advisory Consultancy** is the application of existing knowledge and expertise from staff to provide advice and guidance to an external organisation, with minimal use of the University's resources and facilities, e.g. use only of office facilities and excluding the use of any lab equipment or facilities.

[8] **Facilities-Based Consultancy** is the provision of analysis, measurement and testing, which utilises the University's resources, equipment and facilities, and draws upon and applies the existing knowledge and expertise, to an external organisation.

Types of consultancy

Please ensure that you have read the University of Surrey Consultancy Procedure before starting a consultancy project proposal.

The University of Surrey supports 2 types of consultancy projects:

1. **Advisory Consultancy** – the application of existing knowledge and expertise by staff to provide advice and guidance to an external organisation, with **minimal use** of the **University's resources and facilities**.

2. **Facilities-Based Consultancy** - the provision of analysis, measurement and testing, which utilises the University's resources and facilities, and draws upon and applies staff's existing knowledge and expertise, to an external organisation.

Undertaking consultancy through the University is actively encouraged and fully supported*. The University provides comprehensive assistance throughout the process including: Scoping and costing the project; Pricing and contract negotiation; Project setup and administration; Invoicing and payment follow-up; Gathering feedback and developing case-studies; Reporting; and Relationship management to foster future opportunities.*

Private consultancy refers to work undertaken by staff **independently in a personal capacity**, without coordination by the University. It does not involve the use of the university's name and resources, is not covered by university insurance policies and is **not supported by the University**. The private consultancy approval forms - Part A: Disclaimer of Liability and Part B: Internal Approval - must be completed before any work commences.

Private consultancy receives no support from the University and is not considered part of the staff member's performance or promotion criteria. The decision on whether private consultancy can be included within a REF impact case study will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Conflicts of interest

Failing to declare an actual or perceived conflict of interest may lead to disciplinary action.

A conflict of interest is a situation or circumstance in which an individual's interests and/or loyalties outside of their work for the University conflicts, or can be perceived to conflict, with the interests of the University. This would include interests of the individual and interests of family members, partners, and close friends or associates.

If you and/or your family members, partners, and close friends or associates have, or can be perceived to have, any personal or commercial interest in the potential Client, please declare your interest by completing and submitting the Declaration of interest form. Please refer to the Ethical Conduct Procedure for further details.

Please contact the Secretariat Team at secretariat@surrey.ac.uk for further information regarding activities that may represent conflict of interest.

Consultancy project examples

Examples of Advisory and/or Facilities-Based Consultancy include but are not limited to:

- **Expert advice and opinion** - specialist insights and recommendations, including providing expertise to support a spinout company.
- **Expert witness services –** provision of testimony, analysis, and opinions in legal cases.
- **Expert reports –** formal documents offering professional analysis on aspects such as scientific, technical, commercial, economic, or legal matters.
- **Routine material testing and analysis –** examination of the properties of materials using expert knowledge and to assess aspects such as quality, safety and performance.
- **Feasibility and scoping studies –** early-stage assessments of aspects such as technical, financial, operational and market viability.
- **Prototype validation –** evaluation of a preliminary version of a product, service, or system to identify issues, gather user feedback, and refine the design.
- **Product/service/processes review –** evaluation of Client offerings to identify strengths, weaknesses, and improvement opportunities.
- **Sustainability assessments –** evaluation to measure the environmental, social, and economic impacts of a project, process, policy, or operations of the Client.
- **Strategy evaluation –** review of organisational plans to assess effectiveness and alignment with goals.
- **Policy and procedure reviews –** evaluation and improvement of internal guidelines for relevance, compliance and effectiveness.
- **Data analysis –** interpretation and visualisation of data to extract useful insights, identify patterns, and support decision-making.
- **Data audits –** systematic review of data quality, accuracy, consistency, and regulatory compliance.
- **Data translation –** simplifying complex data into actionable insights for Clients.
- **Market research –** collecting, analysing, or interpreting data about a market, including aspects such as customer preferences, competitors, trends, and potential opportunities.
- **Technology audits –** systematic evaluation of an organisation’s technology to assess aspects such as performance, security, compliance and efficiency, and to advice on alternative technologies.
- **Clinical trial protocol advice –** guidance on study design, methodology, and regulatory compliance.
- **Creation and provision of CPD content to a Client for their delivery, “train the trainer”-** creating and designing learning materials using existing expert knowledge of industry standards and trends, customizing the materials to the Client’s needs, and training the Client to deliver the learning materials.

2

PRE-AWARD

From scoping your project to obtaining contract signatures

All University Consultancy projects must be submitted using Worktribe.

To gain access to Worktribe for the first time, please complete the appropriate Worktribe Access Request form:

Worktribe Access Request for Academics

Worktribe Access Request for Non-Academics

Scoping your project

Consider whether a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is required before discussions with the Client. Refer to the Contract set-up on page 13 or talk to the Consultancy Manager or the University IP Manager, if you are unsure.

Ensure both you and your Client have a mutual understanding of the proposed project. In parallel, discuss the potential project with your Line Manager to gain their approval in principle. The Consultancy Manager can support you to scope your project.

Discuss, refine and agree the following key elements:

- **Aims and objectives:** Clearly define the project's purpose, goals and outcomes, and ensure all parties fully understand the requirements and expectations.
- **Deliverables:** Specify expected outputs, milestones and required formats.
- **Tasks and responsibilities:** Detail and assign tasks, responsibilities, and identify dependencies.
- **Timeline**: Agree realistic start and end dates, and key milestones.
- **Resources and costs:** Identify the necessary resources and costs, such as human resources, data, tools, software, materials, and access to equipment and facilities. Consider budgets needed for travel and consumables, as well as any budget constraints.
- **Client and third-party inputs:** Identify any inputs required from the Client or other parties.
- **Intellectual property (IP) and publication:** Clarify expectations regarding IP and publication. As the creation of new knowledge* is not expected as an outcome of consultancy work, the Client typically owns the results.
- **Assumptions and constraints:** Document any assumptions and constraints, noting any limitations or factors influencing the project.
- **Success criteria and KPIs:** Define success criteria and KPIs to measure project progress and effectiveness.
- **Risks and Contingency Plans:** Anticipate potential risks and challenges and consider contingency plans.
- **Compliance:** Ensure compliance with any legal and regulatory requirements.

By thoroughly covering these elements, a well-defined scope of work can be established, setting the foundation for a successful project and ensuring you have all the information required to populate Worktribe.

**New knowledge refers to the novelty of the activity – it must aim to produce results that are not already known or available. This is not expected as an outcome of consultancy work.*

Creating your proposal in Worktribe

Refer to the Consultancy Worktribe User Guide for details on how to complete your proposal on Worktribe. In summary, the following must be completed:

1. Go to the **"Projects"** tab and **"Create Project"**. Populate the information required.
2. Go to the **"Details"** tab. This tab can be used to view, edit, and add further information, as required. Navigate all the way down to **"Task Template"** and select **"Consultancy"**. This must be done to enable Step 3 below.
3. Go to the **"Tasks"** tab and complete the requested tasks.
   a) Objectives
   b) Deliverables
   c) Income Distribution Method (personal payment or Individual Research Knowledge Exchange Account (IRK))
   d) Funder Details
   e) Payment Milestones, if applicable
   f) Project Impact – this can be updated throughout the project.
   Tasks a) to d) provide essential information which forms part of the legal contract with the Client.
4. Go to the **"Risks"** tab and populate the information required.
5. If you are sub-contracting an element of the project's tasks, add the sub-contractor under the **"Partners"** tab.
6. Go to **"Benefits"** tab, add a title for each benefit, select the type of benefit, and add the details.
7. Go to the **"Budget"** tab and add the required budget lines – see Worktribe User Guide.
8. Use the **"Comments"** tab to communicate with the Consultancy manager or other relevant staff and to let the Consultancy Manager know when your proposal is ready for review.

Once you have created your project on Worktribe, the system will generate a new project record with a unique ID number. This ID must be used in all correspondence regarding your consultancy project.

Costing and pricing your project

It is important to ensure that your project budget realistically reflects the actual resources, equipment and facilities needed to deliver your project, and that it is in line with the University's policies.

Consultancy costs will be broken down into:

- **Directly incurred staff costs,** e.g., temporary or Unitemps staff.
- **Directly incurred non-staff costs,** e.g., travel and subsistence, consumables.
- **Directly allocated costs,** e.g., permanent staff costs (PI/CoI) based on the salary grade, estates costs, infrastructure technician costs, research facilities costs, management and legal fees.
- **Indirect costs,** e.g., overheads.

The Consultancy Manager will review your costings in Worktribe and ensure that the correct costing scheme is applied. They will help you to ensure you have considered all necessary costs to deliver your consultancy project.

The price charged to the Client will take into account additional factors such as:

- Market conditions
- Industry sector
- Client type
- Level of expertise provided
- Type of consultancy

The Consultancy Manager will provide advice to the Lead Consultant (PI) on the price.

If the project's actual 'directly incurred costs' expenditure

*- **exceeds** the approved project budget, the **overspend** will be deducted from the directly allocated staff income.*

*- **is less than** the approved project budget, the **underspend** will be distributed to the School.*

Contract set-up

To speed up contract completion times, the University uses an Offer of Service letter template with standard terms and conditions. If the Client wishes to use their own contract, this will require a review by the Contracts team and may incur an additional fee.

Once the consultancy project has received the necessary approvals via Worktribe (in accordance with Table 13 of the Scheme of Delegation), the Consultancy Manager will engage with the Client, agreeing invoicing and payment terms, which will be informed by the findings from the due diligence process. This is to ensure the contracting approach is both effective and tailored to the project and the Client's needs. Upon agreement, the Consultancy Manager will prepare the Consultancy Offer of Service letter and secure signatures from the **authorised representatives** of both the University and the Client.

In addition to the Offer of Service letter, you should consider whether any of the following agreements are required for your project; if you are unsure, talk to the Consultancy Manager.

*To request a contract that is not yet associated with a project in Worktribe, such as those listed below, navigate to the **'Contracts'** tab and select **'Create Contract'**.*

Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA): To facilitate open discussions about your project while protecting sensitive and confidential information, consider whether an NDA is necessary. An NDA is a crucial legal document that allows you and the Client to share information that you would typically not disclose to third parties.

Material Transfer Agreement (MTA): If your project requires the transfer of materials between organisations such as, but not limited to, biological specimens, samples, chemicals, software, or other proprietary items, you will need to request an MTA. The MTA outlines the terms and conditions under which the materials can be used.

Data Transfer Agreement (DTA): A DTA defines the terms under which data is shared between two or more parties. It is commonly used when transferring sensitive, proprietary, or personal data, ensuring that the data is handled securely and in compliance with application laws and regulations.

The PI and any CoIs are responsible for delivering and managing the project in line with the fully-signed contract. This includes becoming familiar with the contract and its key elements – such as the scope of services, roles and responsibilities, payment terms and any time-related obligations.

3

POST-AWARD

From project award to project closure and identification of further opportunities

University consultancy supports staff to engage with organisations with the potential to lead to deeper collaboration and partnerships and enhance research, teaching and knowledge exchange activities.

Project code creation

You must have received the fully-signed contract and your project code before your consultancy project can commence.

Once the contract has been fully signed, the Consultancy Manager will create a unique finance project code in Agresso for your consultancy project.

The Consultancy Manager will notify you of this project code via ‘Comments’ on Worktribe. They will also add the code in the **‘Details’** tab under **‘Finance Project Code’**.

Your project can commence on the agreed start date ***only*** if you have received your project code.

*Remember to use the Finance Project Code for **all** financial and recruitment-related transactions associated with the project.*

Project management

It is the responsibility of the PI to notify the Consultancy Manager as early as possible of any potential delays or changes to your approved project.

Project kick-off and alignment:

- Reiterate the agreed scope, objectives, deliverables, boundaries and success critiera.
- Ensure all parties understand their roles and responsibilities.

Compliance: Ensure compliance with relevant ethical, legal and organisational policies and guidelines.

Execution and delivery:

- Deliver work according to the agreed project plan, timelines, and quality standards.
- Present insights in an accessible format. Consider using concise executive summaries, visuals and dashboards in clear, engaging formats.

Monitoring and Communication:

- Schedule progress meetings with the Client to track milestones and address issues.
- Maintain consistent, transparent communication to keep expectations aligned and build trust.
- Measure performance against key indicators and adjust the plan, if needed.

Risk and change management:

- Identify potential risks early, discuss openly, and implement mitigation strategies.
- Manage any changes effectively by assessing and ensuring approval of any deviations from the plan.

The Consultancy Manager can provide advice and guidance to help you to manage your consultancy project. Inform the Consultancy Manager promptly of any issues or concerns.

Managing your project finances

It is the responsibility of the Lead Consultant (PI) to monitor and track ALL project expenditure and ensure the approved budget is not exceeded.

Timesheets

It is the PI's responsibility to ensure all timesheets, where required, are submitted and authorised on a monthly basis at a minimum.

UniTemps timesheets require approval by the 2nd working day of the following month.

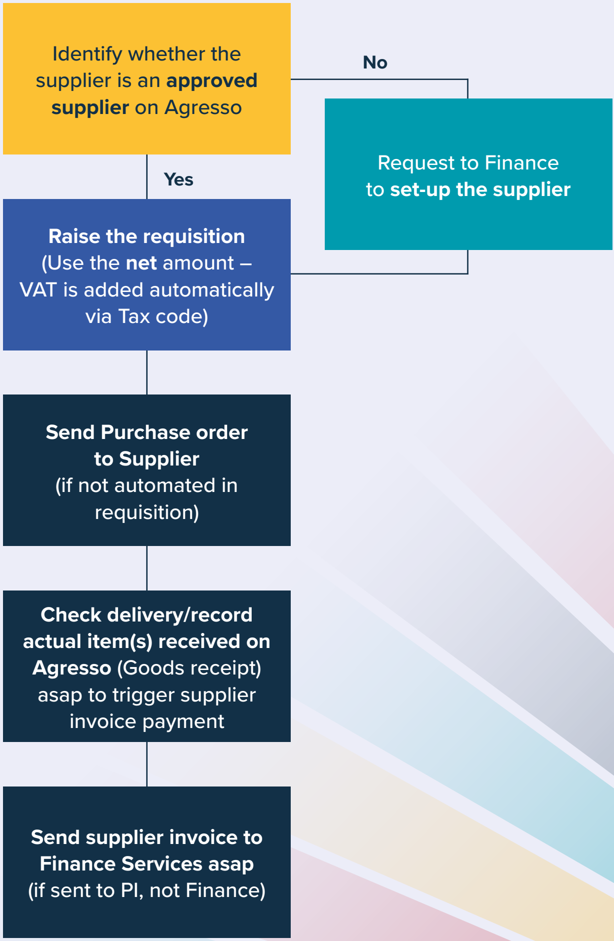
Expenses

It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that all expenses are claimed, on a monthly basis at a minimum, in line with University policy and the approved project budget. All expense claims should be submitted within the month in which the costs were incurred.

Purchasing Goods and Services

It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that all goods and services purchased for the project are in line with the approved budget. If it is not possible to set up on Agresso a new supplier as an approved supplier, then a Purchasing Card may be used for the purchase.

The Faculty Purchase Card (PC) holder will need to submit the statement reconciliation to Finance by the 12th day of the following month.



Project closure

It is the responsibility of the Lead Consultant (PI) to ensure that all the required actions are completed **before** the agreed project end date, including:

- ☑ **All agreed outputs are delivered as per the Offer of Service letter.**
- ☑ **All required staff timesheets have been submitted to Post-Award, if required.**
- ☑ **All student/PDRA timesheets have been authorised via Unitemps (on the 2nd day of the following month at the latest).**
- ☑ **All goods/services have been receipted on Agresso; all supplier invoices have been sent to Finance Services.**
- ☑ **All goods/services paid for with a Purchasing Card are reconciled with the associated monthly statement*.**
- ☑ **Academic feedback form has been completed and opportunities for further collaboration reviewed.**

- The PI must notify the Consultancy Manager when the project has been completed.
- The Consultancy Manager will make a request to the Post-Award Research Finance team for the income to be distributed.

**Any Purchase Card purchases made in the last 6 weeks of the project will need to be reported to the Consultancy Manager, so they can be accrued prior to project code closure.*

Project evaluation and next steps

Project evaluation

The Consultancy Manager will send a feedback questionnaire to you and to the Client. The feedback form serves as a crucial step in evaluating the effectiveness of the engagement. It allows the University to assess the level of satisfaction, understand the impact of the recommendations, and identify areas for improvement. Feedback responses also help to create case-studies, and capture key metrics for reporting.

Opportunities for further collaboration

Hopefully your project was successful and the start of a flourishing new partnership with the Client organisation. Take the time to review and discuss with the Client opportunities for further collaboration. The Surrey Innovation & Enterprise Hub team can help you to discuss potential next steps.

REF Impact Case-Study

Consider whether you can start to develop an impact case-study from your project. What are the next steps to develop this further?

Promotional Materials

Celebrate your successful project by creating a short article or video to post on our innovation webpages and social media (with the Client's approval). The Surrey Innovation & Enterprise Hub team can provide support and guidance.

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

CONTACT US

For advice and support on consultancy contact

consultancyservices@surrey.ac.uk

OTHER GUIDES FOR INNOVATORS INCLUDE

Collaborator Guide

Inventor Guide

Protocol on Student Intellectual Property

TOPS TIPS GUIDES INCLUDE

How to collaborate with SMEs

How to write a successful Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project application

How to plan and write a successful Innovate UK grant application

For further information and advice contact Surrey Innovation & Enterprise Hub

collaborate@surrey.ac.uk