

## Research Investigator (PI & Co-I) Time Policy for Research Applications - Implementation Guidance

### Background and Rationale

Research funders want to be assured that sufficient academic oversight is dedicated to their projects. Funders as well as postdoctoral researchers request appropriate leadership, mentoring and career development support for this staff group. Investigator time is also an important component of indirect cost recovery under the full economic costing (fEC) methodology, because it allows institutions to recover the likely cost of an Investigator's time spent undertaking funded research. The University loses approximately 12 pence for each pound it spends on research activity (according to the TRAC methodology). Every research grant will involve a component of Investigator time and Indirect Costs will be under-recovered if sufficient amounts are not charged on all eligible applications.

The University of Cambridge Research Investigator Time Policy has been in force since 1 August 2020 and mandates minimum time spent on research grant in order to address these points, i.e. to contribute to proportionate cost recovery, satisfy funder expectations and ensure time commitment for leading postdoctoral staff.

### Policy Summary

All research grants will include a mandatory minimum of 0.1 full-time equivalent (FTE) Directly Allocated Investigator time<sup>1</sup> across the life of the project:

- a) Investigator time is inclusive of Principal Investigator + all Co-Investigator time.
- b) An additional 0.05 FTE Investigator time is required for each additional 1.0 FTE Directly Incurred postdoctoral researcher over the first FTE, up to a maximum of 3.0 FTE. Refer to the table below:

Directly Incurred Research Staff FTE	Minimal Directly Allocated Investigator Time (PI & Co-I)
1	10%
2	15%
3	20%

The School of the Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Arts and Humanities do not grant standard exemptions from the University policy. All applications should include a minimum of 0.1 FTE Investigator time (PI+Co-I time) as per policy unless the funding scheme does not allow this. Dispensation from applying the minimum Research Investigator time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances (not simply because it makes the application more competitive) and will require Head of School approval (delegated as appropriate, e.g. to the School Finance Manager/School Finance Business Partner).

*While Head of School approval is required in each case, Head of Institution approval is required before each case for dispensation can be considered by the School.*

<sup>1</sup> Any percentage quoted equates to that of a full-time equivalent (FTE) member of staff (1 FTE). Therefore 10% equals 0.1 FTE. It is not acceptable to reduce Investigator time where an Investigator may work part-time. In unavoidable cases where PI time has to be Directly Incurred, e.g. the Investigator is a College-Based Researcher or is applying to the EC, the minimum recovery rules should still apply.

### Seeking approval

A request for an exemption needs to be received by the School Office at a minimum of 10 working days before the [Research Operations Office deadline](#), directed to

- School of Arts and Humanities: [csahoffice@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:csahoffice@admin.cam.ac.uk)
- School of the Humanities and Social Sciences: [HSSRGA@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:HSSRGA@admin.cam.ac.uk)
- Copying the email in CC to ROO AHSS applications [roo-ahss-applications@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:roo-ahss-applications@admin.cam.ac.uk)

The requesting email shall contain:

- A pdf of the latest project X5 / Worktribe costing including all DA and DI staff as well as a draft X5 / Worktribe costing of the project that includes the level of Investigator time applied as per policy as a counterfactual;
- Principal Investigator's summary of the proposal, including all collaborators, brief background and purpose of research and why exception should be made in this case – no more than 300 words;
- A note from the Head of Institution providing justification and confirming support for the request, as required by the University's procedure, including details and commitment of any departmental resources contributed to the project.

Further guidance The University's [Research Investigator Time Policy](#) is available on the ROO website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies/research-investigator-time-policy>