Preliminary Application

At the preliminary stage before

a. undertaking to prepare a research grant application/expression of interest application as Chief Investigator with Excelsia College (WI) as the lead institution or
b. agreeing to any involvement in a research funding application/expression of interest application involving collaborations with other research providers,

WI staff members are required to complete the Staff Research Grant Preliminary Application.

The Preliminary Application must include

a. a synopsis of the research project including the funding organisation and all research collaborators and
b. both direct and indirect costs of the proposed research.

The pricing of research projects must take into account all costs involved in the research project including administration costs that would normally form part of Excelsia College’s overheads. Significant pressure can be placed on Excelsia College’s finances if there is no recovery of overhead costs. Hence, it is important that all foreseeable costs are specified.

Costs of research to be specified in the preliminary application include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Direct Costs**

a. Labour: Labour costs include salaries and wages plus on-costs of superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance and leave entitlements. Labour costs would also include the costs of outsourced research personnel.

b. Materials and Services consumed: These costs include equipment and maintenance costs, technical and administrative support, costs of stationery and other consumables and materials, travel, copying etc.

c. Third Party Costs: Costs payable to external consultants or research providers.

d. Any specific equipment which must be acquired to undertake the research.

**Indirect Costs**

a. Capital costs: Occupation costs of laboratories, offices, car parks, access to library and research resources, computers and other IT use, etc.

b. Human Resources: Costs of recruitment of specialised staff or replacement staff, costs of monitoring staff entitlements such as special leave, parenting leave, etc.

c. Legal and Central Administration: Contract development and management, costs of establishing a separate legal entity if required, cost of advice from the Legal Counsel, external legal fees.
d. Utilities and maintenance: Electricity, telephone, postage, depreciation, cleaning, building maintenance, refurbishment costs if facility modifications require a make good at the end of the project.

e. Insurance: Professional indemnity, public risk, Directors’ and Officers’ buildings, property and equipment.

f. Financial: Raising invoices, accepting and processing payments, management reporting, costs of maintaining accounts for grant acquittal of cost of capital, audit of acquittals and general audits.

Usually staff members at WI will be asked to specify all direct costs of the research project. Indirect costs will be calculated as a percentage of the grant money received in order to offset costs of overheads and depreciation. Indirect costs will be inserted as a budget item by the Research Office.

The **Staff Research Grant Preliminary Application** is to be submitted to the relevant Head of School and Director of Research. If the preliminary application is approved, the academic staff member may then prepare a full grant application for consideration by Excelsia College.

**Assessment of Full Proposal Prior to External Submission**

At least 20 working days before the grant’s submission deadline, the full proposal with supporting documentation is to be submitted to the Academic Director or delegate. The supporting documentation must include:

a. relevant background about the grant source organisation/institution including any information relating to its mission, goals, values etc. (except in the cases of ARC and NHMRC grants);

b. the granting organisation’s application guidelines including any financial and contractual information (except in the cases of ARC and NHMRC grants); and

c. completed research budget using Excelsia College costing guidelines.

The Academic Director will coordinate reviews of the proposal by any appointed Legal Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. The Academic Director will retain the original application and notify applicants of the result.

If approved and signed by the Legal Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Academic Director:

a. a staff member who is a collaborator on the research proposal may use the approval as the basis of a contractual agreement with the principal researcher’s institution;

b. a staff member who is the principal researcher on the research project may then compile the final grant application.

At least 10 working days before the grant’s submission deadline, the principal researcher is to submit the final grant application to the Academic Director. The final application will comprise:

a. the full proposal as previously submitted (with any minor amendments highlighted);

b. the completed application form for the granting organisation, but without signatures from the Excelsia College Executive;

c. the final budget using Excelsia College costing guidelines. The final line of the budget must be identical with the amount of research funding requested from the granting organisation.
The Academic Director will ensure that all relevant signatures are obtained (Legal, Financial, etc.) and the submission is sent to the Research Committee for final approval. The signed application will be returned to the principal researcher for final submission to the granting organisation (unless direct lodgment by Excelsia College is required, where the application will be sent by the Academic Director).

**Management of External Research Grant**

If the principal researcher is notified that the application for external research funding has been successful, notification is made to the Academic Director who will oversee the initial processes of ensuring that:

a. legal counsel has overseen all contractual arrangements between Excelsia College and the funding organisation and a research contract is in place;

b. ethical approval has been given by the WI HREC;

c. the amount of research funding matches the final line of the budget;

d. the finance office opens a research cost centre account for use by the principal researcher.

The principal researcher will authorise payments from the research cost centre account based on fully informative receipts, and disbursements will be made by the Finance Office.

Monthly statements on the operation of the research cost centre account will be prepared by the Finance Office and provided to the principal researcher, Director of Research, Academic Director, and Head of School.

The Finance Office will notify all parties who receive the monthly statements as soon as 80% of the funding has been expended. The Director of Research will liaise with the principal researcher to ensure that the project is completed within budget.

**References Consulted**

University of Notre Dame (2008) Policy *Staff Research Grant Application and Management*.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Excelsia College *Policy for Preparation and Management of Research Funding Grants from External Sources*.

**Document Status**

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