



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

BRIDGING SUPPORT SCHEME

Rev	Date	Purpose of Issue/Description of Change	Review Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
Policy officer	Senior Responsible Officer	Approved By and Date	Equality Impact Assessed and date
Deputy Director of HR	Director of HR	HR Task Group 7 th June 2022	1 st February 2022

Introduction

This scheme is intended to enable the employment, in certain circumstances and where funds permit, of research and research support staff (including administrators, technicians etc.), between fixed-term contracts at the University, for whom no other source of funding is available, in order to:

- (a) encourage the retention of experienced and skilled staff and sustain research teams and expertise;
- (b) avoid a break in employment and career which might otherwise be faced by these staff members;
- (c) maximise the opportunity for such staff to produce high-quality outputs and/or research impact at the end of funded fixed-term contracts.

The scheme is not intended to replace the principles and procedures of the Fixed Term Contract Policy and the University is committed to ensuring continuity of employment for its staff wherever reasonably possible and to use and/or renew fixed term contracts only where such use is objectively justified. The scheme also supports the UK Concordat 2019 agreement to improve employment and support for researchers.

The scheme is only available for staff who are directly employed by the University on a contract of employment (see eligibility criteria below).

There is no central funding available through this scheme, for any associated costs (salaries, equipment, consumables, etc), which remain the responsibilities of the school concerned. It is expected that funding in the bridging period will be managed within the existing budget of the school, with advice from college finance manager if required.

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria underpin the allocation of bridging under this scheme:

- a) The scheme is only available to staff employed on an externally funded, fixed-term contract by Bangor University (staff on part-time hourly paid or casual contracts are excluded). This includes members of staff who may be on family-related (e.g. maternity, shared parental, etc.) or other similarly approved leave.
- b) The use of the bridging scheme must support the Bangor University Strategy and research plans, and there must be a clear and detailed plan of work for the staff member to undertake during the bridging period.
- c) The bridging period must contribute to the career development of the staff member, in accordance with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers where applicable.
- d) The staff member must have satisfactory performance in all other aspects of their role.
- e) Applications will only be considered when one of the following conditions has been met at the point of application:

- i. Sufficient external funding has been secured to employ the staff member on a further contract, however, there is an unavoidable gap between funding (usually up to three months, but up to six months may be considered).
 - ii. The staff member is named on a submitted application for research funding and the decision is pending with an outcome expected before the end of the bridging period.
- f) Applications for bridging support must ensure the staff member's existing terms and conditions of employment are maintained during the bridging period where these are to remain unchanged following successful completion of funding confirmation. Where any terms will be revised, and this is known at the point of bridging support being considered (e.g. if a reduction in hours will be required as part of the next contract issued once funding finalised), then these should be communicated to individuals and implemented from the first day of bridging support taking place.
- g) Normally an application for bridging support would be anticipated between three and six months prior to the conclusion of a current fixed term contract, specifically where an extension of the current contract has already been explored (and is not possible). It would normally be an outcome of the research team's forward planning of research projects and/or as a review of options undertaken as part of the Fixed Term Contract Policy.

Rules of the Scheme

- a) Efforts must have been made to secure a new grant for further funding in good time before the expiry of the current contract and other relevant sources of support fully and satisfactorily pursued.
- b) Every effort must have been made (and where appropriate continue to be made) to secure from the external funding body the early start of a new award, to minimise the period between contracts and the length of time for which bridging support is sought.
- c) The school Director of Research, Head of School and Director of College Research Institute must support the application for bridging support and provide an assessment of the benefits which would result to the department and individual concerned.
- d) A satisfactory programme of work, including details of key deliverables (e.g. impact activities, submission of publications or grant applications) must be agreed with the Head of School (or their nominee, i.e., Principal Investigator on the grant) to cover the period of employment for which bridging support is sought, and details must be provided when applying for bridging support.
- e) If, within the bridging period, the application to an external funding body (referenced in eligibility criteria) is rejected, bridging support will nonetheless continue for the remainder of the agreed bridging period.
- f) Applications are contingent on the availability of funding and securing an extension of eligibility to work in the UK if required.
- g) Even in the event of an application, the University will still be required to continue to follow the end of fixed-term contract process (in accordance with the Fixed Term Contract Policy), to ensure that appropriate support and contractual notice is provided to the staff member.
- h) Approval decisions are made at the discretion of the school Director of Research, Head of School and Director of College Research Institute, with input from the PVC Research and Innovation as required. There is no right of appeal.

- i) Successful applications should not be processed until, at most, 3 months prior to the end of the current contract (for which this bridging scheme is being applied to replace) to increase the probability of having up-to-date information on future funding opportunities and grant availability.
- j) Applications may be submitted up to and including the end date of the current contract. However, if the application has not been approved, the contract will cease and pay will stop. If the application is approved at a later date, pay will be reinstated from the application approval date and continuous service will be honoured.
- k) The Scheme which is entirely discretionary can be removed at any time, without notice, at the discretion of the PVC Research and Innovation.

Application Procedure

All applications for bridging support must be made on behalf of the named staff member by the Principal Investigator, using the standard Bridging Scheme Application Form.

Applications should consist of a completed application form detailing the following:

- a) a precise summary of the salary costs requested, making allowance for any annual increment due and including full on-costs (National Insurance and pension)
- b) a brief description of how the bridging period supports Bangor University Strategy and research plans
- c) a brief description of the duties to be undertaken during the period for which bridging support is requested and a clear indication of the deliverables
- d) details of any previous bridging support received by the staff member (or a statement that no previous support has been received)
- e) information about the efforts which have been made to secure a new grant, and to arrange the early start of any new award
- f) for situations whereby the application is made and further funding has not yet been secured, the application form should include an up-to-date curriculum vitae for the staff member, including a list of publications;

The completed form should be sent electronically to the school Director of Research who will approve or decline the application based on strategic need for the research to continue. If approved, the application should then be passed to the Head of School. The Head of School will confirm whether funds are available and pass to the Director of College Research Institute for final approval. If a college wish to do these approvals in parallel rather than sequentially, they may do so.

The University will continue to follow the Fixed Term Contract Policy.

The Director of College Research Institute will advise the School and Human Resources of the decision made in relation to the extension of the fixed-term contract using the bridging scheme. Human Resources will issue the appropriate contractual documentation. Where applications to the scheme are not successful, and where the staff member has placed themselves on the redeployment register, action will be taken to continue to seek redeployment for such staff and/or implement the appropriate redundancy and notice procedures, in line with the Fixed Term Contract Policy.

Each approval step should normally be completed within 10 working days, as such, applications should be fully considered within 30 working days.

The Principal Investigator is responsible for keeping the staff member informed throughout the process.

Where an individual's employment with BU is subject to sponsorship from the UK Visa & Immigration Service, continued permission to work and live in the UK is not guaranteed and advice would need to be sought under the immigration legislation and regulations at that time. Consideration should be given to the financial impact of an individual applying for a short term-visa to cover the bridging gap followed by a further visa application to cover the following contract. Considerations should also be made for the processing times of visa applications and potentially associated ATAS application. Further information can be sought from Human Resources.

Financial arrangements

There is no central funding available for bridging support. It is therefore for schools to consider what funding may be available locally and set up an appropriate process for fairly considering applications for funding based on strategic need for the research to continue alongside other calls on school resources. It is expected that funding will be managed within the existing budget of the school, with advice from college finance manager if required.

If funding is obtained from an external body within the period covered by bridging support, the bridging support will cease as soon as the external funding commences. Where an external funding body agrees to provide retrospective funding to support research staff for a period covered by bridging support, then the funds used for bridging support must be reimbursed accordingly.

Further information

Further information on this policy can be obtained by contacting the Athena Swan and Research Concordat Manager, or the designated HR Officer for the area concerned, details of which can be found on the [HR web pages](#).

Scheme Review

The operation of the scheme should be reviewed annually in the light of experience and will always be read and applied subject to the general law.

Equality Impact Assessment

This scheme has been Equality Impact Assessed based on consultation and information available at the time of the scheme being developed. A further Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out in conjunction with any review of the scheme.

Appendix 1: Flowchart of process

