

Research Support Processes in a highly devolved environment: clarity, collegiality, control and continuity

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About the Institute of Education

- Largest post graduate centre for the study of education in the United Kingdom; one of the leading graduate schools of education in the world
- Education and related areas of social science and professional practice
- Small... but medium-sized in research terms
- Member of federal University of London

Growth at IOE

	Structure	Research project income	Academic staff	Research support staff
1998/99	c. 26 'groups'	£5M	c.300	c.7
2004/05	12 Schools	£16.5M	c.350	c.18
2008/09	3 faculties, 16 departments	£21.9M	c.450	c.36
2010/11	2 faculties, 15 departments	?£20M	<450	c.30-32

Requirements for effective working

- Clarity
- Collegiality
- Control
- Continuity

The project

- Followed creation of faculty teams, many new staff
- Worked with consultant specialising in higher education services, and in change
- Agreed a vision statement for the service

Collegiality: research support *raison d'être*

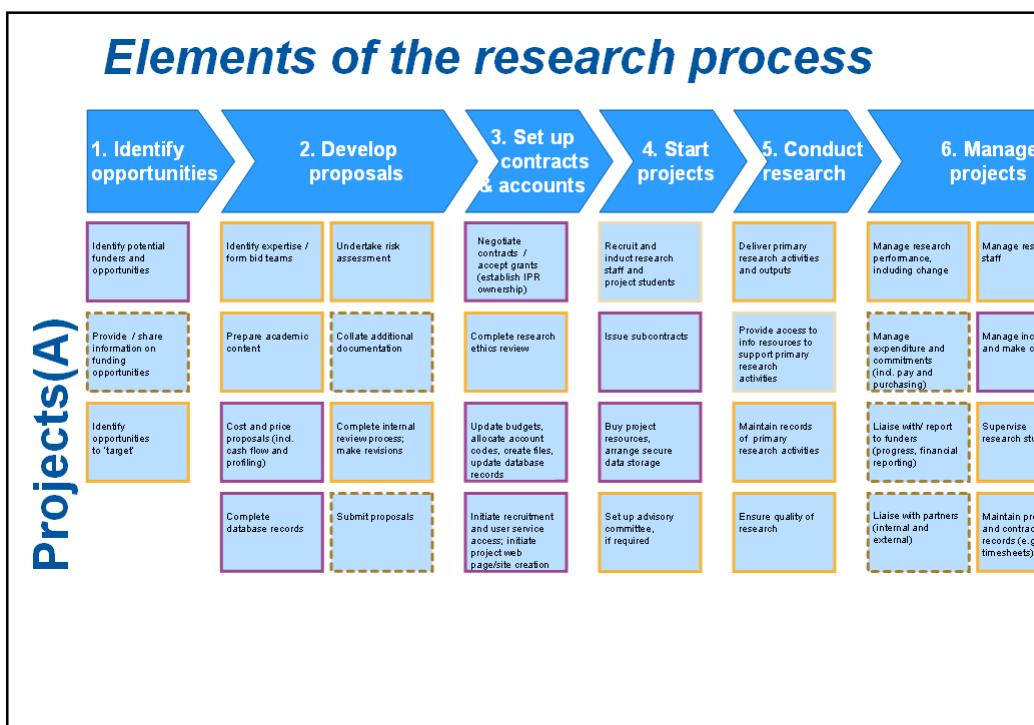
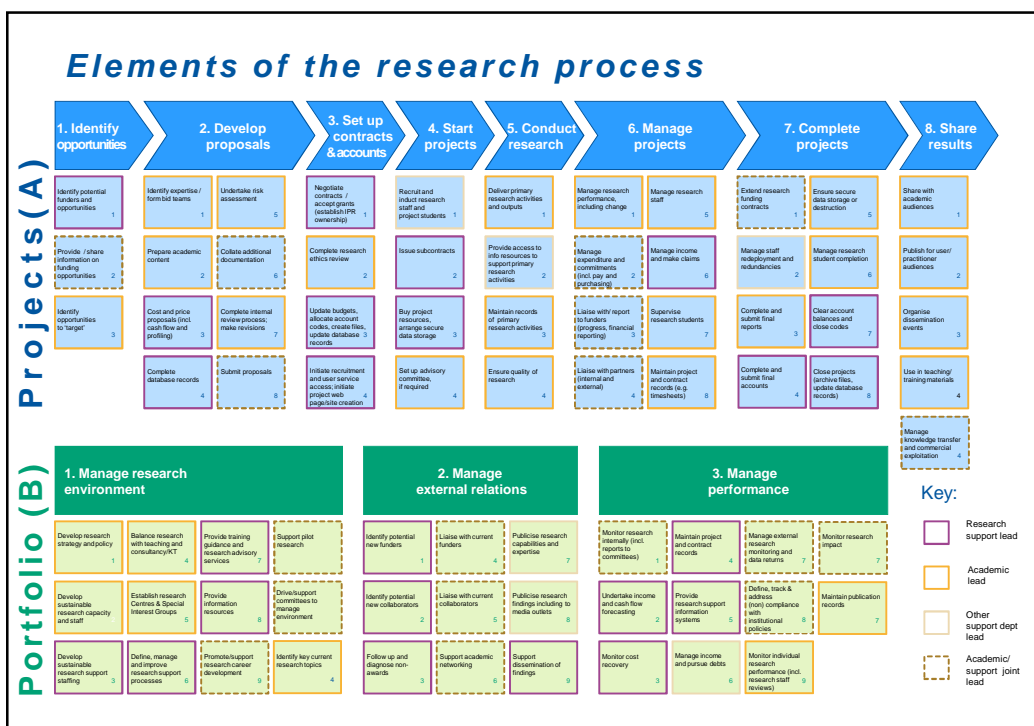
- Support research/researchers
- Ensure compliance
- Manage relationships
- From strategy development and implementation to individual projects

The project

- Identified high-level ‘central’ and ‘local’ functions
- Identified “all” the processes involved in undertaking university research
- Mapped the administrative-led processes (flow charts)

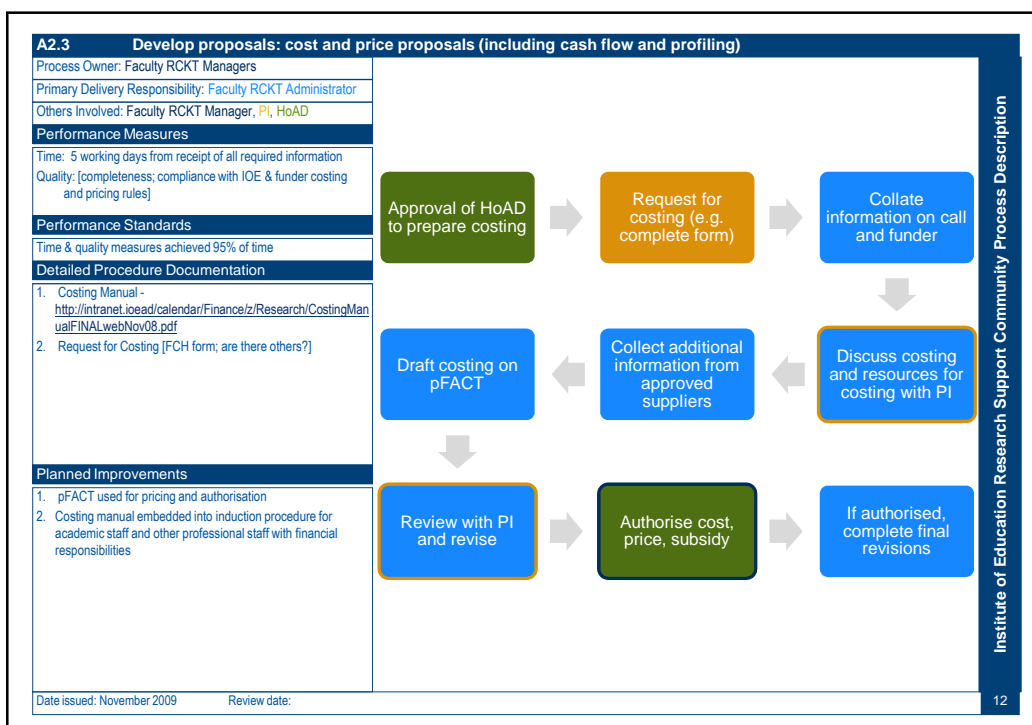
Collegiality: high-level description of roles

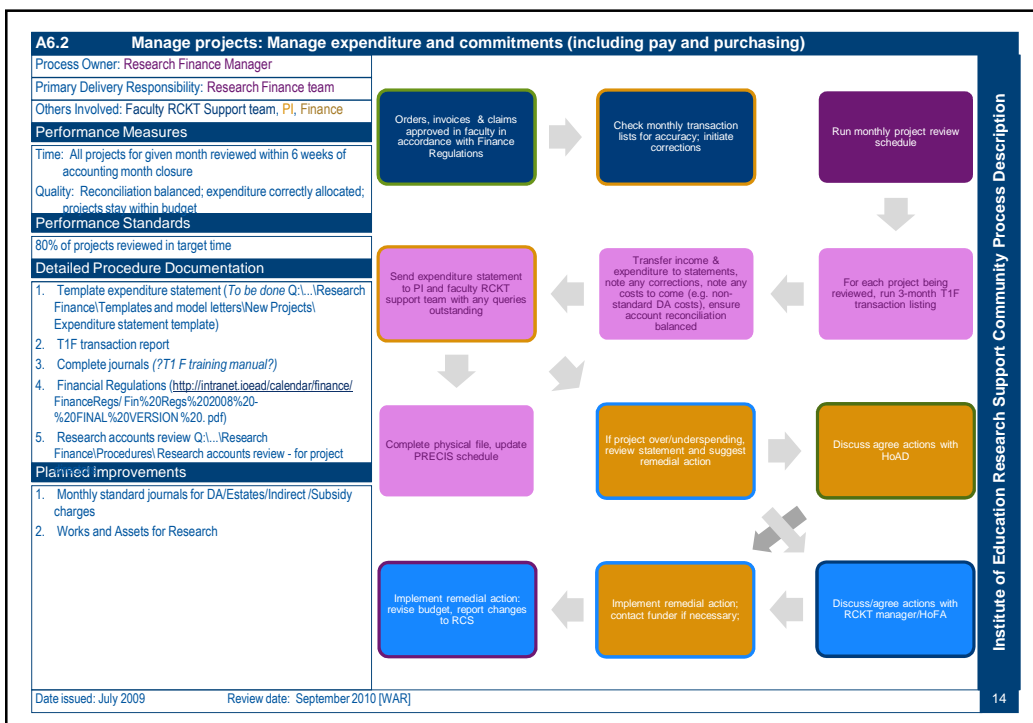
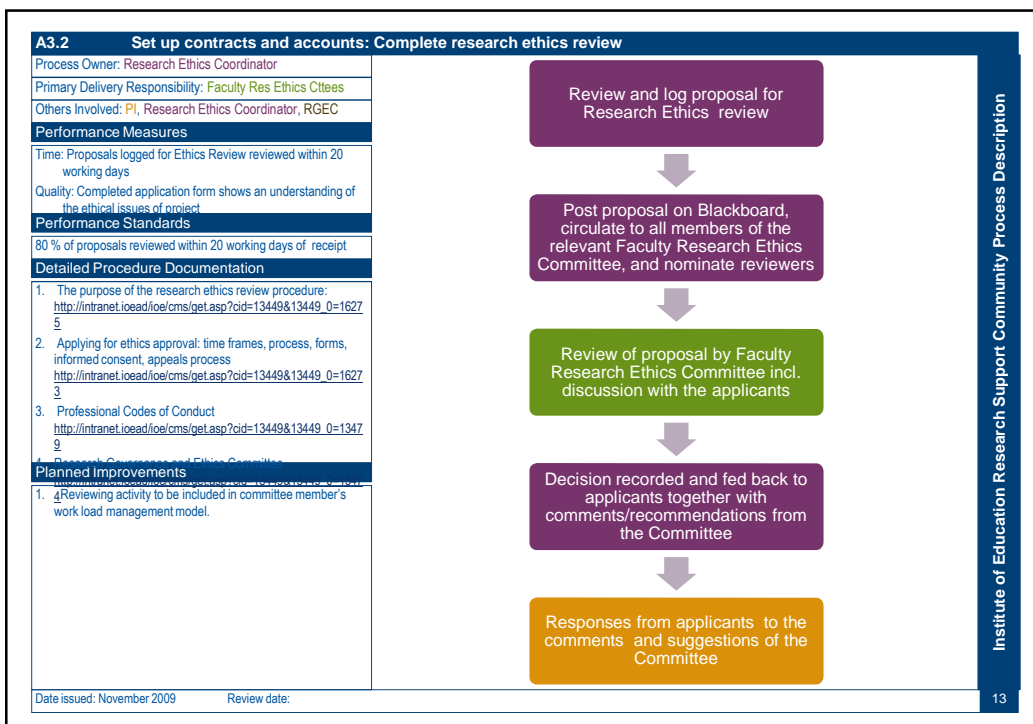
Research Services	Faculty teams
Support to IOE mgt (corporate body)	Support to individual academics
Relationships with funders & collaborators – portfolio level	Day-to-day interaction w. funders & collaborators – project level
Provide centres of expertise to IOE as a whole	Manage interaction with centres of expertise for PIs
Provide resources to IOE as a whole	Customise resources, identify resource needs



Clarity: the process maps

- One flow chart for each administrative-led process in the Projects part of the diagram
- Shows 'who does what' through colour coding
- Performance measures and standards
- Documentation and improvements







Continuity: risk assessment and continuity planning

- We are required to have risk registers for all IOE procedures
- We are required to have business continuity plans for all support areas
- We built this into the project

A4 Start projects		Performance Standards (Target; Achieved)				Risk Assessment and Continuity Plan		
Performance Measures		AY 09/10	AY 10/11	AY 11/12	AY 12/13	Institute of Education Research Support Community Process Description		
A4.1	T	T	T	T	T			
	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q			
A4.2	T	T	T	T	T			
	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q			
A4.3	T	T	T	T	T			
	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q			
A4.4	T	T	T	T	T			
	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q			
Risks								
(Threat short name)		(Threat details)						
Threat A		Threat A						
Threat B		Threat B						
Threat C		Threat C						
Threat D		Threat D						
Threat E		Threat E						
Current controls				Future controls				
Likelihood:	Impact:	Risk:	Likelihood:	Impact:	Risk:			
Business Continuity Statement								
1. Routine Absence								
2. Extraordinary Absence								
Date issued: November 2009		Review date:						

Control: internal audit

- Functional areas are subject to internal audit of processes on a five-year cycle
- At our next audit, we will measure practice against our process documentation – are we doing what we say we're doing? Are we monitoring our performance and meeting our standards?

Outcomes

- Community development
- Process change
- Systems mapping
- Austerity
- Winter School, academic induction
- And more widely?

It's not rocket science...

- ...but it is complex
 - Complexity is more visible, to our community and other parts of IOE
- Sometimes it's more complex than necessary
 - We've rationalised processes to reduce duplication
 - Not there yet!

Austerity

- We will merge two faculties
- We will reduce staff numbers, a little
- No reduction in volume of projects
- How will we cope?
- Process maps as reference point
 - Good enough is good enough
 - Get it right first time

Process diagram as the basis for training

- IOE biennial “Summer School” (winter 2010/11!) and induction of new research support staff
 - Ensuring all areas are covered in training
- Induction and just-in-time training for academic staff
- Potential for use by training providers, e.g. national associations, to plan training programmes?