

January 2011

To Research Organisation Finance and Research Administration Officers

Dear Colleague

TRANSFER OF STFC GRANTS ADMINISTRATION TO THE RCUK SHARED SERVICES CENTRE

As part of the Research Councils' drive to improve efficiency and effectiveness, processing of STFC's research grant, fellowship and studentship administration is scheduled to transfer to the RCUK Shared Services Centre (SSC) in February 2011. This follows a similar move for EPSRC and NERC in December 2010 and is part of a phased transition that will eventually see the SSC take over the administration of grants, fellowships and studentships (both applications and awards) for all of the Research Councils.

As part of this change, all Councils will, for the first time, be using a common back-office system for grants and studentship administration, the development of which has required considerable harmonisation of the processes used by the Councils.

The switch to SSC will involve some changes to grants administration and the purpose of this note is to summarise the impacts on applicants, grant holders and research organisations. The main impacts will be some temporary interruptions to grants administration during the transition period and some changes to Je-S and contact points.

Transition period

To enable the transfer of data from our current system to the new one we will be unable, during the January-February transition period, to carry out administrative steps associated with current grants, including grant transfers, final reconciliations, extensions and changes in Investigators. While we may still be able to undertake some off-system work, there may therefore be some delays associated with these activities during this period.

We will also be unable to deal with requests to extend the due dates of deliverables (starting certificates, final expenditure statements, final reports etc), or to waive deliverables, so, to help with this, we will be automatically extending the due dates for any deliverables expected during this period so that they will fall after the implementation of the new system.

In addition, Grants on the Web will not be updated until data can be supplied by the new grants system.

Je-S

The Je-S system, which will be available as normal throughout the transition period, will remain the route for submission of proposals and reviewer comments and, increasingly, for administering current awards. The main changes to Je-S affecting STFC grants will be as follows:

Research classifications

The change to a new grant system has involved all Councils adopting a new harmonised research classification system. Once STFC is using the new system, applicants will therefore be asked to classify their proposals on Je-S according to this structure when submitting. Any proposals that

are in preparation on Je-S at the time the classification system is changed, which is expected to be in mid-February, will be reclassified and applicants prompted, if necessary, to confirm their revised classifications. Further details of the new system will be available nearer the time on the Je-S help pages.

New Je-S functionality

Following the move to the new grant system, STFC will be adopting the following new Je-S functionality:

- Preaward Tracker, which will enable STFC applicants to monitor progress of their proposal through the peer review process.
- Submission of Annual Statements
- Submission of Offer Acceptances
- Submission of Starting Certificates
- Grant Maintenance Requests, enabling grant holders and grants administrators to request various changes to grants, including extensions, transfers, change of PI etc; and extensions to due dates of Starting Certificates, Final Reports, Final Expenditure Statements etc.
- Grant transfer response, enabling organisations to which a grant is to be transferred to confirm acceptance through Je-S.

Once this new functionality is available, annual statements, offer acceptances and starting certificates will need to be submitted through Je-S and grant holders will be strongly encouraged to use Je-S for grant maintenance requests.

For further information about new Je-S functionality, contact the Je-S HelpDesk or see the Je-S help pages (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandBook/jhHome.aspx>)

Changes to grants administration contact details

Once the move to SSC has taken place, the SSC will be the point of contact for all queries regarding the processing of proposals and administration of current awards. These new contact details will be available from the STFC website nearer the time.

STFC will continue to be responsible for strategy, policy, the peer review process and funding decisions, so applicants and grant holders with questions about these areas should continue to liaise with their normal STFC contacts.

More information

Further information is available from the RCUK website
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/grantsprocess/Pages/home.aspx>

Finally, I would be grateful if you could arrange for the information in this communication to be disseminated to all individuals with an interest in STFC research grants within your organisation.

Yours faithfully

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