Technology Directorate Voucher Scheme: Guidelines for Applications

ROUND 12 (SEPTEMBER 2017)

The following guidelines are intended to assist in preparing an application for the Technology Directorate Voucher Scheme. If you require further guidance or clarification, contact Duncan Robertson (dhr@liverpool.ac.uk) or Ben Mollitt (benmol@liverpool.ac.uk). Further contact details are available on the TD website.

- **Before you apply.** You must talk to the academic lead of the Shared Research Facility (SRF) you wish to use before you submit an application. They will give invaluable advice about the feasibility of your project, the best experimental approach and crucially, how much it’s likely to cost. This will help you write the best application possible, with the greatest chance of being funded. We won’t consider any applications where prior contact hasn’t been made with the SRF academic lead. You must allow at least five days for assessment of your application by the relevant academic lead.

- **Eligibility.** The voucher scheme is open to all full time academic staff; research fellows; clinical fellows and tenure track fellows within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. The scheme is designed to fund small pump priming projects that have potential to develop new areas of research. To promote early career and less established researchers, the career stage of applicants will be considered during the assessment process. Applications from more junior staff will enjoy a higher chance of success. The scheme is **not** open to postgraduate students or post-doctoral researchers. It is also not open to staff from other faculties within the University. Voucher awards are made solely towards the cost of access to an SRF, sample preparation costs are borne completely by the applicant.

- **Voucher Value.** Vouchers are available for a total minimum value of £1,000 to a total maximum of £15,000. This includes both Technology Directorate and Match Funding contributions (see below).

- **Matching Funds.** All applications should contain an element of matching funding. This can be internal funding (e.g. from your Institute) or can be external (e.g. from a collaborating university or commercial partner). Whilst each application will be considered on an individual basis, as a guide we would hope for a 50% contribution in matching funds. Matching funds are only acceptable as cash payments towards access fees for an SRF. Services in kind, such as sample preparation costs, are not acceptable as match funds.

Please note, due to changes with University accounting procedures, it is now a requirement that match funds for the voucher scheme must be derived from non-TRAC compliant sources.
In all instances contributions derived from ‘G accounts’ are acceptable to be used as match funds. Please contact your local Research and Finance Team if you have any uncertainties about the nature of your match funds.

- **NWCR Agreement.** The Technology Directorate has entered into an agreement with the NWCR centre to allow match funds to the voucher scheme to be supplied by awards from the NWCR fund. In such cases, it is permissible for applicants from Bangor or Lancaster Universities to lead voucher applications provided that they are working with an eligible collaborator from the University of Liverpool Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

- **Available Facilities.** Voucher applications are strictly limited to SRFs currently supported by the Technology Directorate. We will not under any circumstances accept applications for vouchers to use facilities we do not currently support. The following facilities are participating in the scheme:
  - Centre for Genomic Research (CGR),
  - GeneMill,
  - NMR Metabolomics,
  - Flow Cytometry and Cell Sorting Facility (FACS),
  - Centre for Proteome Research (CPR),
  - Biomedical Services Unit (BSU),
  - Centre for Cell Imaging (CCI),
  - Liverpool Magnetic Resonance Imaging Centre (LiMRIC),
  - Laser Capture Microdissection Facility (LCM),
  - Computational Biology Facility (CBF),
  - Biomedical Electron Microscopy Unit (EMU).
  - Centre for Preclinical Imaging (CPI).

- **Contact Details.** Contact details for all SRFs except the BSU can be found on the Technology Directorate Website [http://www.liv.ac.uk/technology-directorate/facilities/](http://www.liv.ac.uk/technology-directorate/facilities/). Contact details for the BSU can be obtained from the Technology Directorate.

- **Multi-Disciplinary Projects.** Applications for multi-disciplinary projects, which require access to more than one SRF, can be submitted using a single application form. In such instances, the applicant should indicate the SRFs involved in section B and should also, in conjunction with the appropriate academic leads, complete feasibility assessments (section E) for each SRF involved in the application. Financial details for multi-disciplinary projects (section C) should clearly indicate which SRF a particular cost element is associated with.

- **The Application Form.** The form has six sections for completion. Sections A, B, C and D seek to capture details of the proposed project and should be completed by you. Section E is an assessment of the project feasibility and timescale by the SRF academic lead. Section F seeks to gather details about the strategic impact of your project and needs to be completed by your Head of Department.
Submission. Sections A, B, C, D and E of the form should be completed by the applicant in association with the academic lead of the SRF. Following completion of these sections, the form should be sent to the applicant’s Head of Department (HOD) for completion of section F. The fully completed form should then be submitted directly to the Technology Directorate by the HOD. Under no circumstances should the form be returned to the applicant following passage to the HOD. We will only accept electronic submissions, which should be mailed to tdvs@liverpool.ac.uk. All responsibility for ensuring the application is submitted prior to the closing date lies with the applicant; the Technology Directorate will not under any circumstances make enquiries of HODs regarding the progress of an application. Upon receipt of an application form from an HOD, we will send an email to the applicant and the HOD acknowledging receipt.

Timetable. Applications are invited for this round of the scheme from 9-00am of Monday 18th September 2017. Completed applications must be received at the email address shown above no later than 5-00pm on Friday 20th October 2017. All applications will be considered by the TDSG on 6th November 2017 and applicants notified of the outcome as soon as possible after this date.

Assessment. There will be two of the voucher scheme each year and the applications submitted in a particular round will be assessed by the Technology Directorate Strategy Group (TDSG) at their next meeting following the closure date. The group will score the applications according to their scientific merit and future potential. The University status of the applicant will be considered when assessing applications. In line with the aims of the scheme, this will confer an advantage to more junior applicants. Unsuccessful applications will not be considered for submission to future rounds of the scheme. In exceptional circumstances the Technology Directorate will invite a resubmission but this will only occur following a dialogue with the applicant.

Notification of Application Outcome. The outcome of voucher applications will be communicated by email to all applicants as soon as possible following the TDSG meeting for that round. Following transfer of matching funds to the Technology Directorate, successful applicants will be sent a written instruction, simultaneously mailed to the academic lead of the SRF, to proceed with the project. Upon receipt of an instruction to proceed, the applicant is free to engage directly with the academic lead of the SRF to undertake the agreed work. Reimbursement of the SRF will be undertaken by the Technology Directorate following the satisfactory conclusion of the project.

Time Limit. All work undertaken as part of a voucher award must be completed within nine months of the date of the award. All samples should be in place prior to the application or in exceptional circumstances, can be gathered during the course of the work. In this case, it should be clearly recorded on the application form that samples are not currently available. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure matching funds are transferred to the Technology Directorate. Any delay in doing so will not be considered a suitable reason for extending the time limit of the award. In limited circumstances an extension to the work can
be granted in writing by the Technology Directorate and if this is required, a request should be made at the earliest opportunity.

- **Final Report.** Awards are granted on the condition that the recipient will undertake to write a short report (250 words) detailing the outcome of the work and how it has since progressed. This will be requested by the Technology Directorate one year following the completion of the work.

- **Consecutive Awards.** Successful applicants to the voucher scheme will not be eligible to apply for a subsequent award in the following three rounds. Unsuccessful applications cannot be resubmitted.