

Registering for the Workshop

Thanks for your interest in this workshop.

The workshop runs periodically based on demand.

To book your place on the next workshop please email the RDO;

vinnie.fagan@mu.ie

research.development@mu.ie

Preparing Funding Proposals at MU

Part 2

Research Development Office

Vinnie Fagan

June 2021

Budgeting and Research Finance

Preparing your budget

Demo budget

Teaching Buyout v PI time

The Research Incentivisation Policy

Equipment

Grant Writing Skills

Evaluation Criteria

Overview of a Good Consortium

Resources for Research Impact

Getting the Basics Right

Budgeting and Research Finance

Research Development Office
Vinnie Fagan
June 2021

Costing your Project & Preparing your budget

- If you are thinking of applying for research funding, you should submit a RIS Intent as outlined here; <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/research-development-office/ris-guide>
- For general queries you can contact the RDO by email (research.development@mu.ie).
- After contacting the RDO, an RDO Officer will be assigned to you and (where possible) will be your point of contact throughout the project lifecycle.
- Your RDO Officer will assist you in preparing your budget and will liaise with RDO Finance on your behalf.
- Budgets vary greatly depending on the funder and the specific funding programme so it is important to read the funder's call documents in detail.
- Before submitting a research funding proposal, your final budget must be approved by RDO Finance, via your RDO Officer.

Read all call documents in detail...
...and contact the RDO early!

Some Common Terms

Terminology, as well as the definitions of terms, change from funder to funder and even call to call by the same funder, so it is vital that you read all documents relating to a call.

- **Direct Costs;** Costs that can be directly attributed to the proposal. e.g. Staff costs, consumables, equipment, travel, publication fees...etc.
- **Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC);** Direct costs minus equipment and external costs (e.g. subcontracting).
- **Indirect costs (Overheads);** Cost incurred by the university, but which are difficult to attribute directly to the proposal. e.g. Electricity, HR, RDO, building maintenance...etc. Usually set by funder at rate of ~25-30% of direct (modified direct costs). If overheads are eligible but not specified, then MU rates should be applied.
- **In-kind Contributions;** Contributions to the project other than direct cash contributions. e.g. Existing staff time, existing equipment, space, any other services...etc.
- **Matching Funding;** Some funding schemes only provide partial funding of projects, and require matching funds from other sources. e.g. Host institution, industry partner. This can be direct cash contribution or in-kind contribution.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/research-development-office/research-funding/preparing-budgets>



Some Common Terms

- **Equipment depreciation;** Often funders will not fund the full cost of major equipment because such equipment usually has value beyond the lifetime of the project. However, funders may fund the depreciated cost of equipment. Each funder will define the method of calculation of eligible depreciation.
- **Person Month;** The total monthly cost associated with the employment of a particular person at a particular time. For new staff, PMs are set by MU salary scale, which align to IUA salary scales. For existing staff, PMs are calculated by RDO Finance upon request (project start date and duration required).
- **Unit costs;** Some funding calls do not require a budget *per se* (e.g. MSCAs) since they use set budgetary costs (unit costs) per researcher per month.
- **Consultancy Agreement;** An agreement between two parties where one party agrees to purchase goods or services from another, and therefore, the party providing the goods or services must apply VAT to the quoted price.
- **Request for Tender;** A request for goods or services to be provided on commercial terms, and therefore, the price quoted to provide those service must include VAT.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/research-development-office/research-funding/preparing-budgets>

Example of a Budget

- For this workshop, the Water JPI Aquatic Pollutants Joint Transnational Call 2020 has been chosen as an example because it is evaluated at a European level, with European evaluation criteria, but involves a national funding agency (EPA), with its associated funding rules and eligibility (for demonstration purposes, this call covers a lot of bases!).
- Call specific documents can be downloaded from the Water JPI website (also see workshop pack);
<http://www.waterjpi.eu/joint-calls/joint-call-2020-aquaticpollutants>
- However, the guidelines and T&Cs of the national funder (EPA) also apply and must be read carefully (see workshop pack).

	Funding Organisation:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 
National Contact Point (NCP)	Name:	Email and Phone:
	Lisa Sheils	l.sheils@epa.ie
Funding Commitment	Total Amount for the Call	Maximum Amount Per Proposal
	€ 500,000	The following will be used as national eligibility criteria: Maximum Budget Requested for Coordinator: € 300,000 Maximum Budget Requested for Partners: € 150,000 Maximum of 1 Irish research organisation (e.g. coordinator or partner) requesting budget from the EPA within a consortium
Other Funding Criteria	As detailed in "Maximum Amount Per Proposal"	
Relevant documents	EPA Research 2019 Call - Guide for Applicants EPA Research 2019 Call - Guide for Grantees EPA Research 2019 Call - Terms and Conditions	

Preparing Your Budget

- When you contact the RDO, the relevant RDO Office will send you an internal budget template with some of the fields populated and will provide some guidance on how to complete it.
- Your RDO Officer will work with you to complete the budget template and will liaise with RDO Finance on your behalf.
- Your RDO Officer will get approval for the final budget from RDO Finance before the proposal is submitted to the funder.
- For further information and guidance on preparing budgets please see the MU RDO website <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/research-development-office/research-funding/preparing-budgets>

Contact the RDO early; We will help you to prepare your budget.

- Since this is a workshop, we will now talk through an example budget (see workshop pack).

Teaching Buyout v PI time

- **Teaching Buyout;** Also called teaching replacement. Costs budgeted to cover the salary of a temporary replacement lecturer. Costs are usually for a person at a more junior level than the post-holder.
- Some programmes allow for teaching replacement costs to facilitate the participation of applicants with existing commitments (e.g. IRC, EI, SFI, Wellcome Trust).
- **Funding for teaching buyout must be used for that purpose** (so the RIF policy is not relevant here). There are several options for teaching buyout, which your RDO Officer will discuss with you.
- **All teaching buyout must be agreed with your Head of Department before an application can be endorsed by the RDO.**

Teaching Buyout v PI time

- **PI Time;** The salary costs of the PI for the time he/she spends on the project. Calculated using **actual** daily/monthly costs of the PI **for the period of the project** (inclusive of ER PRSI & ER pension).
- **You must contact the RDO for costing of any current staff.**
- Generally, PI time is not an eligible cost for national funders (historically except EPA), but is for European funding programmes (HEur, ERA-NET co-funded calls...etc).
- HoD agreement is required for PI time costs prior to proposal submission.
- **Monthly Timesheets must be maintained** by the PI and submitted to RDO Finance on request (usually requested twice during the academic year; March and September). Completed timesheets are used to calculate the PI time earned over a given period **and are the only mechanism of drawdown.**
- Funding for PI time is re-distributed to the PI/Department on an annual basis in line with MU RIF policy.
- Following the distribution of funding for PI time, the funds can be used for **any legitimate research cost** (which may include teaching buyout), as **agreed with your HoD.**

Research Incentivisation Policy

- In recognition of the importance of external funding, MU's Research Incentivisation Policy outlines the financial incentives available for academic staff who win research funding (see workshop pack).
<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/research-policies>
- All research overheads are allocated to, and managed by, the central administration Finance office.
- However, a Research Incentivisation Fund (RIF) is maintained with a value of 75% of research overheads recouped each year (single payment in each financial year, and a year in retrospect of actual research grant drawdown).
- The RIF is redistributed annually between the PI's General Research Account (GRA, 13.5%), the Departmental Research Fund (40%), the Research Institute/Centre Fund (40%) and the Central Research Development Fund (6.5% managed by the office of the VPRI). Important to note these rates relate to the RIF and not the total overheads.
- Funding for PI time, is distributed between the PI's General Research Account (25% (except where overheads are low)) and the home department (75%) to provide replacement of the PI's teaching duties or other purposes as agreed with HoD.

Research Incentivisation Policy

- Approx. €69K overheads in the demo budget discussed earlier, of which 75% allocated to Research Incentivisation Fund. The table below indicates how these funds are redistributed.
- Demo budget has total PI time costs of €21,012, of which 25% goes to PI's GRA, and 75% to Department.

Using the Demo Budget Discussed Earlier as an Example		
	€69,013 overheads	PI time
	75% allocated to RIF = €51,760	€21,012
PI GRA	(13.5% of 75% = 10.13% (effective rate)) €6,988	(25%) €5,253
Departmental Fund	(40% of 75% = 30%) €20,704	(75%) €15,579
Institute/Centre Fund	(40% of 75% = 30%) €20,704	n/a
Central Research Development	(6.5% of 75% = 4.88%) €3,364	n/a

- It is important to be able to predict how much funds will be available to you, so that you can plan your research and be more strategic (see workshop pack, RIF Calculator).

Major Infrastructure

- While there are very few funding calls specifically for equipment/infrastructure, each particular call may have different equipment/infrastructure eligibility criteria.
- Often full costs of large equipment/infrastructure (e.g. >10K (call specific)) are not eligible because they may have value beyond the lifetime of the project. However, the depreciation of the equipment may be an eligible cost, for the time that it is required during the project.

Equipment Depreciation = (A/B) x C x D

Example; Project duration 36 months; total cost of required equipment is 100K; equipment is needed from month 12 onwards and will be in 50% usage.

€20K = (24/60) x 100 x (50/100)

A =	The period in months during which the durable equipment is used for the project after invoicing
B =	The depreciation period for the durable equipment: 36 months for computer equipment or 60 months for other equipment
C =	The actual cost of the durable equipment
D =	Percentage of usage of the durable equipment for the project

- Before approving depreciation costs, RDOF insist that you identify where the remaining equipment cost will come from. Therefore, you must strategically plan, negotiate and pool resources available to you, your colleagues and your Department/Institute.

Conclusions

- Your budget must be able to realistically provide the finances required to deliver the outputs described in your proposal and you must be able to justify each cost.
- There are many budgetary considerations that are only applicable under particular circumstance so it is easy to overlook important aspects of your budget.
- You are not expected to be familiar with all these budgetary considerations, however, you are expected to contact the RDO early so that we can assist you with your budget and approve the final budget before proposal submission.
- **Take-home message; It is not in your interest to bypass the RDO in any situation, so...**

Conclusions

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...contact the RDO early...we are here to help!

Grant Writing Skills

Research Development Office
Vinnie Fagan
June 2021

Evaluation Criteria

- It is very important to understand what you are being evaluated on. For each call, the evaluation criteria will be defined and you should write your application with these criteria in mind.
- It is highly advisable to study all call documents, including evaluator criteria/score sheet (if available) and to summarise what exactly the funder is looking for, so that you can continuously refer to this evaluation criteria summary as you write your application.
- Generally, proposals are evaluated based on the below three major criteria, with each weighted differently.

Excellence	Impact	Implementation
50%	30%	20%

- Typically, to differentiate proposals with equal scores, Excellence takes precedence over Impact, followed by Implementation.
- Specific calls may increase the weighting of other criteria (e.g. gender consideration, Public & Patient Involvement (PPI), value for money) so it is very important to read all call documents for each call.

Plot a Course to Success by Sailing the C's



Excellence

Creative

- Proposal must be highly innovative
- Go beyond the state-of-the-art
- A good solution to a real problem

Comprehensive

- Must have thought of everything
- Get feedback from colleagues in different disciplines
- Take all feedback on board, particularly first impressions

Coherent

- Work packages are complementary
- Not separate independent mini projects

Excellence

Creative
Contemplated
Comprehensive
Comprehensible
Coherent

Contemplate

- Detail of your proposal must be well thought out & explained well
- Lack of detail is a common failure
- Discuss with colleagues, refine & modify

Comprehensible

- Easy to follow by non-expert
- Consistent terminology, connective language, concise, minimal jargon, limit acronyms.
- Can a colleague read your proposal for the 1st time & understand it in one take?

- Excellence refers to the research proposal itself; The idea! (Can also include to excellence of the candidate)

The Consortium; Don't Compete, Collaborate!

- Very difficult to be a world-class expert in multiple disciplines, so to develop an excellent multidisciplinary research proposal, build a network of collaborators; if you don't, it is difficult to compete with those that do.
- Know what you need from the collaboration and what you bring to it. The best collaborations are formed through mutually beneficial partnerships.

A good consortium;

- (i) de-risks the project for the funder (greater expertise => higher chance of successful outcomes)
 - (ii) coordinates efforts & prevents duplication
 - (iii) has partners with distinct & complementary expertise working to solve the same problems, but from different perspectives
 - (iv) has partners from different sectors (greater chance of impact)
 - (v) has partners that are fully committed to the collaboration
 - (vi) has good geographical spread
- More partners mean more complex project management; must be thoroughly addressed in your proposal (WPs, roles & responsibilities clearly defined, each partner should have a specific & complementary role).
 - A network of collaborators also allows you to apply to calls with consortium requirements.

Impact

Current

- Is your research timely
- Address an issue that matters to society & the world now

Considered

- Think of impact from the start
- Impact Strategy: identify & target beneficiaries to enhance uptake
- On the right platform, a video clip can go viral

Captured

- How will you know the research has high/low impact
- Impact Strategy should identify metrics

Impact
Current
Considered
Captured
Contribution

Contribution

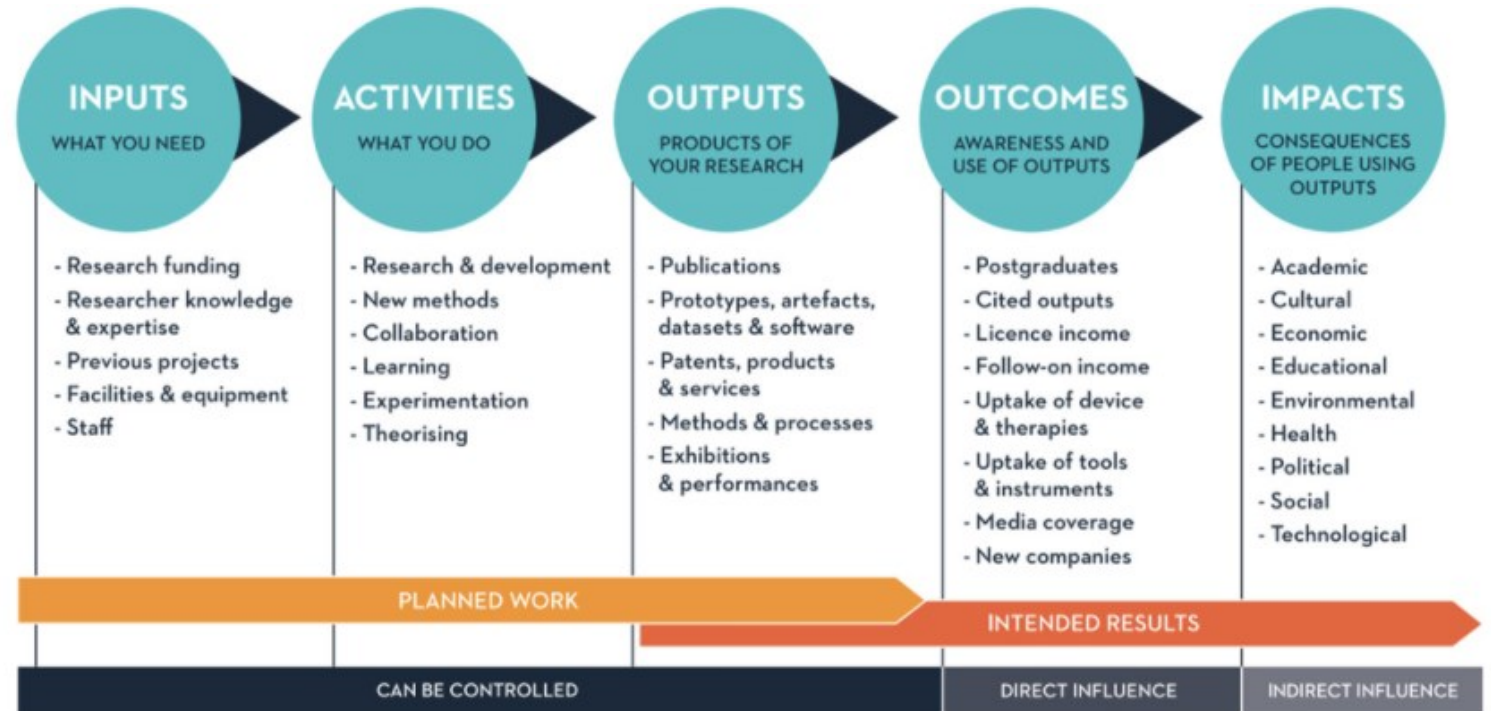
- To National Research Priority Areas?
- To the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
- To the European Mission Areas?

- Impact refers the implications beyond academia; The economics and/or well-being of the wider society.

Impact Toolkit

- The Higher Education Authority have funded an Impact Toolkit, which is hosted by UCD, but was contributed to by representatives from across Ireland's research community, including MU (see workshop pack).

<https://www.ucd.ie/impacttoolkit/>



- SFI also provide good resources to assist applicants in preparing impact sections (see workshop pack).

<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

- We encouraged you to use these valuable resources.

Implementation

Implementation

Credible
Categoric
Calculable

Credible

- Be realistic within the time, budget & your experience
- Get feedback from more experience colleagues

Categoric

- Be explicit. Reviewer can only give credit for what is written
- Define and assign exact tasks, and give timelines (Gantt)
- Specify milestones and deliverables

Calculable

- Measurable. How will you manage the project to ensure it is on track.
- Specify who is responsible for tracking the achievement of tasks etc, submission of reports to funder, monitoring expenditure

Get the Basics Right or Risk Sinking!

Complete

- Complete all sections

Concise

- Use less words to say more
- Less for reviewer to sift through

Captivating

- Use analogies, graphics, anything to make it interesting (e.g. boat analogy)
- Break text up & vary sentence length
- Narrative writing style. See video [here](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0167983)

Compliant

- You meet all eligibilities and other specific requirements (e.g. budget support letters)

Conscientious

- No errors or typos
- Accurate info
- Well formatted
- Headers/footers

Consistent

- Spelling (US/UK)
- Terminology
- Formatting

Convincing

- Back statements up with evidence (refer to a time you achieved something, ideally that resulting in an output)

Get the Basics Right or Risk Sinking!

Complete, Compliant, Conscientious, Consistent
Concise, Captivating, Convincing

How to be Concise

- To be concise in your writing, review your text and remove any words that are not needed to convey the message. Restructure sentences so that you use the minimum amount of words.
- Try the below exercise. The workshop pack has a simple guide, downloaded from here; <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/writing-concisely>

Wordy	Concise
However, it must be remembered that Ruth's marriage could have positive effects on Naomi's situation.	
In high school, where I had the opportunity for three years of working with the student government, I realized how significantly a person's enthusiasm can be destroyed merely by the attitudes of his superiors.	
The economic situation of Anne Moody was also a crucial factor in the formation of her character.	
Frequently, a chapter in a book reveals to the reader the main point that the author desires to bring out during the course of the chapter.	

How to be Concise

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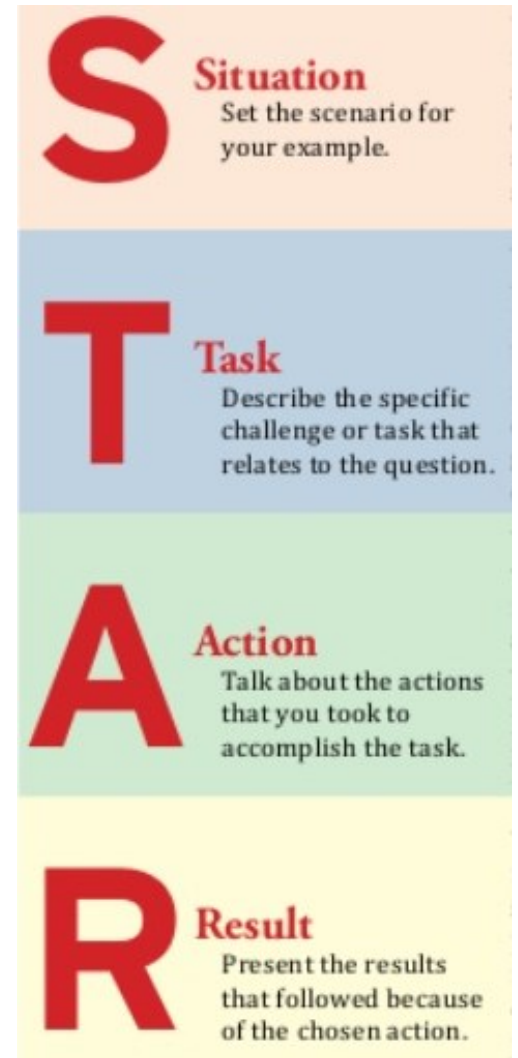
Wordy	Concise
However, it must be remembered that Ruth's marriage could have positive effects on Naomi's situation.	Ruth's marriage, however, will also provide security for Naomi.
In high school, where I had the opportunity for three years of working with the student government, I realized how significantly a person's enthusiasm can be destroyed merely by the attitudes of his superiors.	In high school, during three years on the student council, I saw students' enthusiasm destroyed by insecure teachers and cynical administrators.
The economic situation of Anne Moody was also a crucial factor in the formation of her character.	Anne Moody's poverty also helped form her character.
Frequently, a chapter in a book reveals to the reader the main point that the author desires to bring out during the course of the chapter.	A chapter's title often reveals its thesis.

Use STAR Method

- Your proposal may require Letters of Support (LoS), CVs, personal statements.
- In these sections it may be useful to use the STAR method to convince reviewers of your skills or achievements (see workshop pack).
- The STAR method can help you to prove your claims.

Example

I am experienced in the development and delivery of training programmes. At the RDO, I was tasked with the organisation of a grant writing workshop, to be delivered by an external training consultant. However, after obtaining quotations it became clear that external consultant fees were prohibitively expensive. Therefore, with support from my colleagues, I prepared a workshop that was specific to the needs of MU researchers. I delivered the workshop and it received very positive feedback from both colleagues and participants. The training is now delivered periodically on a permanent basis, as part of the University's Research Skills Development Programme.



More Available from Research Professional

- Many more articles and guidance material relating to grant preparation are available from the Know How section of Research Professional.
- For example, see article with 8 basic but very useful tips on grant writing (also see workshop pack); <https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/rr/funding/insight/2021/2/Write-grants-like-a-boss.html>

The screenshot shows the Research Professional website interface. At the top left is the logo '* Research Professional'. To the right are links for 'Maynooth University', 'Vinnie Fagan', 'Email alerts', and 'Log Out'. Below the logo is a navigation menu with 'News', 'Funding', 'Awards', 'Conferences', 'Our Institution', and 'Help'. A search bar contains 'Articles' (selected), 'Opportunities', and a 'Go' button. A dark red banner features 'Funding' on the left and 'Advanced Opportunities Search' on the right. Below this banner are categories: 'Bio/Medical', 'Engineering & Physical', 'Social Sciences', 'Arts & Humanities', 'Know How' (circled in red), and 'Top Funders'. The 'Know How' section is titled 'Know How' with a sub-header 'Guidance on developing winning proposals from leading PIs and managers, organised by topic' and an 'Email me updates' button. A grid of article titles is displayed below, including 'Funding: The Basics', 'Working Internationally', 'Research Office View', 'Big Proposals', 'Starting Your Career', 'Working with Industry', 'Top PIs Tell All', 'Impact and Innovation', 'Winning Proposals', and 'Europe: Funding: The Basics' with a sub-link 'From the archive: How to prepare a poster'.

More Available from Elsevier

- The Elsevier Researcher Academy website has training webinars covering various aspects of scientific research, which you can access free of charge; <https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/>

- You may find the below presentation useful, which relates to the preparation of research funding proposals; <https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/research-preparation/funding/successful-research-grant-applications-getting-right>

The screenshot shows the 'Learn' page on the Elsevier Researcher Academy website. The URL is researcheracademy.elsevier.com/learn. The page features a search bar, a star icon, and a featured article titled 'INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY FOR RESEARCHERS: Minorities in STEM: Barriers they face in academia and pathways to allyship'. Below this is a navigation menu with two tabs: 'Research cycle' (selected) and 'Content library'. The 'Research cycle' tab is divided into five main stages, each with a list of sub-topics:

RESEARCH PREPARATION	WRITING FOR RESEARCH	PUBLICATION PROCESS	NAVIGATING PEER REVIEW	COMMUNICATING YOUR RESEARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Funding> Research data management> Research collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Fundamentals of manuscript preparation> Writing skills> Technical writing skills> Book writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Fundamentals of publishing> Finding the right journal> Ethics> Open science> How to publish in premium journals> Publishing in the Chemical Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Certified Peer Reviewer Course> Fundamentals of peer review> Becoming a peer reviewer> Going through peer review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Social impact> Ensuring visibility> Inclusion and Diversity for Researchers

Thank You

Thanks for your interest in this workshop.

The workshop runs periodically based on demand.

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