Developing, assessing and managing Linkage grants

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Developing a Linkage application: 
ARC LP110200217
On the Cutting Edge - Promoting Best Practice in Surgical Innovation

Wendy Rogers
Developing a Linkage grant

1. Timelines
2. Team members
3. Finding the cash contributions
4. Putting the application together
Timeline: 18 months

Year 1 2009
Faculty grant for developing interdisciplinary projects
Workshop on *The Cutting Edge of Innovative Treatments* (Nov 2009)
Appointment of Jane Johnson (post-doc) Dec 2009

Year 2 2010
Mq grant for developing Linkage
Search for partners – workshop at Mq
First conference presentation (AABHL)
Meeting with key partner in Adelaide

*LP Application submitted Nov 2010*
Team members

CIs:
Rogers
Johnson
Townley
Sheridan
Ballantyne
Lotz
Meyerson
Tomossy
Eyers
Maddern
Thomson

Partner Organisations
Sydney West Area Health Service
University of Otago
ASERNIP-S, RACS
Thomson-Houston Consulting
Bellberry Inc
University of Adelaide
Finding the cash contribution

Why Choose Us?

Time
Persistence
Luck
Personal relationships
Putting the application together

11 CIs: 11 part Fs
PO sign-off (the ‘right’ person)
Budgeting
Assessing Linkage project applications

Catriona Mackenzie, member, HCA Panel, ARC College of Experts (2010-12); chair 2012
What kind of research projects are funded by the Linkage scheme?

Linkage projects are research projects, not contracted research or consultancies and must be persuasive as research

– Assessors are attuned to potential conflicts of interest. The research must be independent of the commercial etc. interests of the partner organisation
Scoring of Linkage Proposals

Investigators (20%)
Project (50%)
  – Significance and Innovation (25%)
  – Approach and Training (15%)
  – Research Environment (10%)
  • Partner Organisation Commitment (30%)
Partner Organisation Commitment (30%)

The most time-consuming and challenging aspect of preparing a linkage project

Funded projects usually demonstrate clear evidence of

- A history of deep engagement between research investigators and partner organisations
- Significant time commitment from PIs
- How the proposed research meets the needs of partner organisations and helps to provide solutions
- How the CIs, partner organisations and PIs from partner organisations will work together as a team
Investigators (20%)

Team needs to:

– demonstrate that it has the relevant expertise to work with partner organisations in providing solutions

– be coherent – role and expertise of each CI must be clearly explained

The first CI should be an experienced researcher with a strong track record.

If track records of some team members are not as strong as others use ROPE section to explain why...
Track Record

Use ARC’s sub-headings to structure ROPE section
Be clear and concise in explaining research opportunities available and career interruptions (if relevant) - ROPE
Don’t try to fudge publication lists
Provide brief statement for each ten best publication
Further evidence sections: make it clear howthe team members have the expertise and research background necessary for the project
Some Common Problems with Investigators

There are too many investigators, investigator roles are unclear, or the team lacks some relevant expertise. Investigator track record raises questions about feasibility of project (e.g., poor outputs from previous grants, researcher has insufficient background and experience in research field or with research methodology).
Significance and Innovation (25%)

What is the research problem addressed by your project?

Why does the partner organisation have a stake in addressing this research problem?

How is your research innovative in the way it addresses this problem?

What are the broader benefits (social, economic, environmental, technology) and outcomes of your research?

What distinguishes your project from other research in the field?
Approach and Training (15%)

Conceptual framework and methods must be articulated clearly and in sufficient detail; justify their appropriateness; why they can be expected to yield new insights, knowledge.

Aim to strike the right balance between too much detail (which risks losing the assessor’s interest) and too little (which suggests that you are not on top of the theoretical issues).

Provide a clear research plan (eg. different phases) and detailed timelines, making clear how partner organisations will be involved.

Assessors look carefully at training opportunities and mentoring arrangements.
Research Environment (10%): Some Do’s

DO explain why MQ provides a good research environment for this project by:

– identifying specific colleagues who will provide you with critical feedback, support, mentoring etc. relevant for this specific project.

– identifying specific research centres or groups of which you are a member and which are relevant for this specific project.

– Identifying specific facilities (eg. museums, labs, technical equipment and support) that are crucial for the success of the project.
Research Environment: Some Don’t’s

DON’T:
– Fill up space with a lot of generic information about the university and its research aspirations
– Mention the names of prominent researchers in the university unless you expect them to provide some input into your project.
– Simply rely on ERA rankings to establish the quality of the research environment.
Budget and Budget Justification

A poorly prepared and justified budget can sink a project.

You need to demonstrate that your project represents value for money.

You need to demonstrate that the partner organisation’s cash or in-kind commitment is sufficient.

Don’t pad the budget with unnecessary requests.
Some Tips on Budgets

Teaching Relief: Link requests for teaching relief to tasks involved at specific phases of the project

Personnel: Justify level of expertise and experience required

Travel: Must be clearly justified as an essential component of the project. Administering organisations are expected to contribute to e.g. conference travel costs

Equipment: Must be essential and project specific
Managing a funded Linkage project:

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Wendy Rogers
Award of funding

Text message at home

OMG! Did we get the Linkage?
Managing a Linkage grant

1. Award of funding
2. Getting started
3. Organising the work
4. Communication
5. Trouble shooting
6. Achievements
7. The road ahead
Getting started

Time between award of funding and start of project: 7 months

Major issue: key PO legislated out of existence with loss of CI

The search for a new PO

Logistics: sign off required from 11 CIs, 5 POs, the ARC ....
Appointment of dedicated staff!!!!

Post-doctoral Research Associate: the project engine

Research Assistant: the project glue

2 PhD students
Organising the work: weaving a research thread

- Law and regulation
- Ethics
- Partner Relations
- Taxonomy
- Qualitative research
- Admin and logistics
Communication

- Website
- Conference abstracts
- Basecamp
- Project meetings 2-3/year
- Working group meetings 6-8/year
- Newsletter
- Management group meetings
- Publications
- Events
- Emails
Trouble shooting

1. Changes in CIs

1. Managing partner relationships

1. Keeping the research on track/keeping track of the research

1. Communicating about multi-disciplinary research

1. Keeping everyone involved and with “outputs”

6. Foresight and trying to budget
Achievements

1. Myerson D. Is there a right to access innovative surgery? *Bioethics* (accepted 15 May 2014)
Achievements

Conference Presentations
11th World Congress of the International Association of Bioethics: Special Symposium, Rotterdam
Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law, 2011-13: multiple presentations
23rd Medico-legal Congress, Sydney

Workshops
Ethics of Innovative Surgery, Mq University (2013)

Engagement with Partner Organisations
Research visits at WSLHD Multiple
Research visit to ASERNIP-S Project update to Bellberry Ltd, Adelaide
Research visits by Dr Ballantyne (University of Otago) to Macquarie

Finalist: Mq Excellence in Research Awards (Social Science & Humanities)
Outreach

Business breakfast for stakeholders
Personal contact with potential end-users of our innovation checklist
Stakeholder presentations:
- Medical grand rounds (St George Hospital)
- Workshop for Directors of Clinical Governance
The road ahead

1. Keeping an eye on the project aims
2. Keeping an eye on the budget
3. “Packaging” the research for stakeholders
4. Balancing academic and practical outputs (cf ERA)
5. Meeting Partners’ expectations
6. Managing communication of results
Many thanks are owed

Our Partner Organisations
The team: CIs, Swantje and Katrina, Tock and Leigh (PhD students)
Faculty and Central Research Offices
ARC